EXPLORING THE NAMIBIAN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY'S RESPONSES TO

GENDER NONCONFORMING LEARNERS: A CASE OF ERONGO REGION

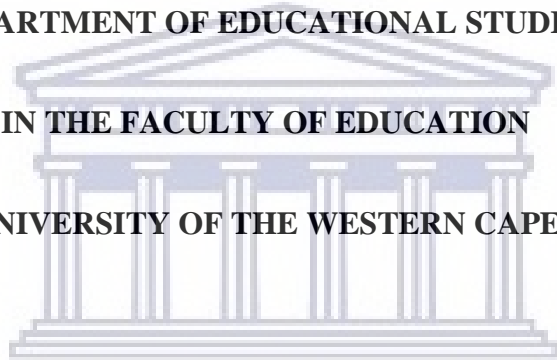**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR**

THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR PHILOSOPHIAE

IN THE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

IN THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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BY

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SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR R.F.A.MAARMAN

Key words

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Transformative mixed methods

ACADEMIC EDITOR

Dr. Helena Miranda
P.O. Box3189
Ongwediva

13 November 2020

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Editing of Ms. Rauna Haitembu's Dissertation

This is to confirm that I have electronically edited Rauna Haitembu's Dissertation, **EXPLORING THE NAMIBIAN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY'S RESPONSES TO GENDER NON-CONFORMING LEARNERS: A CASE OF ERONGO REGION.**

I further confirm that the editing covered the language (grammar), philosophical soundness of ideas, relevance of literature, typing errors, formatting style, citations (adherence to standard styles), and proof-reading.

The editing did not, however, cover the list of references, as these are easier checked on a hard copy. I have 17 years' experience of reviewing and editing written academic work, such as theses, dissertations, research project reports and journal articles. Currently, I am the Chief Editor for the Namibian Educational Research Association (NERA) Journal.

Even though I edited the mentioned dissertation, the authorship and final responsibility for the edited draft of the mentioned dissertation lie with my client.
Please do not hesitate to contact me at the above-mentioned address, should you require additional information regarding the editing of the dissertation.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Helena Miranda

Signature

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the Namibian Inclusive Education policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Gender nonconformity within the scope of this study refers to nonconforming to societal gender expectations through behaviour, presentation, sexual identity or any other means construed as normal by societies. Thus the study was guided by the research question: How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools? Even though there is growing evidence on mistreatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools worldwide, there is minimal evidence on the support for gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian schools. Additionally, there is paucity of literature on gender nonconformity in the Namibian education context.

The current study used a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods case study design encased within a Social Identity Perspective (SIP) to understand the research problem. A random sampling procedure was used to select 182 school teachers in Erongo region, Namibia. In addition, purposive criterion sampling was used to select 27 schools with grades 8-12 from which the population sample of teachers was randomly drawn. The purposive criterion sampling was also used to select one Deputy Director of Special Programmes and Schools (SPS), one Deputy Director of Diagnostic, Assessment and Training Services (DATs), one Regional School Counsellor as well as one Inclusive Education officer at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) to be part of the sample.

The data were collected through quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures concurrently. The qualitative data were collected through a questionnaire (Appendix K) and a

face-to-face interview. The qualitative data were also collected through a questionnaire completed by the teachers. The qualitative data from the interviews and the questionnaire were analysed thematically to arrive at emerging patterns and themes. The quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire (Appendix K) which was completed by the teachers. The quantitative data were then analysed using a Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS) software. Since this study is of a mixed-method nature, the data are integrated at the discussion phase.

The findings of this study revealed a positive response of the Namibian IE policy to all learners in Namibian schools. However, the IE policy was found to be silent on issues of gender nonconformity within education. This silence was found to be reflected in the Namibian education system at the tertiary education level. There is a lack of sexual orientation content in the curriculum of teacher education in Namibian institutions of higher learning. However, at basic education level, the national school curriculum and the Life Skills as subject curriculum content do cover topics on sexual orientation. The gender nonconforming learners were being tolerated in some schools. Moreover, gender nonconformity is addressed according to individual, religious and societal beliefs in schools.

The current study recommends for the IE policy review for the policy to clearly refer to the care and support for gender nonconforming learners in schools. Further the study recommends for establishment of legal frameworks that supports the IE policy with clear guidelines on how to handle gender nonconformity issues in schools, introduction of sexual orientation content into the curriculum for the teacher-training programmes, for the Life Skills as a subject to be an

examinable subject, creation of supportive learning environments and for the strengthening of the psychological support to learners.

The study made a contribution to the existing knowledge on gender nonconformity studies in the Namibian context. The conception of the SIP used within a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods paradigm stands as a methodological contribution to research in the field of inclusive education. The frame-work for supplementing the implementation of the IE policy has also contributed towards the inclusive practices in the Namibian context.

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Declaration

I Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu declare that "*Exploring the Namibian Inclusive Education policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners: A case of Erongo region"* is my own original work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete reference.

Full name: **Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu**   Date: **31 January 2021**

Signed: *RHaitembu*

Acknowledgements

I would like first and foremost to thank the Almighty God as His guidance and love has always been with me. I thank God for bringing Professor R. F. A. Maarman's attention to this study. I am forever indebted to you for reaching out to me when I was in dire need of professional guidance. Your willingness to bring this study into your department and to take up supervision had made it possible for me to celebrate this achievement. I sincerely thank you for believing in me even before we met. Thank you for your continuous guidance, professionalism and exceptional trust you had in my abilities throughout this study.

To my children, Paulus Ndahanduka Hamalwa and Anna Jennifer Tuleingepo Hamalwa, thank you for being the pillars and the strength that kept me going. To my brothers and sisters, thank you for supporting me and for your patience even in times when I have been unavailable and unkind towards you. To my dear parents, thank you for believing in education and for your constant advice. My friend Dr. Emilia Ndapandula Mbongo, thank you for being there as always and for being a constant support in my life. I am forever grateful to have a friend like you. My friend and academic colleague, Dr. Frans Ndemupondaka Haimbodi, it was a journey worth taking, thank you for taking it with me and thank you for your motivation.

My gratitude also goes out to Tuhafeni Ndipwashimwe and Dr Absai Vatuva for always being available to take me to and from airport when traveling to take up my studies. I would like to extend a special thank you to Professor Antony Brown. Thank you for your contribution towards this study and for sharing your life story. Your enthusiasm and willingness to make Namibia a better place for all the Namibian people have inspired this study. Moreover, thank you for editing the content of my questionnaire (Appendix K) and interview schedule (Appendix L) as well my

proposal. The articles you have shared with me were very relevant and had contributed immensely to this study's literature and increased my knowledge on the topic, thank you.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Namibian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture especially its staff members and teachers in the Erongo region who participated in the pilot study and in the main study. Your participation had made it possible for me to complete this study. A special thank you goes to the Ministry of Health and Social Service for your willingness to offer psychological support to the participants in this study.

Finally, I would like to thank all the colleagues who helped out with the photocopying of the research instruments as well as distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Thank you Mr Paulus Ambata at University of Namibia, Oshakati Campus; Mr Francis Kolofu, Education officer at Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture; Ms Tjirimuje Valerie, Education officer at Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture and the staff at the Teachers Resource Centre in Omaruru circuit of Erongo region. Your assistance and support had made the completion of this study possible.
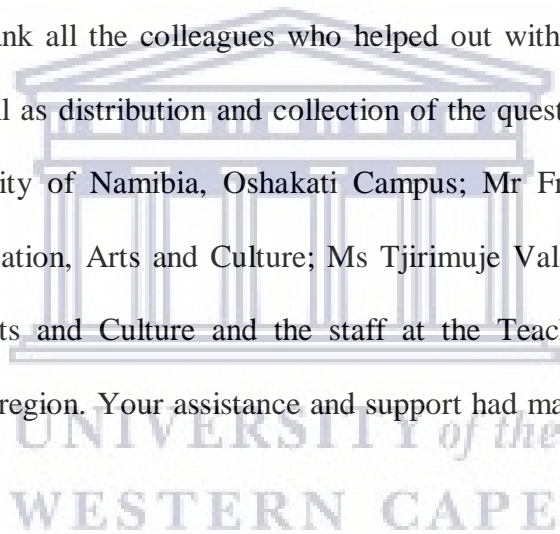
Dedication

In memory and honour of my grandmother Petrina Mweshidjalela Ndekume yaMwaetako, the woman who shaped my life into what it is today and my first teacher, this study is dedicated to all the grandmothers out there who are raising grandchildren single handedly.

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List of abbreviations

CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education
DATs	Diagnostic and Advisory Services
MOE	Education Management Information System
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IE	Inclusive Education
KHRC	Kenyan Human Rights Commission
MoEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEAC	Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
MoESD	Ministry of Education and Skills Development
NNSSF	Namibia's National Safe School Framework
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
SFIIEP	Supplementary Framework for Implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy
SIP	Social Identity Perspective
SPS	Special Programmes and Schools
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Studies
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction

Education is the most important tool for human empowerment and social liberation. It is therefore required for schools to respond to the needs of all learners. This calls for the schools to embrace a form of education which is responsive to all learners. In that regard, Inclusive Education (IE) becomes a necessity. IE does respond to diversity within the educational settings, hence most of the countries in the world are striving to realise inclusion within their education systems. Such efforts include the establishment of IE policies to provide guidelines and strategies for the education institutions to respond to all learners.

The policy guidelines and strategies are very crucial as they advocate for social justice within an education system. However, research shows that learners from minority groups such as gender nonconforming learners do experience harassment and bullying as well as face discrimination on a daily basis in schools (Collier et al., 2013; Evans & Chapman, 2014; Msibi, 2012). Even though there is growing evidence of the challenges faced by gender nonconforming learners in schools, there seems to be lack of information about how the Namibian IE policy is responding to these learners within the Namibian schools. Hence, in this study, the researcher had seen a need to explore how this policy is responding to the gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools.

At the core of the current study is a critical exploration of how the Namibian IE policy addresses the needs of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Hence, this chapter serves as the introduction to this study by giving the background to formal education in Namibia before

and after independence in 1990. In this chapter, the researcher has positioned the Namibian education within the transformative paradigm by focusing on the educational transformations that took place after independence in 1990. These are the transformations which are aimed at the provision of IE for all in the Namibian schools.

This study's focus was to improve inclusion practices in schools through the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) by emphasising the effects of categorisation on individual's self-esteem and self-worth. Therefore the researcher presents a brief introduction of the theoretical framework on which this study is based. The SIP is used in this study as a theoretical framework due to its assumptions (see chapter two) that correspond with this study's assumptions (see section 1.7).

Guided by the SIP in this study, the researcher chose to use terms "gender nonconforming" and "gender nonconformity" (see definition of key terms under section 1.11) instead of other labels given to gender nonconforming people such as homosexual or homosexuality. These two terms are preferred in this study due to their inclusiveness of all learners regardless of their gender identities. The researcher asserts that these terms remove the labels attached to homosexuality such as gay, lesbian or homosexual and other terms. Thus gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming terms lessen the stigma associated with these labels. Moreover, the researcher was interested in increasing respect for diverse sexual identities of all learners in Namibian schools. Thus the researcher has to respect the gender nonconforming learners and avoid terms that can reduce their being as self-identifying individuals. Therefore, the researcher used the terms gender nonconforming and gender nonconformity to refer to all learners who are not conforming to gender norms and to homosexuality.

The statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study and assumptions of the study as well as the research questions are presented in this chapter. The methodology used in this study is also briefly introduced in this chapter. Towards the end, the researcher presents the delimitations and limitations of the study, defines key terms and outlines the thesis. Lastly the chapter is concluded with a summary which highlights the main points discussed in the chapter.

1.2 Background to the study

1.2.1 Education in Namibia before independence

Namibia had been a colony of South Africa for close to a century until 1990 when it became independent (Angula & Grant Lewis, 1997). Before the South African government took over Namibia as its territory, Namibia has been under the rule of German since 1884 to 1915. The German colonial government, through the missionaries such as Rhenish Missionary Society (among Hereros and Namas), The Finnish Missionary Society (among Owambos) and The Catholic missionaries (among Hereros, Namas and Kavangos), has established an education system under which the Namibian (formerly known as South West Africa) indigenous population and the German settlers received different educational services (Cohen, 1993).

The education provided to indigenous people was merely for provision of industrial skills, skills in domestic work and skills to read the Bible (Cohen, 1993; Leu, 1979; Dahlström, 2002). These skills necessitated the indigenous people to remain good workpeople to provide food and manual labour to the missionaries. However, the differences in educational provision within the education system had resulted in the majority of the Namibian's indigenous population to remain

illiterate. When South Africa took over the governance of Namibia in 1915, the existing policies on educational provision served as the basis for further discrepancies in the education system (Amukugo, 1993; Angula & Grant Lewis, 1997; Cohen, 1993)

South African was governed on the principle of apartheid by the time Namibia become its territory. Hence, the Namibian formal education was based on segregation as per the apartheid regime laws that governed South Africa (Amukugo, 1993; Jansen, 1995). This education was characterised with inequalities. As Amukugo (1993) maintains education in Namibia under the apartheid regime was discriminatory and segregated on the basis of race, ethnicity and gender.

The education that was provided was tailored on the existing policies from the missionaries thus the majority (blacks and coloureds) of the learners received low standard education that lacked promotion of critical thinking. This education involved more rote learning (Amukugo, 1993; Dahlström, 2002). Similarly to the missionaries' aims of education for indigenous people, it was believed that blacks and coloureds only needed education for a certain level of labour such as household administration, nursing and teaching (Leu, 1979; Amukugo, 1993; Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC), 1993). Consequently, the few available special schools then catered only for the elite (white) learners while the majority (blacks and coloureds) of the learners were excluded (Leu, 1979; Amukugo, 1993).

The curriculum that was offered to the majority (blacks and coloureds) of the learners also did not reflect inclusion thus learners from the majority groups with special educational needs, social, emotional and other needs were not catered for. Consequently, most of these learners who were enrolled in school dropped out due to unresponsive educational practices and environments

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(Leu, 1979). As a result, most of the Namibian children with special needs were not accorded chances to receive formal education (MoEC, 1993).

Education is seen as a tool to empower children with skills that will enable them to function in a changing world (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 1960). Thus learning is believed to instil values, attitudes and behaviours that will enable the youth to live together in a world of diversity and pluralism (UNESCO, 1960). On the basis of the past inequalities in education discussed above, it is expected of the Namibian schools to respond to the needs of all learners.

The researcher maintains that it is imperative for all Namibian children to be accorded opportunities to complete formal education. Hence, in this study, the researcher establishes that it is important to explore how the Namibian IE policy is responding to the needs of all learners including those who are not conforming to gender norms. The researcher also maintains that education functions as a tool towards personal emancipation hence all Namibian citizens deserve chances to receive quality education for life long skills. Accordingly, after the independence of Namibia, the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC) has embarked upon educational reforms to increase access to education for all (MoEC, 1993). These include the establishment of the IE policy to address inequalities in education. These reforms are discussed in the next sub-section.

1.2.2   Education in Namibia after independence

Namibia became an independent country in March 1990. Immediately after this, the new government embarked upon educational reforms to address all forms of discrimination within the

education system. The educational system had to dismantle the apartheid regime policy of segregation and inequality through a new learning and teaching paradigm. Thus the new education system has then to be based on recognition of all people regardless of their colour, gender, abilities, disabilities and socio-economic background (MoEC, 1993).

Inclusive Education is a worldwide ideology which is not only advocating for education systems to respond positively to the educational needs of learners but it also focuses on realisation of human rights in the school settings. It recognises that all children with or without disabilities face challenges that need to be addressed (UNESCO, 2009). It is argued that if these challenges are not addressed, they will prevent children from reaching their full academic, emotional and social potential. As it is discussed above, the Namibian formal education upon independence was not reflective of inclusivity, hence the Namibian government's efforts to promote inclusivity in education. The researcher in this study upholds that in order to promote diversity in education and acceptance that all children are equal, inclusion should be about valuing and respecting differences among learners.

Namibia has come far in making efforts to respond to the needs of all learners in schools. The MoEAC has launched a policy on Inclusive Education (IE) in 2014. The Namibian IE policy states that the ministry recognises that learning needs stem from a range of factors, including life experiences, negative attitudes and other factors (Ministry of Education (MoE), 2014). The policy further states that IE should result in good practices of inclusion across the board (MoE, 2014). It should be noted that prior to the launch of the IE Policy, the Namibian formal education after independence had already been based on a social justice and a no discrimination ideology (MoEC, 1993). In the context of the current study, it is important to observe that a no

discrimination approach to education includes aspects of care and support for all learners regardless of their background and sexual orientation.

In the African culture, sexual orientation has been always regarded and accepted to be romantically attractions toward the opposite sex (Oloka-Onyango, 2015; Ntlama, 2014). Other forms that deviate from the norm are frowned upon and not accepted. In line with aforementioned, Lorway (2006) claims that gender nonconformity was deemed unAfrican and an unwelcome Western practice by many Africans. One can argue that as a result, individuals who do not conform to the heteronormative binary of gender could be looked upon as socially unfit, thus treated as outcasts. A study by Shipo (2010) shows that due to prejudice, hostile and sometimes violent public reactions, most gender nonconforming people in Namibia continue to enter heteronormative marriages to bow to the societies' expectations. Therefore, it is logical to argue that gender nonconformity has emerged as a challenging aspect in Namibia. This is not only in terms of social settings but also regarding the educational policy formulation and educational aims to attain social justice in schools.

The Namibian curriculum reform after independence was aimed at reviewing of the curriculum content to reflect and address the Namibian child's needs. In regard to the above matter, literature shows that countries (i.e., South Africa) that have accepted gender nonconformity have made efforts to include inclusive sex education into their policies and curriculums (Answer Ed, 2015; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014; Nel, 2014; Russell, 2011). Namibia seems to heed this example at the curriculum level as the Namibian basic education curriculum content includes issues of sexual orientation. In that regard, the researcher argues that inclusive sex education should be

reflected in the wording of the curriculum and policies' content in such a way that it can bring about a change in individual thinking about the topic of gender nonconformity.

The idea behind the educational reforms in Namibia was to make the education system inclusive hence the IE policy should present a fully transformative stand. Therefore the researcher argues that it is important to explore how the Namibian IE policy responds to gender nonconforming learners. Brown (2016) is of the opinion that heteronormativity functions as a default norm in the Namibian education curriculum content. In that regard, the researcher building on Nell and Shapiro's (2011) view argues that an education system that nurtures heteronormativity as the only form of gender could create barriers to an optimal learning environment for gender nonconforming learners.

The researcher draws conclusions that the positioning of heteronormativity as a default norm for gender in the Namibian education curriculum content seems to present a silence within the education settings on gender nonconformity issues. The researcher maintains that this silence have implications on the policy makers, educators and the government's call for no discrimination in education and realisation of social justice in education. Hence, against this background, the researcher deemed it necessary to employ a Social Identity Perspective (SIP) within a transformative paradigm to explore the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. The researcher anticipated for this exploration to bring about understanding of how the policy is responding to gender nonconforming learners and realisation of fully inclusive schools. A brief overview of the SIP framework is presented below.

1.3 Theoretical framework: the social identity perspective

The researcher in this study had used the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) in order to explore the responses of IE policy to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The researcher draws from Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory of 1979, Stryker's identity theory of 1977 and Spivak's concept of othering of 1985 to explore the IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners. The assumptions of social identity theory, identity theory and othering are aligned to the assumptions of this study. These theories assume that a social identity forms part of the individual's self-concept and self-esteem. In relation to this assumption, the researcher acknowledges Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model that relationships in social settings such as schools are important to learners as they form part of their social identities. Hence, the extent to which these social settings are accommodating and accepting of differences among learners will have an effect on gender nonconforming learners' self-concept and self-esteem. Therefore in this study, the researcher assumes that a positive regard of gender nonconforming learners will be instrumental in building their positive self-concept and self-esteem for better learning. Hence, the researcher conceptualised the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) of the social identity theory, identity theory and the othering concept to explore the IE policy responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The SIP is introduced briefly in the next six sub-sections and a detailed discussion is done in chapter two. The next sub-section gives a brief description of the social identity theory.

1.3.1 The social identity theory

Several authors (e.g., Burke, 2004; Dervin, 2012; Hogg, 2001; Kumashiro, 2000; Stets & Carter, 2012; Tajfel, & Turner, 1979) affirm that the social identity theory is based on Tajfel's 1970

experimental study into minimal groups which investigated the intergroup discrimination within these groups. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), the social identity theory's assumptions are that each individual has a need of a favourable self-identity and the status of the group to which one belongs is crucial to provide such positive identity. The theory further assumes that the classification of groups into "us" and "them" is an important feature of individuals as they attempt to make sense of their social world (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Literature (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Worchel et al., 1998) states that when people believe that an individual can only belong to a certain group they tend to have a discriminating attitude towards the out-group members. Gender nonconformity is an issue which is neither welcomed nor openly discussed in the Namibian community. Hence, the above discussions have implications on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners. The researcher in this study assumes that gender nonconforming learners might be treated differently by individuals who see gender nonconformity as a wrongful act. Consequently, this study aimed at using the SIP to highlight the effects of belonging to a social group on the individual's self-concept and self-esteem. It is indicated in the literature that identifying with a group does increase individuals' feelings of solidarity and group cohesiveness (Burke et al., 2007; Castells, 1997).

The above statements highlight the need for acceptance and positive regard of the gender nonconforming learners. This was hoped to promote positive identity for these learners and lead to better performance in school. For the purpose of this study, the social identity theory's assumptions introduced in this sub-section are linked to the assumptions of the identity theory which are discussed in the next sub-section.

1.3.2   The identity theory

Burke (1991) writes that the identity theory maintains that identities are a set of meanings that individuals hold for themselves as members of a social group. Burke (1991) and Burke et al. (2007) state that the identity theory posits that social groups are formed as an individual identify with others of the same character. The theory also maintains that the individual continually seeks to confirm self-views and will work hard to maintain the situations and relationships that lead to self-verification (Burke et al., 2007). The theory further states that self-verification is crucial as it provides an emotional anchor that helps the individual to be less vulnerable in unfavourable life events (Burke et al., 2007).

Stryker and Burke (2000) write that an individual's behaviour mirrors the group perceptions thus their actions are unison. Therefore the individual behaves in a certain manner according to the perception of the group to keep their identity standards. According to the identity theory these behaviours in turn will not only have effects on the self-esteem of the individual but also on one's self-efficacy (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Castells (2004) states that religious revelations, personal fantasies, power apparatus, social and cultural structures function as the building materials to construct meaning. Thus individuals' social groups and society identity meanings construction is based on their cultural and social perspectives. In relation to inclusion within education, the social context, culture and religion play a role on how educators respond to learners. Hence the aforementioned assumptions demonstrate the importance of the IE policy in advocating for unconditional regard for all leaners regardless of individuals' cultural and religious beliefs on gender nonconformity. The othering concept as another component for the SIP in this study is introduced in the next sub-section.

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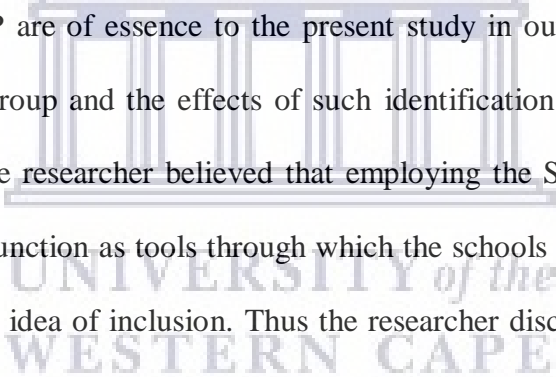
1.3.3 The Othering concept

Canales (2000) refers to the concept of othering as a process by which individuals name and mark those deemed different from oneself. Further, research (Brons, 2015; Dervin, 2012; Jensen, 2011; Powell & Menendian, 2016) maintains that through othering people construct sameness and differences as well as affirm their identities. These processes lead to formation of groups based on these constructed characteristics and differences. Zevallos (2011) explains that otherness is how the societies establish and identify social categories. It is thus assumed that deviation from the societies' expectations and norms is seen by the society as the "other" of law-abiding society (Zevallos, 2011).

Research (e.g., Canales, 2000; Epstein et al., 2000; Gillespie, 2007; Powell & Menendian, 2016) holds that once an individual's behaviour is perceived as against the social norms their identity is defined on basis of being a threat to the social order and looked upon as not human. Thus full social acceptance of the group that is deemed different becomes difficult. Since gender nonconformity is seen as deviation in African cultures including Namibia, one can argue that gender nonconformity becomes the "other" identity as it is deemed different from the norm. The researcher took a position that the Namibian schools and the IE policy should advocate for respect and acceptance of differences in terms of gender identities among learners to curb the effects of othering. In that regard, the researcher discusses the strengths of the SIP for an inclusive education study in the next sub-section.

1.3.4   The strengths of the social identity perspective for an IE study

The use of a Social Identity Perspective (SIP) in a social justice and inclusion research is of very importance as the components of SIP highlight the need for favourable self-identity and the effects of such identification on the self-concept and self-esteem of an individual (Burke, 2004; Dervin, 2012; Hogg, 2001; Kumashiro, 2000; Stets & Carter, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This framework could help to raise awareness about the emotional effects of othering within schools thus it is hoped to lead to better practices of inclusion. Hence the SIP serves as a relevant frame to look at how the IE policy is responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools given their differing sexual identity and orientations.

The assumptions of the SIP are of essence to the present study in outlining the importance of identifying with a certain group and the effects of such identification on one's emotions, self-esteem and self-worthy. The researcher believed that employing the SIP will demonstrate how educational policies could function as tools through which the schools could address differences among learners to reach the idea of inclusion. Thus the researcher discusses the applicability of the SIP to the Namibian IE policy in the next sub-section.

1.3.5   The Namibian inclusive education policy and the application of SIP

The researcher considered the probable practical applicability of the SIP to an inclusive education study. The SIP's applicability to an inclusive study is due to its unique nature to highlight the importance of the need to belong to a social group. The researcher hoped for the SIP to lead to emancipating of the wider school community to become liberal members of the

school society in terms of gender nonconformity. The SIP was also hoped to bring about social change within the Namibian schools in terms of gender nonconformity issues.

The uniqueness of the SIP is further extended to its applicability to several social issues and environments including schools. Some authors (e.g., Brikkels, 2014; Kumashiro, 2002; Msibi, 2012) claim that schools have become spaces in which the "other" is treated harmful by either fellow learners or the teachers. There are some cases in which learners' differences are not recognised in schools hence they are negatively othered and labelled for being different from the norm (Borrero et al., 2012). Therefore, the researcher applied SIP to this study to demonstrate that recognition of difference will prevent negative othering in schools.

The researcher argues that it is important for individuals to recognise differences between the self and the "other" in a positive manner. Therefore, it is against the aforementioned that the researcher deemed the underlying principles of the SIP necessary in the current study in achieving transformation of school communities. The SIP is also applied to this study with hope to foster tolerance, acceptance and recognition of diversity in schools. The principles of the SIP discussed above made this perspective ideal for this study, however, the researcher points out that this perspective has some limitations just like any other perspective used in research to discover knowledge thus the researcher briefly introduces these limitations in the next sub-section.

1.3.6   Critique of social identity perspective

The reviewed literature on SIP demonstrated how this perspective is ideal to explore how the IE policy is responding to learners. This perspective is also appropriate to demonstrate how the IE

policy could be employed to attain social justice in education through inclusion practices. However, since the SIP is coined from theories and a concept that have been used in several studies for decades, the SIP also has some conceptual ambiguities just like any theoretical perspective that has a place in generation of lager quantity of research.

This perspective implies that once the group status is made legitimate dis-identification and out-group preference can occur. A sexual orientation is not merely a social identity which can be taken up and be given up at a whim. Thus applying these assumptions to real life situations such as sexual orientation makes this perspective conceptually inapt in the context of the current study. Moreover, the SIP's weakness might lie in its components' emphasis of the "other" as this might function as a form of classifying gender nonconforming learners as a separate group thus failing to include them. Nevertheless, there is empirical evidence that SIP has proven to be applicable in studying social issues across various fields of studies. Hence, the researcher is confident that the strengths of this perspective outweigh the above outlined weaknesses. Therefore, the researcher asserts that the social identity perspective was the most useful theoretical framework to guide the researcher to address the problem under study. The researcher discusses the statement of the problem in the next section.

1.4   Statement of the problem

The Namibian education system has given much attention to acknowledging and recognising diversity among learners. Therefore several efforts such as establishment of a policy on inclusive education are made to address the learners' needs in schools across the country through inclusive education (MoE, 2014). The Namibian IE policy mandates for good practices of inclusion across the board for realisation of education for all in Namibian schools. Hence the Namibian schools'

mandate is to support all learners who experience barriers to learning due to different experiences (e.g., special needs or socio-economic backgrounds) (MoE, 2014).

Globally, there is empirical evidence (see Butler & Astbury, 2004; Blaauw, 2012; Oswald & Engelbrecht, 2004; Pepper, 2015) of the challenges faced by gender nonconforming learners in most countries. In contrast, there is paucity of research on gender nonconformity in Namibian schools hence there is minimal evidence on the responses of the IE policy to gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian schools. The search for related literature on gender nonconformity proved that literature on this topic is scant in the Namibian education context with few studies that could be located. The few studies (e.g., Brown, 2016, 2017; Francis et al., 2017) that could be located maintain that gender nonconforming learners are among the groups of learners that suffer from psychical and verbal violence in Namibian schools. Brown (2017) discovered that some gender nonconforming learners in Namibia have left school before completing grade 12 due to being discriminated and bullied in schools.

The growing body of research that highlights the distressing homophobic bullying and violence against gender nonconforming learners (e.g., Elia & Eliason, 2010; Meyer, 2008; Msibi, 2012; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015) is of concern in regard to the learning of these learners in the Namibian schools. In light of this concern, the limited studies on the Namibian context in terms of gender nonconformity within education posed a challenge on understanding how gender nonconforming learners are responded to and treated in Namibian schools within an IE policy mandate. The insufficient empirical evidence on gender nonconformity within the Namibian schools further presented a challenge on understanding the educational responses to gender nonconforming learners for realisation of education for all as per

the mandate of the IE policy. Therefore the researcher in the present study maintains that there was a need to understand how the Namibian IE policy is responding to these learners in schools.

Authors such as Brown (2017) and Francis et al. (2017) are of the opinion that the Namibian IE policy presents an invisibility and uneasy silence in regard to marginalised identities in Namibian schools. The researcher therefore argues that this policy silence and invisibility could create a gap between the IE policy's aims for provision of support to all learners and the practical reality of inclusion in the Namibian schools. Thus, the researcher intended to break this invisibility and silence through utilisation of the SIP within a transformative mixed methods paradigm.

The present study asserts that exploring the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners through a Social Identity Perspective (SIP) within a transformative mixed methods paradigm had provided educators with necessary information and knowledge to evaluate the current inclusion practices in Namibian schools. Through this evaluation educators could consider possible improvement in education in regard to gender nonconformity. The policy exploration in this study was done in relation to policy discourse around non-discrimination, social justice, equality, access, equity and democratic participation in education as a right for all Namibian children. In so doing, the current study assumed that the schools will establish strategies specifically aimed at responding to gender nonconforming learners in line with the Namibian constitution's call for a non-discriminatory nation (GRN, 1990). The researcher therefore hoped for this study to bring about transformation within the schools in regard to gender nonconforming learners. This is anticipated to lead to safe learning environments where all learners are treated equally for better academic performance. In relation to these reasoning, the researcher discusses the purpose of the current study in the next section.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the current study was to explore how the Namibian IE policy responds to gender nonconforming learners. Thus the researcher in this study aimed at employing a Social Identity Perspective (SIP) within a transformative mixed methods paradigm to discover knowledge on gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. This knowledge is anticipated to make a contribution towards successful inclusion practices in regard to gender nonconforming learners. The SIP assumes that differences in social expected norms could lead to either negative or positive reactions among people. Thus the rationale for the current study through the SIP lens was to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore ways in which the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools.

2. To discover the educational responses that are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy

3. To determine, from the participants' perspectives, how teachers and other learners treat the gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools.

4. To establish how participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools.

5. To identify elements that would form the supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools and develop the said supplementary framework thereafter.

These objectives are linked to the importance of this study to the field of the inclusive education hence the researcher discusses the significance of the study in the next section.

1.6   Significance of the study

The role of education on individuals' mental liberation and individual's functionality in an industrialised society could not be underestimated nor could the need for provision of educational opportunities be overlooked. As Takács (2006) points out, exclusion and discrimination of gender nonconforming learners can lead to school dropout and suicidal thoughts in some learners. Research (e.g., Hillard et al., 2014; Kitchen & Bellini, 2013) maintains that when gender nonconforming learners do not get chances to finish schooling, they face challenges such as lack of job opportunities. Kitchen and Bellini (2013) indicate that due to unresponsive systems, some gender nonconforming individuals end up leading pretentious and unhappy lives. Thus it is worth noting that failure to respond to gender nonconforming learners' needs will have negative impacts on their lives and education. Hence the significance of the current study is linked to the assumptions of the SIP that society and individual reactions toward the out-group and the other have effects on the other's self-esteem and self-concept. This is of outmost importance as learners are expected to stay in schools and complete their education for better future opportunities.

Booth and Ainscow (1998) argue that education does foster principles of equality and socialism. The aim of introducing inclusive education in Namibia was to provide opportunities to all learners. It is therefore important to note that every learner needs to feel safe and valued in order to benefit from these educational opportunities and to freely contribute to the development of the country. Therefore the researcher argues that the present study contributes to the fostering of

tolerance and acceptance as well as the realisation of equity for all learners. As it is motioned above, education is believed to be the key for attaining mental freedom, thus the current study is hoped to raise awareness among educators and other stakeholders to encourage respect of all learners as well as promote social justice for all citizens. Moreover, it is hoped that through a transformative paradigm, the current study had contributed towards the improvement of the learning outcomes for all learners through creation of a safe climate in schools.

The conspicuous lack of studies on gender nonconforming learners in Namibia contributes to the invisibility of these learners through research. In that regard, the researcher argues that this invisibility will have multiple impacts on how the schools respond to gender nonconforming learners. Hence, the present study had contributed to a building up of a body of knowledge on how to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners in Namibia. Additionally, in this study, the researcher has developed a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Moreover, the study was also aimed at informing policy makers on the needs of gender nonconforming learners. This would hopefully help them to rethink the phenomenon of gender nonconformity in Namibian schools and to employ necessary strategies that respond to the needs of gender nonconforming learners accordingly. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing knowledge in the area of inclusion.

Overall, the researcher argues that it was imperative to carry out the current study as it shed light on how the IE policy responds to gender nonconforming learners' needs in an inclusive education context. Moreover, the MoEAC has carried out an assessment on the effectiveness of the IE policy in response to learners with disability in Namibian schools. Teachers and parents

were found to lack awareness on how to access the support services and materials needed by the learners (MoEAC, 2018). Therefore this assessment demonstrates that there is a need to explore inclusion practices in Namibian school especially in regard to issues of gender non conformity. Hence, this study stood to contribute to knowledge of inclusion and improvement in inclusion practices within the Namibian schools.

The current study's relevance is further aligned to the epistemological assumptions of the SIP and the transformative paradigm that knowledge is socially, historically and culturally located. Thus this study contributes to the school communities' knowledge of gender nonconformity issues by highlighting the need for cultural tolerance towards diversity. In response to the strengths of the transformative mixed methods paradigm, the present study produced findings that are not only credible to the educators but also useful to the entire Namibian community. The importance of this study discussed in this section is in relation to the study's assumptions that are discussed in the next section.

1.7   Assumptions of the study

The researcher in this study did not aim to engage in the debates about the origin and causes of gender nonconformity nor did the researcher aimed to look at the immorality and morality of gender nonconformity. Instead, the researcher focused this study on the IE policy's provision for gender nonconforming learners. Therefore the researcher in the current study holds an assumption that exploring the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibia could provide proper information and strategies to be employed for the schools to respond positively to these learners. The researcher further holds the assumptions of the Social Identity Perspective (SIP). The SIP is conceptualised and based on the tenets of the social

identity theory pioneered by the social psychologists Tajfel and Turner in 1979, the identity theory developed more by Stryker in 1977 and othering as a systematic theoretical concept coined by Spivak in 1985. The Social Identity as a component of the SIP emphasises that a portion of an individual's self-concept dependents on the relevance and importance placed on the group membership to which the individual belongs (Hogg et al., 1995).

The concept of gender nonconformity is still an issue which presents mixed reactions among the Namibian nation, thus gender nonconforming people are categorised as the "other" by the large society. The SIP assumes that the classification of groups into "us" and "them" is very important as it helps individuals to make sense of their social world (Hogg et al., 1995). Hence, the researcher in the present study acknowledges that gender nonconforming learners should be accorded a chance to identify positively with support of an inclusive setting within schools for better learning.

The researcher also holds an assumption that a positive regard of gender nonconforming learners will lead to building their positive self-concept. This is assumed to contribute towards these learners' overall wellbeing as they came to embrace their sexual identity without fear of being prejudiced. Moreover, the researcher holds another assumption that developing a supplementary framework for IE policy implementation will offer educators the appropriate strategies to promote acceptance and tolerance of gender nonconforming learners. Therefore the researcher attempted to discover information that could lead to realisation of these assumptions through the research questions presented in the next section.

1.8   Research questions

The current study sought to address the following main research question: *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?*

Sub questions:

The main research question was investigated via five research sub-questions, namely;

1. In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

2. What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?

3. From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

4. How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

5. What elements would form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of the Namibian IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The researcher therefore tried to answer these research questions within the scope of the study described below.

1.9   Delimitation of the study

This study was focused on how the Namibian IE policy responds to gender nonconforming learners. The study was confined to 27 schools with grades 8-12 (see section 4.3) from which 182 teachers were selected in Erongo region. The study also focused on the regional school counsellors, deputy director for SPS, deputy director for DATs and the IE officer at NIED. The study used the SIP as the framework within a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods paradigm to explore the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian schools. The next section presents the limitations of the study.

1.10   Limitations

The researcher had discovered that even though there is copious research done globally on gender nonconforming learners, lack of research studies on the topic in the Namibian context posed a challenge in terms of existing knowledge to guide the current study. Nevertheless the researcher critically reviewed available literature on gender nonconforming learners in other countries (i.e., South Africa, Botswana and Kenya) and a few studies that could be located on the Namibian context to present the status of the inclusion in terms of gender nonconforming learners. The nature of the topic also presented a limitation as some participants refused to participate in the study due to their religious and cultural beliefs about the topic under study. However, the researcher has mitigated this limitation by providing the information sheets to the participants that explains the whole study and benefits for the whole school community. Additionally, the researcher had conducted briefings with the participants to explain the main aim of the study. These efforts seemed to have been successful as only 2.2% of participants for

the questionnaire (Appendix K) did not participate at all. The key terms used in this study are defined in the next section.

1.11 Definition of key terms

Discrimination generally means the act of showing partiality or prejudice toward the other person or a group of people (McGinley, 2010). However, UNESCO defined discrimination in education as any exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, has the effect of impairing equality of treatment in education by limiting any person from accessing education on the basis of inferior standards (UNESCO, 1960). As Glavinic (2010) indicates, when learners are misunderstood they do not perform well in school. Thus, in the context of the current study discrimination refers to practices in schools that do not allow gender nonconforming learners full access to education by exposing them to some form of maltreatment.

Equity: The MoEC (1993) defines equity as provision of special encouragement and support for those who experienced discrimination in the past. The Namibian IE policy, in response to the Namibian constitution, aims at responding to all learners' needs by providing them with equal opportunities and granting them chances to thrive as liberated citizens (MoE, 2014). In line with this aim, the current study uses the term equity to refer to educational provisions that encourage and support diversity among all learners in Namibian schools and promotes respect of all learners irrespective of their sexual orientation.

Gender nonconformity is used by several authors (see, e.g., Collier et al., 2013; Gottschalk, 2003) to refer to a behavioural expression of congenital gender inversion. The term refers to people that do not dress, behave or "fit in" with the gender expectations. It is further defined as

exhibition of behaviour, cultural or psychological traits that do not correspond with traits typically associated with one's sex and having gender expressions that do not conform to gender norms (Gottschalk, 2003). The term gender nonconformity is used within the scope of this study to refer to nonconforming to societal gender expectations through behaviour, presentation, sexual identity or any other means construed as normal by societies. Socially, it is believed that there is a correct way to behave, dress, talk and act as a male or female. Therefore deviation from these societal expected norms and behaviours is regarded as gender nonconformity. In the present study gender nonconformity and **homosexuality** are used interchangeable in few occasions but the researcher prefers to use the former due to its inclusiveness of all learners regardless of their gender identities. The term gender nonconformity also removes the labels attached to homosexuality such as gay and lesbian thus it lessens the stigma associated with these terms from the individuals.

Heteronormativity is termed by Pepper (2015) and Oloka-Onyango (2015) as the assumption of existence of only two genders and that human sexual relations as a natural order should only occur between a man and woman and any other possibility defies the order of nature. This study assumes the above definition to refer to heteronormativity.

As Oloka-Onyango (2015) points out, **homophobia** is difficult to define. Nevertheless, some scholars have defined homophobia as an irrational fear (Mostert et al., 2015) or hatred of gender nonconforming (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender) people (Bowers & Minichiello, 2005). The use of the term h**omophobia** in this study should be understood, based on Haskins (2014) definition, as referring to the general negative attitudes and prejudice against gender

nonconforming people which is manifested as exclusions, taunting, name calling and discrimination.

Homosexuality refers to an intrinsic sexual orientation in a person towards one of their own sex (Jearey-Graham & Macleod, 2015). The current study defines homosexuality in line with Braverman (1973) and Masango (2002) as a predominantly romantic, desire, orientation of sexual need or sexual attractions between members of the same gender.

Inclusive Education: In accordance with UNESCO (2009), the Namibian IE policy defines inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children through increasing participation, reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from the education systems (MoE, 2014).Therefore, inclusion is aiming for acceptance and celebration of diversity among learners. Thus, the term inclusive education is used in the present study to refer to full inclusion of learners in terms of respect, appreciation and recognition of diversity among learners.

The researcher, in relation to Hughes's (2017) writing defines **prejudice** as a cognitive process of reducing individuals to unfavourable social categories where a person judges those individuals as "them". This negative judgment of the "other" happens in the mind of the individual simply because the "other" belongs to a different social group. Hence, prejudice is applied to this study to illustrate the larger community's negative judgment of the gender nonconforming learners as members of a different social group.

Sexual orientation is defined by the American Psychological Association as an enduring pattern of emotions as well as emotional, romantic, and sexual attraction to men, women or both sexes

and refers to person's sense of identity based on those attractions, behaviours and culture (American Psychological Association, 2020). Thus the term **sexual orientation** is used in the current study's context to refer to learners' self-identity as based on sexual or emotional attractions to other people who are of the same sex, opposite sex or to both.

Research (e.g., Hogg et al., 2004; Spears, 2011; Turner & Reynolds, 2001) reveals that the **social identity perspective** is an approach that comprises of social identity theory and self-categorisation theory employed by several researchers to analyse the intergroup relations In the context of the present study the **social identity perspective** refers to a theoretical perspective that comprises of social identity theory, identity theory and othering. This perspective is used in the current study to outline the effects of social groupings on the individual's wellbeing as well as to challenge and advocate for social changes.

Social justice: Murrell (2006) and Vincent (2003) referred to social justice as a disposition toward recognition and eradication of all forms of oppression and differential treatments existing in the practices and policies of institutions. Grant and Agosto (2008) referred to social justice as attributes that bring about the improvement for people's wellbeing and their quality of living. For the purpose of the current study, **social justice** should be understood as attempts in education to promote practices that bring about the socially just outcomes for all learners within the Namibian schools.

Several authors (e.g., Canales, 2000; Holslag, 2015; Jensen, 2011; Staszak, 2008; Zevallos, 2011) borrowed from the original definition of **Othering** by Spivak to describe **Othering** as a practice of transforming differences in the "other" resulting in creation of dichotomies where others are considered different and separate from the in-group henceforth classified as impure,

not normal and not worthy as human beings. The current study assumes the above definition to refer to **Othering** as the process of identifying differences among people and classifying them into groups of us and them. The researcher briefly introduces the methodology used in this study in the next section.

1.12 Research methodology

1.12.1 Research design

Creswell (2012) and Merriam (2009) state that a transformative mixed methods research design is a procedure to collect and analyse data using both qualitative and quantitative methods to understand the research problem and lead to social justice and social changes. The qualitative approach's basis for this study lies in its exploratory nature to social reality and the search for understanding of the lived experience of human beings (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). The researcher also used a quantitative approach to establish how gender nonconforming learners are responded to within the Namibian schools. The quantitative method has its merit within the current study as generalisations can be made about a large population based on the quantitative trends and statistical analyses (Muijs, 2011).

The researcher is inspired and guided by the work of authors such as Conrad and Serlin (2011), Creswell and Plano Clark (2003, 2011) as well as Fraenkel et al. (2012). These authors write that using a mixed method research allows for the compensation of the weakness of the other and capitalisation of the strengths of both methods to lead to a complete understanding and solving of the research problem. Hence, the researcher deemed this research design appropriate to explore the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. The population of the study is discussed briefly in the following sub-section.

1.12.2 Population

The population of this study consisted of the education officers and teachers in Erongo region, the IE Officers at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), the Deputy Director for Special Programmes and Schools and the Deputy Director for Diagnostic, Assessment and Training Services. The sample and sampling procedures used in the study are introduced in the next sub-section.

1.12.3 Sample and sampling procedures

The researcher in this study used purposive criterion and random sampling procedures to obtain two different samples. Research (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, 2017) indicates that purposive criterion sampling is done intentionally with a purpose to select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. Hence, purposive sampling was used to select education officers and deputy directors as they all met the same criteria of being the policy makers and responsible for monitoring of the IE policy implementation.

Gay et al. (2012) define simple random sampling as the basic sampling technique where a group of subjects is selected for study from a larger group. A simple random sample allows for the generalisation of findings and the use of statistical methods to analyse sample results (Cohen et al., 2011; Thomas, 2003). Hence, a simple random sampling was used to select six to seven teachers from each of the 27 schools. This gave a total of 182 teachers who participated in the current study. The instruments used in this study are introduced in the next sub-sections.

1.12.4 Instruments

Baxter and Jack (2008) write that research instruments are strategies and measurement tools designed to collect data on the phenomenon of interest in the study. Two instruments were used in this study, namely a questionnaire (Appendix K) and an interview schedule (Appendix L). These two instruments are briefly introduced below.

1.12.4.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is said by Cohen et al. (2011) to be a widely used and straightforward instrument that allows for data collection without the presence of the researcher. Hence, a questionnaire was deemed useful for this study as it helped the participants to answer questions freely without the researcher's influence on them (Check & Schutt, 2012). Thus, a questionnaire (Appendix K) consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions was distributed directly to 182 teachers. The researcher used a second instrument, the interview schedule (Appendix L) which is introduced in the next sub-section.

1.12.4.2 Individual interviews

Creswell (2012) indicates that interviews are helpful to the study as they lead to obtaining in-depth views on the subject under study by giving the participants a chance to describe detailed personal information. An interview schedule (Appendix L) consisting of open-ended questions was used to gather data from one deputy director for SPS, one deputy director for DATs, one regional school counsellor and one IE officer trough a face-to-face interview. This instrument was found to be beneficial to this study as the researcher had a chance to clarify and make follow-up questions. This clarification has yielded useful information hence the researcher

gained more insight into the gender nonconformity issues in Namibian schools from the educators' point of view. The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder. The two instruments were piloted before they were administered to the main study hence the pilot study is introduced below.

1.12.5 Pilot study

Creswell (2014) emphasises that the researcher should ensure accuracy and credibility of the results. Hence, to ensure validity and reliability of the results of this study, the questionnaire (Appendix K) and the interview schedule (Appendix L) were piloted before they were administered to the main sample of the study. The process of piloting involves testing the main study procedures on a mini-sample to test for feasibility and validity. Due to the nature of the current study, a pilot study was necessary as it determined the contextual sensitivity (Gay et al., 2012; Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015), which was useful to adopt the content of the main study procedures as needed.

The research instruments were administered to a small group of participants (30 teachers and one education officer) in the Erongo Region. The interview schedule (Appendix L) was piloted with one education officer due to a smaller number of education officers in Erongo region. These teachers and the education officer had similar characteristics as the target population hence they were deemed fit to provide relevant information regarding the research instruments. The instruments' items were adjusted as per the results of the pilot study. The procedures used to collect data in this study are introduced in the next sub-section.

1.12.6 Data collection procedures

A letter (Appendix B) to seek for permission to conduct this study was written to the Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Another letter (Appendix F) was written to seek permission from the Regional Education Director of Erongo Region, the school principals and teachers to have access to their schools. All the letters outlined the purpose and intentions of this study. This was done in consistence with Cohen et al. (2011), who maintains that access and acceptance to the research sites are important aspects of the data collection as they offer the researcher opportunities to show their credentials and ethical considerations for the intended research. The questionnaires were distributed to 182 teachers and face-to-face interviews were conducted with four education officers. The researcher introduces the procedures used to analyse data in this study below.

1.12.7 Data analysis

A qualitative data analysis is about making sense of data in terms of the participants' definition of the situations and the phenomenon under study (Cohen et al., 2011). This involves making patterns out of the responses and grouping data into categories to develop themes. The data from the interviews were analysed by writing down the important materials directly from the original source. This helped the researcher to focus on the important materials rather than concentrating on too many details. As Gay et al. (2012) advised, the data were organised into categories, themes and patterns. Additionally, the qualitative data from the questionnaire (Appendix K) were organised into themes and patterns that emerged from the results and literature reviewed. This organisation had helped the researcher to discuss the data easily according to the emerged patterns and themes as well as identified codes.

The quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed using statistical data analysis package software (SPSS). This descriptive statistics allowed for easy and quick interpretation of large data as well as understanding as literature indicates (Belli, 2008; Gay et al., 2012). Descriptive summary statistics such as percentages were used to identify characteristics of the sample to be generalised to the target population. The data are presented in tables and graphs for easy interpretation. The ethical considerations for the study are discussed in the next sub-section.

1.12.8 Ethical considerations

Gay et al. (2012) indicate that research participants are not to be harmed in any way, either physically, mentally or socially and that they participate only if they freely agree to do so. For these and other ethical reasons, the nature of this study was explained to all participants before they participated in the study voluntarily. Participants were further informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any obligation. In accordance with Best and Kahn (2014) and Check and Schutt (2012) to ensure confidentiality of every participant, no real names of the participants, their schools or any form of identification appears in this dissertation or any research report emerging from this study.

The participants were informed that the data to be collected were solely to be used for the purpose of this study. Permission in a form of letters was sought from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the regional director of education, the school principals and teachers to conduct this study. Informed consent was also sought from the participants, after the nature, the purpose and benefits of the study were explained to them. This consent was obtained by way of signing by each participant before taking part in the study. The researcher presents the outline of the thesis in the next section.

1.13 Thesis outline

This thesis is divided into eight chapters as follows:

Chapter one: Introduction and orientation of the study

The current chapter served as an introduction to the study by focusing briefly on education in Namibia before and after independence, as far as inclusive education is concerned. This chapter also gave a brief introduction of the theoretical framework of the study. The chapter further presented the statement of the problem, the purpose and the significance of the study. The chapter also presented the assumptions of the study, the research questions, the delimitation of the study and definitions of terms as well as the limitations of the study. The research methodology is also briefly introduced in this chapter and ethical considerations are explained. Finally, an outline of the thesis and a summary of the main points are presented at the end of the chapter.

Chapter two: Formulation of the social identity perspective as a theoretical framework

The theoretical framework around which this study is framed is discussed in this chapter. The SIP is discussed in terms of historical perspectives and assumptions of social identity theory, identity theory and the supplementary concept of othering as the components that made up the theoretical framework for this study. In this chapter, the researcher presents the strengths of the SIP for an inclusive education study and aligned the SIP to the Namibian IE policy. Moreover, this chapter presents the discussions of the SIP's application to inclusion and social justice studies. The chapter further discusses other studies that employed these theories and the othering concept as a framework for the current study. Further, a critique of the SIP is presented in this chapter followed by the justification why the foregoing perspective was deemed necessary for

the scope of the current study. The researcher concludes this chapter with the conceptual framework of the study and a summary.

Chapter three: Literature Review

This chapter focuses on the relevant literature reviewed in terms of importance of general education and the state of inclusion in Africa and the Namibian education systems. This is done by looking at how different countries' (i.e., South Africa, Kenya and Botswana) education systems adopt for inclusion. It also focused on how education systems support gender nonconforming learners through inclusion. The status of IE in Namibia and the IE policy as well as other educational policies in response to inclusion are discussed in this chapter. The chapter also presented the attitude of African and Namibian communities towards gender nonconformity. The treatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools in Africa and globally is also discussed in this chapter. Educational responses to diversity are discussed last followed by a summary of the chapter.

Chapter four: Research Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher has focused on the methodology employed by the study to understand the research problem and answer the posed research questions. These discussions include the in-depth description of the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, instruments, data collection and analysis of the data as well as ethical considerations. The researcher also justified the use of the convergent parallel transformative mixed methods case study design in the current study. The pilot study, validity and reliability issues are also addressed and the researcher concluded this chapter with a summary.

Chapter five: Presentation, analysis and discussion of results

In this chapter, the researcher presented the data analysis and discussion of research findings. The qualitative data from the interviews and the questionnaire are presented, analysed and discussed first followed by the quantitative data presentation, analysis and discussion. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings of the study.

Chapter six: Discussion of the findings

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the findings of the current study in accordance with literature reviewed, the SIP's assumptions, the study's assumptions and the methodology used in this study. This discussion is done in sections according to the main themes that emerged from the data collected in this study. These themes have corresponded with the themes in literature reviewed for this study. The chapter is concluded with a summary of the main points emerged from the data discussions.

Chapter seven: Development of the Supplementary Framework for Implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy (SFIIEP)

In this chapter, the researcher developed a supplementary framework for the IE policy implementation. This framework is explained in terms of its aims, its position in relation to the legal frameworks in Namibian education discourse and strategies to be used for this framework to be aligned to the IE policy implementation. A summary of this framework in relation to the IE policy is also given in this chapter. The researcher also highlights the outcomes envisioned from the alignment of this framework to the IE policy implementation. The possible limitations of this

framework are also highlighted in this chapter. The chapter is concluded with a summary of the main points that emerged from the presentation of the framework.

Chapter eight: Summary, conclusion and recommendations

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the current study. The chapter also presented the contribution of the study towards the existing body of knowledge in the field of inclusive education and to the researcher's experience. This chapter also serves as the concluding part of the whole study. The researcher presents the summary of the main points discussed in chapter one in the next section.

1.14 Chapter Summary

The researcher introduced the current study in this chapter. The researcher gave a brief discussion of education in Namibia before and after independence, 1990. It is highlighted that education was based on segregation and special arrangements in education were only made for the minority groups. The chapter presents that after the independence of the country in 1990, several reforms have taken place in order to address the inequalities left behind by the apartheid system. It is presented in this chapter that these reforms include educational policies such as the IE policy which is aimed at inclusion of all learners.

The researcher presented the statement of the problem which is concerned with the lack of information about how the IE policy is responding to gender nonconforming learners in schools. Moreover, the statement of the problem pointed out lack of research on how these learners are being treated in Namibian schools within an IE policy context. The researcher also discussed the purpose of the study which was to explore how the Namibian IE policy responds to gender

nonconforming learners. The researcher in this chapter introduced the transformative mixed methods within the SIP framework which is employed for this study with hope to improve inclusion practices in schools with regard to gender nonconforming learners.

The researcher further discusses the significance of the study in terms of contributing to the fostering of tolerance and acceptance as well as the realisation of equity for all learners. The assumptions of the study, the research questions, limitations and delimitations of the study are also discussed in the current chapter. Lastly, the researcher defines the key terms and gave an outline of the thesis. In order to clarify further the concepts and processes discussed in the current chapter and to correctly place the current study within discourse around issues of Inclusive Education, the researcher discusses the Social Identity Perspective as the theoretical framework for this study in the next chapter.
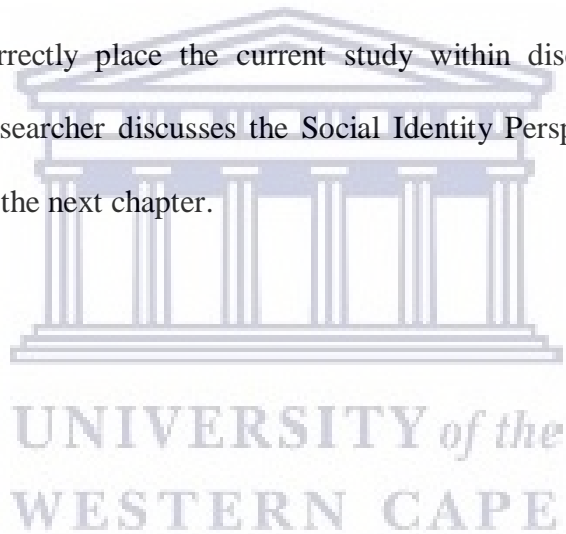
CHAPTER TWO:

FORMULATION OF THE SOCIAL IDENTITY PERSPECTIVE AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

The researcher used the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) to explore the Inclusive Education (IE) policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Thus this chapter presents a review of related literature on the SIP as a theoretical framework for this study. The societal norms of the society within which we socially identify have influences on our behaviour and attitudes towards certain issues. Moreover, as human beings we tend to categorise ourselves into social groups as per these societal norms (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Several authors (e.g., LaFont & Hubbard, 2007; Maletsky, 1998; Shipo, 2010) write that gender nonconformity is one of the issues that most societies, including Namibia, look upon as deviation from the norm. Literature (e.g., Collier et al., 2013; Hogg et al., 1995; McLeod, 2019) indicates that one of the identified effects of social categorisation on the minority groups is the internalisation of discrimination related stress. One can argue that this internalisation of stress can act as a learning barrier for learners. Hence it is of outmost importance to understand how social categorisation can affect individuals. This is envisioned to benefit learners as the schools could be improved through research that addresses learners' needs in schools.

The above discussions demonstrate the need for this study to use the Social Identity Perspective (SIP). Hence the researcher discusses the SIP as the theoretical framework for the study in this chapter. The chapter outlines the historical perspectives and assumptions of the social identity theory, identity theory and othering as the components that made up the SIP as the framework

that guided this study. The researcher further highlighted the relevance of the SIP for this study by discussing other studies that employed these theories and othering concept as a framework for research. These studies demonstrated the applicability of the SIP to a social justice study. Hence, the chapter positioned the Namibian IE policy within the SIP and discussed the application of the said framework to an inclusive study.

The researcher has also highlighted the views that criticise the tenets of the SIP as a framework for research. The researcher has further justified why the foregoing SIP was deemed necessary for the scope of the current study. Lastly, the researcher presents the conceptual framework of the study and concluded this chapter by highlighting the important points presented in the chapter. The researcher presents a detailed discussion of the SIP in the next sections.

2.2   The Social Identity Perspective

In order to explore the responses of the Namibian IE policy toward gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, the researcher has employed the SIP within a transformative mixed methods paradigm. It is important for the researcher to point out at this juncture that several authors (e.g., Chang et al., 2016; Cox & Gallois, 1996a; Hogg et al., 2004; Turner & Reynolds, 2001; Reynolds, Subasic et al., 2017) had employed a social identity perspective made up of different components to study social issues. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has drawn from three components to coin a social identity perspective to explore the responses of the Namibian IE policy toward gender nonconforming learners. Thus the researcher drew from Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory (1979), Stryker's identity theory (1977) and Spivak's concept of othering (1985a) to explore problem under study.

Burke and Stets (2009) argue that when the identity theory and the social identity theory are used side by side in a study, they complement each other and bring out the important principles of each theory. Other scholars such as Hogg et al. (1995) indicate that even though these are two separate theories they both focus on the nature of self in relation to society. The cognitive processes involved in group classification such as social identity, social comparison and social categorisation aspects of the social identity theory, identity theory and the process of othering are overlapping. Hence in the current study, the researcher conceptualises the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) from the social identity theory, identity theory and the othering concept to explore the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The next sub-sections explain the historical perspectives and assumptions of the components that made up this perspective; social identity theory, identity theory as well as the othering concept.

2.3 The historical perspective and assumptions of the social identity theory

2.3.1 Historical perspective of the social identity theory

Weigert (1986) traces the emergence of the identity concept in research back to as early as before the 1900s. However Jenkins (2014) argues that literature on identity dates back as early as the 16th century. For example, John Locke wrote about identity and diversity in "An Essay concerning human understanding" of 1689 while William Shakespeare alluded to identity in his "As you like it" play of 1599 (Jenkins, 2014; Worchel et al., 1998). Literature (e.g., Barker, 2012; Weigert, 1986) further indicates that research and theorising in the three disciplines (sociology, anthropology and psychology) that used identity at the time were focused on self, character and personality concepts. However, it is logical to argue that Locke has set the foundation for exploration of identity and diversity with his "Of identity and diversity" chapter.

He writes that we form identities when in our minds we conclude that two things of the same cannot exist in one place at the same time (Locke, 1689), hence only one thing can exist therefore the other is diverse. In his chapter "Of identity and diversity" Locke further explains how personal identity is formed. The researcher therefore argues that Locke's writing has formed the basis for understanding formations of different identities.

The identity concept became prominent in 1940s when a clinical psychoanalyst Erik Homburger Erikson used the identity as a technical term in his study of the effects of socio-cultural context changes on the youth's ego during World War II (1939-1945) (Jenkins, 2014; Weigert, 1986). According to Jenkins (2014), Erikson interpreted the social reality and human nature through Freud's formation of ethos and egos to formulate "group identity" and "ego identity". Weigert (1986) avers that Erikson's conceptualisation of identity which later formulated into identity society forms the basis for identity theory and social identity theory.

Literature (e.g., Ellemers et al., 2002; Worchel et al., 1998) affirms that scholars such as Erving Goffman 1963, Leon Festinger 1954, Simmel 1900s and George Herbert Mead 1934 are some of the few notable predecessors of the social identity theory. These authors are said to have made a vast contribution to sociological and psychological literature on identity (Ellemers et al., 2002; Jenkins, 2014; Worchel et al., 1998). According to Ellemers et al. (2002), Goffman, building on the identity concept by Erikson, has introduced the phrase "social identity" in his 1963 book titled "Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity".

In 1970s, Tajfel and others have based their work on the intergroup processes on the social identity concept (Stets & Burke, 2014). Further, Turner and Brown used the term social identity in their 1978 work with an effort to simplify Tajfel's ideas of intergroup discrimination

(Ellemers et al., 2002). However, literature (Barker, 2012; Burke & Stets, 2009) indicates that Henri Tajfel was the pioneer of social identity theory. Literature further maintains that Tajfel first proposed the *social identity theory* in the early 1970s. The theory was later developed by Tajfel and Turner in the late 1970s and early 1980s to understand intergroup relations and group processes (Barker, 2012; Ellemers et al., 2002; Jenkins, 2014). It is indicated that several authors using the identity perspective to study different identities, defined identity within the context of their studies. Jenkins (2014) writes that identification is a way in which an individual or collectives are distinguished in their social relations with others. Burke and Stets (2009) defined identity as a set of meanings that defines the individual as a member of a certain group, the role the individual occupies in the society as well as characteristics that make them unique individuals.

The above discussions demonstrate that the social identity theory had been used for several decades in research. Despite the theory being used several decades ago, it is still one of the widely used concepts to study various social justice issues hence contributing to a larger body of knowledge in different disciplines. The above discussions also demonstrate that the researcher can define identity in relation to the context of the current study and link the assumptions of this theory to the exploration of the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. Hence, the next sub-section presents the assumptions of the social identity theory.

2.3.2   Assumptions of the social identity theory

Literature affirms that the social identity theory is based on Tajfel's 1970 experimental study into minimal groups which investigated the intergroup discrimination within these groups (Tajfel, 1970, 1979). The assumptions of this theory are that each individual has a need of a favourable

self-identity and the status of the group to which one belongs is crucial to provide such positive identity (Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The theory further assumes that the classification of groups into "us" and "them" is an important feature of individuals as they attempt to make sense of their social world (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) outlined the three aspects that formed part of the social identity theory. These are the psychological analysis of the cognitive-motivational processes which produce the need for positive social identity, the application of this analysis to the real world situation and the interpersonal-intergroup continuum. The theory further outlines the three cognitive processes involved in evaluation of the other; social categorisation, social identity and social comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The theory posits that these cognitive processes are necessary for human beings to function as belonging to the in-group or out-group (Jenkins, 2014; Islam, 2014; Tajfel, 1970; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The theory assumes that these processes, influenced by political powers and social practices, have an impact on human social behaviours and actions (Islam, 2014; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The social identity theory posits that through the process of social categorisation, individuals identify themselves into groups of "us and them" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Then through the social identification, the individual identifies with an in- group more openly as they feel that the norms and attitudes of the members of this group are compatible with theirs and are worthy of emulating (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The individual then adopts the identity (race, gender, sexual or any other identity) of the group to which the individual has categorised with and their self-esteem becomes tied up with group membership (McLeod, 2019; Rubin & Hewstone, 1998; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Worchel at al., 1998).

The social identity theory further assumes that after the social categorisation the social comparison then takes place (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Through social comparison the individual appraises themselves in comparison with the "other" (Hogg, 2001). Thus own self-concept and social concept of the "other" becomes meshed with the perceptions of group members (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg, 2001). In regard to the aforementioned, it is logical to conclude that there is a link between the psychological aspects of the person and their representation of the self and social groups in which the self is embedded.

Tajfel (1970) asserts that the social categorisation of people into distinct groups will lead to intergroup behaviour in which the in-group members are favoured over the out-group members. Moreover, Tajfel (1979) maintains that the individuals see their group as superior to the out-group which will lead to prejudice. He further states that with power to influence the out-group, this feeling of superiority will lead to discrimination of the "other". According to Hardiman et al. (2007) the out group members are victimised and exploited by some systems and institutions. Thus once they come to acknowledge and question the experience and negative effects of being oppressed the out group members start to resist (Hardiman et al., 1997). This is the stage where people start to question the previously accepted "truths" such as that gender nonconformity is ungodly, unAfrican and unacceptable.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) argue that the attitudes and actions of group members are predicted by the interaction between the need for positive identity, collective definition of group members and perception and understanding of the social structure of the intergroup relationships. Tajfel and Turner (1979) further maintain that social groups are important sources of pride and the self for group members as they give individuals a sense of social identity (McLeod, 2019; Rubin &

Hewstone, 1998). As a result, group members will adopt different strategies to achieve positive social identity. The theory hypothesised that if the in-group members feel that their superiority is being threatened they will seek to find the negative aspect of the out-group members to enhance their self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This might lead to the in-group members being highly discriminatory and favouritism. On the other hand, the out-group might try to collectively or individual mobilise social acceptance if they feel that their social status is being treated as illegitimate (Ellemers et al., 2002).

Trepe (2006) building on social identity theory argues that people are aware and evaluate others in terms of belonging to either the "in-group or out-group" social groups. Further, Cox and Gallois (1996a) employing the social identity theory to examine models of identity development indicate that through social categorisation, social identity and social comparison, people develop a tendency to discriminate. In line with the above arguments, Worchel et al. (1998) state that when people believe that an individual can only belong to a certain group these people tend to have a discriminating attitude towards the out-group members. In relation to the inclusive education, the assumptions discussed above demonstrate the importance of understanding the differences among the learners in order to avoid prejudice and discrimination.

In this study, the social identity theory' assumptions are linked to the other two components (identity theory and othering) of the SIP hence, the researcher presents the historical perspectives and assumptions of the identity theory in the next sub-sections.

2.4 The historical perspectives and assumptions of the identity theory

2.4.1 The historical perspectives of the identity theory

The researcher mentioned earlier in section 2.3.1 that literature has traced social identity theory and the identity theory back to the work of Erikson since the 1930s. However, further review of the literature for this study pointed out that the notion of identity dates back further than the 1930s. According to Weigert (1986) Erikson's scholarly studies in the late 1930s have introduced the identity concept into a technical term and most studies on identity then followed. However, literature (Barker, 2012; Brown, 2000) indicates that several work of scholars such as William James in 1890, Charles Horton Cooley in 1900s, George Herbert Mead in 1934, and others have all contributed toward the formation of identity theory. Research (see Stets & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Weigert, 1986) also indicates that Stryker borrowing from Erikson's work but leaning more on George Herbert Mead introduced the term identity theory in his work of 1968. Literature indicates that this theory emerged as the most influential theory of self over decades (Barker, 2012; Brown, 2000; Burke, 2004).

The literature reviewed for this study affirms that the identity theory became more prominent when it was further developed by Stryker in 1977 based on Stryker and colleagues' structural symbolic interactionism research programme which focused on the impact of social structures on self and the impact of self on behaviour (Burke, 2004; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stets et al., 2018; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Weigert, 1986). Over decades, notable scholars such as Burke, Turner and others further expanded the theory into theories on specific identities such as identity control theory, self-conceptualisation theory and others. However for the purpose of the present study the researcher had focused on the hypothesised underlying structure of identity to determine the

effects of identity on self-concept and self-esteem. These hypothesised structures are in relation to the role of the Namibian IE policy in responding to all learners including gender nonconforming learners. On the basis of the above argument, the researcher presents the assumptions of the identity theory in the next sub-section.

2.4.2   The assumptions of the identity theory

Leary and Tangney (2012) indicate that Erikson's work of 1951 defines identity as a way of making sense of some aspects of self-concept and applying a set of meanings to define who one is in certain social situations. The identity theory like the social identity theory focuses on socio-cognitive processes with more emphasis on behaviour, self-verification, dissonance reduction and definition of the situation. Further the identity theory focuses on the self as comprises of different roles the individual has in the society (Burke & Stryker, 2000; Stets et al., 2018). The identity theory's main assumption is that during the identity verification, the conformity between meanings in perceptual input and the meanings in the identity standard have an effect on the individual behaviour (Burke, 1991, 2004; Stets & Cater, 2012).

Burke (1991) writes that the identity theory maintains that identities are sets of meanings that individuals hold for themselves as members of a social group. These meanings constitute the identity standard for the individual. The theory also posits that once one's standard is matched with the self-perceptions, it is then taken that the individual is doing fine (Hogg et al., 1995; Stryker, 1977). This then in turn forms the groups as an individual identifies with others of the same characters (Stets & Cater, 2012). The theory further assumes that when the individuals verify themselves as group members they are either rejected or accepted based on their similarities with or differences from the majority of the group members (Stryker, 1977). In

addition, the identity theory maintains that the individual continually seeks to confirm self-views and will work hard to maintain the situations and relationships that lead to self-verification (Burke et al., 2007). Self-verification is said to be crucial as it provides an emotional anchor that helps the individual to be less vulnerable in unfavourable life events (Burke et al., 2007; Stryker, 1977).

Burke (1991) argues that the individual takes purposive actions to match his perceptions to the standard that one holds. It is assumed that identity is threatened when others do not support one's behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2009). An individual's behaviour is said to mirror the group perceptions thus their actions are unison (Hogg et al., 1995). Therefore the individual behaves in a certain manner according to the perception of the group to keep their identity standards. In relation to the axiology assumptions of the transformative paradigm used in this study, Carter (2013) maintains that morals determine how individuals behave when alone, in group and when they are in group of members who pressure them into behaving immoral. According to the identity theory these behaviours in turn will not only have effects on the self-esteem of the individual but also on self-efficacy.

Burke (1991, 1996) writes that emotional attachment is formed among the group members and the environment is a social interaction in which others' behaviour will affect an individual. However, Castells (2004) argue that religious revelations, personal fantasies, power apparatus, social and cultural structures function as the building materials to construct meaning. The individual, social groups and societies then process these building materials by realigning them according to culture and social determinations (Castells, 1997: p7). Burke (2004) is of the opinion that culture defines our positions within the social structures on which identities are tied.

In other words, individuals, social groups and society identity meanings construction is based on their cultural and social perspectives.

Leary and Tangney (2012) argue that the person's perspective of self is not influenced by culture but by context. They maintain that a little shift in the context will influence the individual's perspective of "us". However they pointed out that the context cannot change the self-identity but shapes it as it develops. In relation to inclusion of gender nonconforming learners in all areas of education, the context, culture and religion play a role on how educators respond to these learners. Hence the aforementioned assumptions are relevant to an inclusive education study. These assumptions are tied up to the assumptions of the othering concept that are to be discussed in the next sub-sections together with the historical perspective of othering.

2.5   The historical perspective and assumptions of Othering

2.5.1   The historical perspectives of Othering

Spivak Gayatri Chakravorty first coined othering as a systematic theoretical concept in 1985. Spivak describes how the formation of the "others" under unequal conditions takes place. She explains how by assigning inferiority status to the "other" as the colonised gives the coloniser the "Other" power over the "other" (Spivak, 1985a, 1985b). The othering concept is defined as an action by which an individual or group becomes mentally classified in somebody's mind as "not one of us" (Spivak, 1985b). A study by Canales (2000) refers to othering as a process by which individuals name and mark those deemed different from oneself. According to Dervin (2012) and Jensen (2011) through othering people construct sameness and differences as well as affirm their

identities. These processes lead to formation of groups based on these constructed characteristics and differences.

Literature (e.g., Borrero et al., 2012; Dervin, 2012) indicates that research on othering has its foundation in a broader range of fields. Scholars from branches such as anthropology, sociology and psychology have all been engaged in research on othering. Further, in search for relevant literature on othering for the current study, the researcher discovered that there is a plethora of studies employing othering to address different social issues including race, gender and sexual orientation. For instance, Borrero et al. (2012) indicate that academic researchers have contributed to the study of othering literature by exploring issues of racial, sexual and ethnic identity. Further the creation of "us" and "them" has also been focused on in the social sciences studies (Borrero et al., 2012; Dervin, 2012).

Scholars such as Crenshaw (1989, 1991) have conceptualised intersectionality to explore the race and gender dimension of violence against women of colour with a notion of othering. Crenshaw outlined how women of colour were categorised as the other by being discriminated and oppressed in terms of law practices as compared to white women. Collins (1989) has also employed othering in the feminist theory to describe the interlocking systems of oppression and outline the impact of oppression on the other. Elsrud (2008) and Tanyas (2016) building on othering report that immigrants in Sweden and Turkey were accorded a negative cultural and ethnicity positions as opposed to natives of the said countries. They indicated how the process of othering has uplifted and kept the cultural selves into a favourable position. Therefore, othering functions as a process of segregation. However, in relation to inclusive education, othering could

also function as a tool for positive identification. The assumptions of the othering are presented in the next sub-section.

2.5.2 The assumptions of Othering

Zevallos (2011) indicates that otherness is how the societies establish and identify social categories. It is thus assumed that deviation from the societies' expectations and norms is seen by the society as the "other" of law-abiding society (Zevallos, 2011). As Elsrud (2008) claims, the processes of othering in any situation have one common aim which is to create the "other". Staszak (2008) elaborates that the "other" divides people into two groups where one group is valued and is the norm, while the other is devalued and susceptible to discrimination. Similarly, other researchers (Barter-Godfrey & Taket, 2009; Spivak, 1985b) state that othering is a form of discrimination as it leads to naming and grouping of people according to individual attributes. It is considered to be a form of discrimination (Barter-Godfrey & Taket, 2009; Staszak, 2008) as it categorises people as into normal and not like us. As Canales (2000) writes, through the process of societal organisation and disorganisation, the identities of those defined as the other are created and maintained. In terms of the current study, one can argue that gender nonconformity becomes the "other" identity as it deemed different from the norm.

Research (e.g., Canales, 2000; Epstein et al., 2000; Powell & Menendian, 2016) holds that during the societal process of organising people into social groups a myth about the origin of the group is created. Consequently, the real capacities of the group members are judged against this mythical norm (Canales, 2000). In terms of gender nonconformity, this mythical norm is prominent as the society believes that gender nonconformity is unethical and ungodly. Research (e.g., Epstein et al., 2000; Powell & Menendian, 2016) further indicates that group members are

expected to conform to a ritual of societal perceived behaviour. Research (e.g., Gillespie, 2007; Powell & Menendian, 2016) maintains that unrest occurs within the group that support the uniformity and conformity ideology once the social order is threatened by what is deemed deviant thus the group will make an effort to reorganise the social structure back to the norm.

Research (e.g., Brons, 2015; Canales, 2000; Gillespie, 2007) further asserts that once an individual's behaviour is perceived as against the social norms their identity is defined on the basis of being a threat to the social order and looked upon as not human. The other's identity is then perceived as spoiled by the attributed behaviour (Brons, 2015; Canales, 2000) thus it becomes difficult for fully social acceptance to take place. Stereotyping of the other is said to deepen the separation between the self and the other which leads to exclusion of the other as the self lacks understanding of the other's world (Canales, 2000).

The researcher emphasises, on the basis of the above discussions, the need for the schools to make efforts to respond positively to all learners in order to prevent negative othering of gender nonconforming learners in schools. Hence, the researcher interprets the SIP components; social identity theory, identity theory and othering, in relation to the current study in the next section.

2.6   Social categorisation and othering in relation to the study

The tenets of the social identity perspective's components mentioned in the discussions of these components are useful in highlighting the need for educators to embrace and show positive regard of the gender nonconforming learners. This was envisaged to promote positive identity for these learners and lead to better performance in school. Shelby (2005, as cited in Papish, 2015) indicates that group members experience the feeling of solidarity when they share a common

goal. Literature (e.g., Burke et al., 2007; Castells, 2004) indicates that the in-group cohesiveness increases through identification with a certain group. In the context of the current study, the aforementioned view has implications on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners. The researcher emphasises that learners need to identify with groups that match their characters to attain group cohesiveness for better learning.

Hall (1997) claims that culture gives meaning to things by defining clear differences between them. Hall further points out that these differences assign positions to things thus differences in cultural expected norms become fundamental to cultural meaning. Several scholars (e.g., Collins, 2000; Epstein et al., 2000; Powell & Menendian, 2016) demonstrate how the system of categorisation has consequences on the treatment of the other. They indicate that being part of a group affects how one views others and behaves towards them.

The researcher argues that individuals' feelings about a certain group will be determined by how these individuals have classified those group members and what cultural expectations one has of that particular group. Hence, the researcher reasons that differences are needed as they define each person as a unique individual. Canales (2000) purports that instead of individuals to react to the "other" on the basis of the other's perception of their world, the individual reacts based on established myths and stereotypes. Canales further reveals that people fail to hear others' voices that are not familiar to their perceived norms and tend to misinterpret their actions. Thus the researcher in the present study takes a position that the schools, guided by the IE policy, should advocate for respect and acceptance of differences in terms of gender identities among learners.

Kalny (2009) and Stahl (2016) caution that cultural beliefs in combination with othering and unequal power relations will lead to denial of human rights for certain groups. In support of the above idea, Browne (2007) purports that sexuality is continually negotiated in relation to power thus rendering heterosexuality a norm. Equally, some authors (e.g., Hall, 1997; Hansel, 2011; Kalny, 2009; Stahl, 2018) point out that the act of stereotyping sets boundaries between the normal and deviant and what is acceptable and the "other". In line with the above view, Dervin (2012) claims that the cognitive orders of stereotyping that people form and learnt in their groups guide their behaviours in interactions with the "other".

On the basis of the above discussions, the present study stood to explore how the IE policy responds to gender nonconforming learners. This exploration was hoped to provide information for the school communities which is necessary for the improvement of inclusion practices and promotion of acceptance of all learners in Namibian schools.

In a study by Adkins (2000) it is discovered that gender nonconforming people were positioned into groups with different ascribed identities thus othered. They were expected to experience work differently and behave as such. Browne (2007), employing the othering concept to explore the recreation of heterosexual spaces, wrote that the "others" were considered invisible and out of place. Browne argues that heteronormalising othering process can take diverse forms that can be slippery and thus it will be overlooked and ignored. In that regard, Powell and Menendian (2016) argue that it is needed to have an inclusive society in order to improve the well-being of everyone. They argue that othering could be addressed through pluralism in democracy. This argument calls for the societies to value social diversity and respect differences among the citizens. In agreement with Powell and Menendian (2016), the researcher envisions the

aforementioned to provide space for tolerance, acceptance and accommodation of differences as well as support for creation of new inclusive narratives, identities and structures. The researcher positions these interpretations within the relevance of the SIP to the current study by discussing this perspective's strengths and applicability to an inclusive education study in the next section.

2.7   Strengths and application of the SIP for an IE study

The strengths of the SIP in social justice and inclusion research lies in its emphasis of the need for favourable self-identity and the effects of such identification on the self-concept and self-esteem of an individual (Burke, 2004; Dervin, 2012; Hogg, 2001; Kumashiro, 2000; Stets & Carter, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The SIP's assumptions that the way an individual is perceived by others will influence feelings of self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is one important fact of SIP in view of the current study.

Research (see Stets & Carter, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) further shows that the SIP posits that the self-categorisation process allows a person to classify and categorise themselves with the people of same characters, attitudes, norms and perceptions. Hence, we favour people with whom we share characteristics regardless of their relations to us. Through these categorisations individuals with the same characteristics form the in-group and those with different characteristics are classified as the out-group. The implications of the above views for inclusion within the schools are that learners do identify with certain groups within the school community and these identities are of outmost importance to them.

Papish (2015) and Burke (1991) note that identifying with a certain group helps the individuals to surpass victimisation imposed on them by the in-group and fight oppression. Burke (2004)

asserts that identity is not a trait or a state of an individual but a continuous process. Moreover, Burke et al. (2007) write that individuals work to maintain relationships and situations in which they are accepted and are allowed to be who they are. In relation to the above view, another relevance of SIP to the present study lies in its assumption that self-verification provides an individual with an emotional anchor which is useful for resilience in cases when the person encounters stressful life events (Burke et al., 2007). It could be interpreted from the above discussions that the application of SIP to the current study has highlighted the need for individuals to be understood in terms of their own beliefs and feelings for better emotional growth. This argument has relevance to the current study as the researcher hoped for the study to ensure positive acceptance of gender nonconforming learners for the establishment of better care and support structures within the Namibian schools.

The SIP involves analysing the impact of belonging to a certain group on the individual's self-worth. This could be interpreted that once some learners are seen as not fit to belong, their self-worth will be affected thus they will develop feelings of low self-worth. Literature (e.g., Brown, 2016, 2017; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015) has demonstrated that once learners are made to feel worthless they perform poorly at school. It is also indicated that when one's identity is deemed not fit for social norms this can lead to stress. Therefore, in terms of an inclusive education study, the assumptions of the SIP are of essence by outlining the importance of identifying with a certain group and the effects of such on one's emotions, self-esteem and self-worthy.

The SIP provided a methodological framework to the present study as it focuses on the world views of a transformative paradigm assumptions. This perspective responds to the transformative

mixed methods paradigm's assumptions that the individuals' views of realities are social constructed (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mertens, 2007). The SIP responds to this paradigm by acknowledging that culture and society influence the individual's beliefs of what is normal and not (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003). It further responds to the ontological assumptions of the transformative paradigm by trying to determine which reality can bring understanding of gender nonconformity and challenge the status quo for social justice (Merriam, 2009). Hence the SIP fits the methodological transformative stance that this study took in order to address the main research question: How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The SIP was therefore relevant to this study by outlining (Burke, 2004) how culture, religion, social expectations and other people around us influence our experiences. This perspective further relates to ontological assumptions of this study by demonstrating that we learn of the social categories and their meanings and expectations from others. The SIP within the transformative mixed methods paradigm has strengthened the current study's position that our interests and values define what we believe to be true; gender nonconformity (Meterns, 2007; Taylor et al., 2012). Moreover, in relation to a transformative mixed methods paradigm, this perspective provided a lens through which the current study applied the necessary procedures to construct knowledge that was hoped to bring about improvement of inclusive practices in the Namibian schools.

The researcher acknowledges the axiology assumptions of the transformative paradigm that individuals have their rights to embrace their cultural beliefs in dealing with gender nonconformity. Hence, tying the identities to culture, social and people's influence on behaviour

makes the SIP relevant to the current study as it looked into incorporating strategies to bring about understanding of gender nonconformity. In line with the aims of the present study, Kumashiro (2002) writes that schools should be affirming spaces within which "otherness" is embraced. He cautions that rather than assuming that all learners are heterosexual, teachers should acknowledge that learners do bring sexual diversity into the classrooms and they should teach to these diversities. Since the assumptions held by SIP are focusing on several human identities, it could be deduced that the SIP aims for human development and empowerment for different social groups. Thus this perspective provided a holistic framework for understanding the diversity presented within an inclusive education setting.

The famously quoted (Brown, 2017; Francis et al., 2017; Maletsky, 1998) gay bashings through insults and threats towards gay and lesbian people by Namibian political leaders underline their feelings toward gender nonconformity as a perverted behaviour and a disease that can be cured. The researcher argues that these gay bashings by the Namibian politicians could be transmitted to the learners in schools and they might manifest themselves in a form of mistreatment. Thus, the SIP provided a framework through which to demonstrate how these beliefs can be transformed by research for the whole community to respond positively towards gender nonconformity. The SIP helped the researcher in the current study to demonstrate the impact of IE policies on the school community by outlining the importance of accepting the "other". The researcher hoped that this would make the Namibian people more caring and compassionate to the "other" within the school community and culture.

As Namibia became independent and strove for the realisation of human rights, understanding of one's rights to freedom of sexual expression becomes a challenge to the traditional norms of the

social structure. Inclusivity calls upon educators to create environments in which perceived differences are valued, respected and included rather than be cause for exclusion. In essence of SIP, the researcher hoped for the society members to understand the other's perception through empathy. In terms of gender nonconformity, the educators should attain informed empathy in order to respond positively to the needs of gender nonconforming learners.

Kumashiro (2000) is of the opinion that teaching the privileged about the other will not necessarily guarantee empathy. He cautions that people can display feelings that do not reflect intentions thus the self will still remain privileged. Nevertheless, Canales (2000) points out that othering could be used as a tool to achieve empowerment instead of being a tool for segregation. Thus in agreement with the above discussions the researcher applied the SIP to this study and demonstrated that transformative relationships could happen when there is inclusionary othering by understanding the other's world from their perspective.

Research (e.g., Borrero et al. 2012; Kumashiro, 2000)) points out that the social events and experiences of the individual have an effect on the socio-cognitive processes. Within the frame of SIP, the current study borrows from MacNeil et al. (2009) and Bronfenbrenner (1994) to note that experiences of different reactions toward gender nonconformity within our environments can have critical psychological effects on the learners. Bronfenbrenner's social ecology model demonstrates how the individual is affected by what is going on around them. Thus the present study acknowledges that all society members are expected to react in certain manners toward different issues based on their social experiences. The SIP is then applied in the current study to highlight the importance of positive attitudes towards gender nonconformity. It is also applied to identify the social constructed truths and realities that can bring about social changes.

Epstein et al. (2000) observe that people try to avoid bad publicity that even there might be individuals within the system with power to effect change they remain silent for fear of creating bad publicity. Thus, the researcher argues that it is important for individuals to recognise differences between the self and the "other" in a positive manner. The aim of this study is not to advocate for doing away with the "other", but the researcher hopes for the societies to come to know the "others" and understand the world as it is through others' experiences and perspectives (Canales, 2000; Epstein et al., 2000). Therefore by employing the SIP the researcher anticipated that the school communities will come to understand the gender nonconforming learners and value them as members of this nation.

The researcher reasons that it is worth acknowledging Ashforth and Mael (1989) who wrote that regardless of how much the group members are disliked by the society and how painful it is for them to be affiliated to the out-group, identification can persist tenaciously. In reference to gender nonconformity, the researcher argues that there is a need to understand that regardless of how much the society expresses its disapproval, once identity is assumed one cannot change their identity not even to conform to societal norms. Moreover, education is believed to be a tool for mental liberation, thus there is a need to engage in research that fosters tolerance and advocates for acceptance of the perceived other. Therefore the researcher envisioned the usefulness of SIP in the current study as to advocate for social changes and to achieve democratic rights for all.

The researcher hoped that in exploring the current situation of educational inclusion for all from a SIP view could render a lens for the educators and policy makers to understand the need for

positive educational response toward gender nonconforming learners. This was hoped to bring about changes within schools that advocates for inclusive sex education as well as lead to establishment of strategic planning toward the current issue in Namibian schools. The researcher therefore hoped that employing the SIP will demonstrate how policies could function as a vehicle through which the education system addresses differences in education to realise the idea of inclusion in schools.

The SIP holds an essential characteristic for this study as it emphasises recognition of differences (Collins, 2000; Cox & Gallois, 1996b; Hall, 1997). This is an important aspect for the current study as it focuses on promotion of practices that recognise differences within the Namibian education institutions. The researcher hoped that utilising the SIP would be beneficial to the study as this perspective acts as a lens through which to view issues of gender nonconforming learners and differences in education from different yet equal valuable perspectives of social identity theory, identity theory and othering.

The researcher therefore draws implications of this framework for inclusion education policy as that to restructure the schools' culture and environments to value diversity (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Mertens, 2007). Therefore, it is against the aforementioned tenets that the researcher deemed the underlying principles of the SIP: social identity theory, identity theory and the othering concept, necessary in the current study to bring about individual emancipation and empowerment. The researcher hoped for the SIP to demonstrate that othering and self-identification can as well lead to self-empowerment if these processes are not used to focus on the negative traits of the "other". Therefore, on the basis of the foregoing arguments, the researcher envisioned the principles of the SIP as relevant to underpin the current study in

achieving transformation of school communities as well as foster embracement of diversities within the education institutions in Namibia.

The discussions in this section demonstrate the strengths and applicability of SIP to an inclusive education study. However, the researcher deemed it necessary to highlight some of critical assessments regarding the use of this perspective in research. Hence the next section presents the critique of the SIP.

2.8   Critique of social identity perspective

The purpose of the current study was to explore how the IE policy is responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The study was hoped to discover strategies to foster tolerance and acceptance of all learners in Namibian schools. It was further hoped for the study to advocate for the schools to grant chances to all learners to learn in a safer environment. The reviewed literature on the SIP's components (social identity theory, identity theory and othering) demonstrated how this framework is ideal for exploring how the IE policy should be utilised to attain social justice in education through inclusive practices. However, as Brown (2000) cautions, just as with any theoretical perspective that has a place in generation of lager quantity of research, the SIP also has some conceptual ambiguities.

The theories that made up the components of the SIP have evolved into various theories of different identities which led to different interpretations and applications of the original assumptions (Burke, 2004; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Burke & Stets, 2009; Weigert, 1986). A major conceptual concern for the current study was the SIP's hypothesis that intergroup attitudes can be changed by redrawing the social boundaries and thus de-categorising the social groups

(Burke, 1991, 2004; Stets & Cater, 2012). This assumption had implications for the current study as sexual orientation is not merely a social identity which can be taken up and be given up at a whim. Applying this assumption to real life situations such as sexual orientation could make this perspective conceptual inapt in the context of the current study.

Another SIP's weakness might lie in its emphasis of the "other" as this might function as a form of classifying gender nonconforming learners as a separate group thus failing to include them. Additionally, this framework places emphasis on individual prejudice and the interpersonal harassment but the current study was aimed at focusing on group treatment rather than on individual treatment. Further, Brown (2000) criticised this perspective on its inability to establish a clear link between self-esteem and intergroup bias. However, authors such as Martiny and Rubin (2016), in favour of the self-esteem hypothesis, have provided a more advanced elaboration of the hypothesis thus making it easy for researchers to expand on it.

In addition to the above realisation, Brown (2000) asserts that the attempts of this perspective to focus on the negative impacts of social grouping on the other fail to explain the affective aspects of behaviour in cases of extreme hostility such as homophobic killings. However, it should be noted that the researcher used the SIP to focus on how the IE policy addresses gender nonconforming learners based on their sexual orientation. This perspective was also employed to enhance the educators' understanding of the importance of positive self-identity. Additionally, the SIP was used to discover possible strategies to care and support gender nonconforming learners. Therefore, in the next section, the researcher justifies why the social identity perspective was the right theoretical framework to be applied to the present study.

2.9   Justifications of the social identity perspective for an inclusive education study

There is empirical evidence that a perspective from a point of social identity has proven to be applicable in studying social issues across various fields of studies. Apart from studies referenced within this study's literature, Rogers et al. (2015) have drawn from an identity perspective to investigate the relationship between racial and gender identity among black male teenagers. They have discovered that being accorded a favourable racial and gender identity had contributed to higher levels of psychological well-being and academic adjustment among learners. Additionally, Tomiri et al. (2016) also used the notion of identity to study the perceptions on identity formation, identity practices and identity transitions as well as implications of these identities on HIV prevention among homosexual males. Their study discovered that men who have sex with other men had to hide their sexual identity due to family and community disapproval, harassment, violence as well as exclusion. This had put them at risk of contracting HIV as they experienced poor psychosocial health and could not seek medical assistance due to stigma towards homosexuality. These results highlight the important aspect of a need for individuals to self-identify for better psychological well-being.

Chang et al. (2016) have used a SIP to determine the role of cultural norms on depression symptoms expression among Chinese people. They discovered that strong identification with the culture had affected the way these participants had expressed symptoms of depression. Cultural norms led people to express somatic symptoms of depression while they suppressed emotional expressions (Chang et al., 2016). Their results demonstrate the effects of identifying with a certain group as well as the effects of cultural norms and expectations on the behaviour of the community members.

Researchers such as Reynolds, Lee, et al. (2017) have also employed a social identity perspective to investigate the effects of school climate and social identification on the academic achievement and how the social identification determines the school culture. They demonstrated that identifying with the school had a significant effect on learner achievement. Another study by Reynolds, Subasic, et al. (2017) has used the social identity perspective to determine how intergroup relationship is perceived, when does it change and how does it change. They demonstrated how prejudice and social changes are interdependent as both are outcomes of group processes and intergroup dynamics that position people from different groups in a particular social relationship. These studies discussed above demonstrate how a social identity perspective could be applied to different social issues to demonstrate the effects of social exclusion, disapproval, harassment and violence toward people that are deemed different as well as how this perspective could be used to achieve social change.

The researcher therefore argues that in addition to literature discussed on SIP in the current study, the above discussion provides ample evidence that this perspective's position in a vast amount of research demonstrates its accommodation for different interpretations in different contexts. Additionally, the researcher demonstrated how SIP's strengths outlined above (see section 2.7) outweighed the perspective's shortcomings. Moreover, in agreement with Armstrong et al. (2011a), the researcher in the current study recognises that the use of social identity perspective questions the ability of the inclusive process for a truly transformative approach to educational change at both school and the whole education system level. The researcher further acknowledges that the focusing of the argument on the excluded groups fragments the inclusion and reinforces the concept of "them" as a problem due to their differences. However, it should be

noted that full inclusion can only be realised through acknowledgement and acceptance of differences among learners.

Hence, it is evident from the literature discussed in this chapter that social identity theory, identity theory and othering (SIP) presented a unified lens to look at the IE policy responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The SIP is seen as a framework that is committed to addressing negative effects of group identification, the negative regard and inferior status that society collectively accord to the "other". Furthermore given the fact that gender nonconformity is regarded as unethical and it is not recognised as an identity worth of acknowledgment, there is a need to raise awareness of the current laws on human rights and the pledge for provision of education free from discrimination. Most notably, the emphasis of positive identity and feeling of self-worth (Burke, 2004; Dervin, 2012; Hogg, 2001; Kumashiro, 2000; Spivak, 1985; Stets & Carter, 2012; Stryker, 1977; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) attached to the assumptions of the components of the SIP are of outmost importance for this study.

The SIP is appropriate for the current study as the researcher sees it as a transformative approach to address diversity and inclusion in education. Accordingly, the researcher acknowledges the role of the SIP in emancipating, not only the gender nonconforming learners, but also the larger society from the oppressive mentalities. Additionally, the researcher acknowledges the role of SIP in facilitating the researcher's understanding of how the schools are responding to gender nonconforming learners. The SIP also played an important role for the researcher to identify strategies that could be employed for the schools to respond positively and care for gender nonconforming learners. In that regard, this perspective helped the researcher to gain understanding that was needed for the development of the Supplementary Framework for

Implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy (SFIIEP) hence it contributed to the expansion of the researcher's knowledge. Therefore, the researcher presents a conceptual framework of this study in the next section.

2.10   Conceptual framework of the study

The conceptual framework of the current study is drawn from the main concepts defined and discussed in the study's literature (see figure 2.1). Inclusion in education is deemed to be an answer to doing away with inequalities within education systems. It is further believed to foster tolerance and lead to acceptance of differences. In that regard, the discussed literature holds that the Namibian IE policy aims to address the needs of all learners in schools, hence it should explicitly address gender nonconformity issues. The researcher points out that failure to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners will lead to exclusion and their mistreatment in schools.

The literature of the current study (e.g., Collins, 2000; Epstein et al., 2000; Hansel, 2011; Hillard et al., 2014; Kitchen & Bellini, 2013; Powell & Menendian, 2016; Stryker, 1977; Spivak, 1985a; Takács, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) clearly demonstrates that categorisation of people into "other" that is different from the perceived ideal leads to exclusion of the other people and deems them naturally unfit to be citizens. Research (see Hillard et al., 2014; Kitchen & Bellini, 2013; Takács, 2006) further show that exclusion and discrimination of gender nonconforming learners lead to a magnitude of life challenges including school dropout, suicidal thoughts and lack of chances to finish schooling which leads to further challenges such as lack of job opportunities as well as end up leading pretentious, unhappy lives. On a different note, literature claims that othering could be used in an inclusive manner to promote understanding of the other (Canales,

2000; Collins, 1989). The current study therefore adopts a conceptual framework of SIP which is transformative in nature within an inclusion setting for responding to gender nonconforming learners (see figure 2.1).

The researcher believes that this conceptual framework had contributed towards realisation of inclusive responses to gender nonconforming learners. This is hoped to lead to safer learning environments, improved self-esteem and overall well-being of learners as well as contribute to better academic performance. This conceptual framework (see figure 2.1) also helped to outline the theories and methodological approach used in carrying out the current study. Additionally, this conceptual framework made a contribution towards the body of knowledge in regards to application of SIP within an inclusive education study. Thus this framework could also be applied to other studies on inclusion and social justice but not only to gender nonconformity issues. For better understanding and interpretation of the said conceptual framework, the following diagram presents a visual presentation of the conceptual framework of this study.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual framework of the study
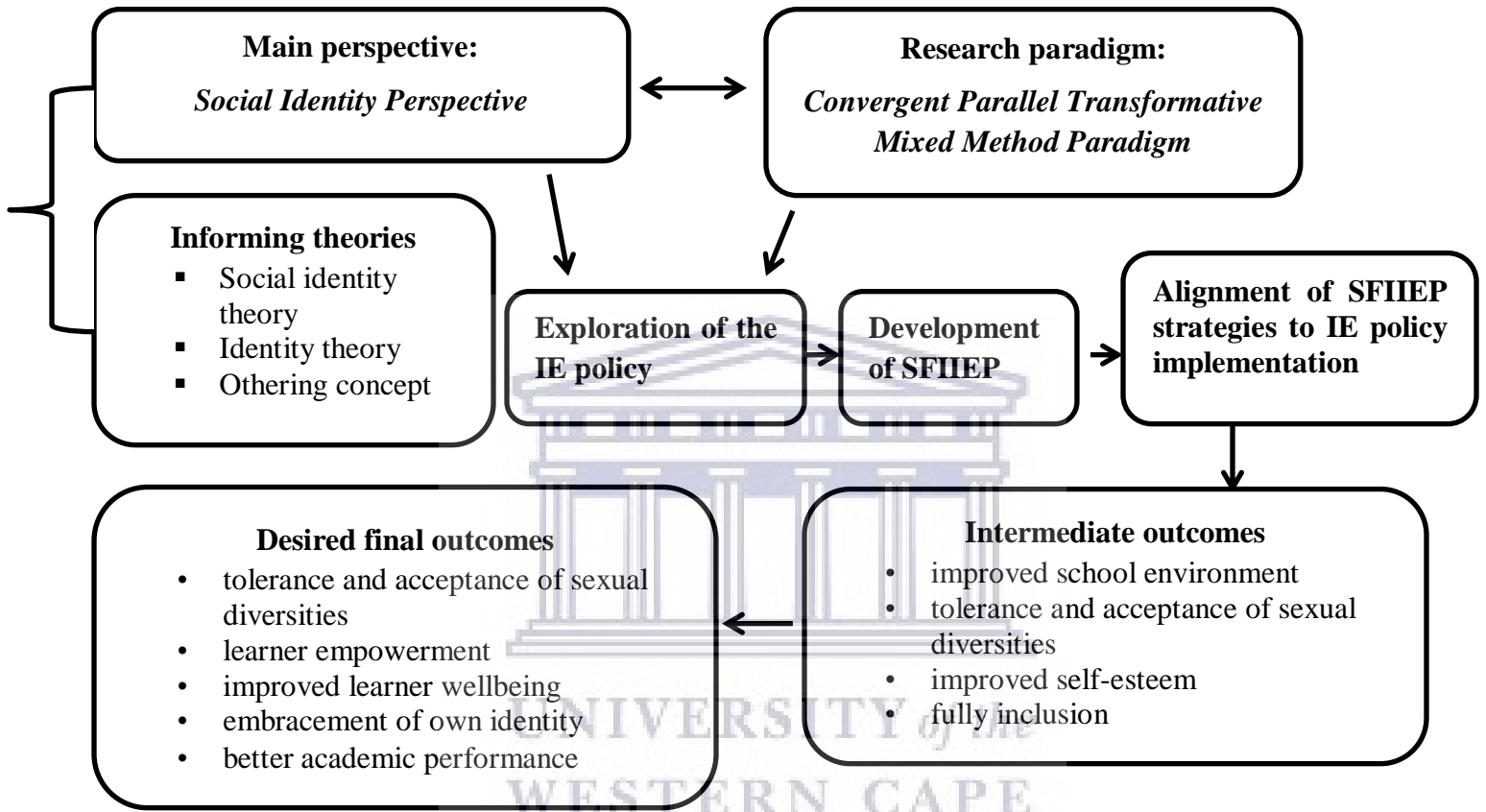
Note: The SIP conceptual framework outlines how the main perspective for the current study could be applied to lead to realisation of inclusion. The outcomes of the SIP do not only end with the intermediate outcomes of full inclusion for improved school environment, self-esteem, tolerance and acceptance of sexual diversities. The transformative nature of the SIP takes this realisation beyond the immediate outcomes by addressing the psychological effects of othering and improves the overall wellbeing of learners. This is believed to lead to lifelong effects of

embracement of own identity and better performance in all spheres of the learners' lives. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

The informing theories (i.e., social identity theory, identity theory and othering concept) are combined to form the SIP that informed the study. The SIP and the research paradigm employed in this study are of a transformative nature hence applied together in this study they led to a better exploration of the Namibian IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners in schools. This exploration has led to the development of the SFIIEP which is recommended to be aligned to the implementation of the Namibian IE policy. This is envisioned to achieve intermediate outcomes (i.e., improved school environment for all learners, tolerance and acceptance of sexual diversities among the learners, improved self-esteem of all learners and realisation of fully inclusion) that are hoped to lead to the final desired outcomes (i.e., acceptance of sexual diversities among learners, learner empowerment for all learners, improved learner wellbeing, embracement of own identity among learners and better academic performance). This chapter is summarised in the next section.

2.11 Chapter Summary

The researcher has coined the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) from the social identity theory, identity theory and the othering concept. Hence, this chapter presents the SIP as the framework on which this study is based. This framework assumes that self-identity is developed in relation to the society. Through the cognitive processes individuals are classified into groups according to their characteristics and are grouped as such. The individual is then expected to behave as the society sees fit or risks a chance of being classified as different from us and labelled naturally unfit to the societal and cultural expectations. These identified assumptions are crucial in this

study as the study aims to yield new knowledge on gender nonconformity and lead to changes in the Namibian schools.

The researcher has also reviewed studies that employed these theories to study social issues across a range of fields. In so doing the chapter highlighted the impacts of othering and the alternatives of employing these theories for achievement of inclusion. Through the literature review on numerous studies on identities, it became clear that there is no uniform method to application of identity theories on social issues. Several researchers used identity studies in different ways to study social issues. Therefore, the researcher used own discretion in adopting a social identity perspective to this inclusive study in a Namibian context. This chapter highlighted that the unique nature of the SIP which is to address unfavourable treatment of the "other" and its efforts to bring about social justice fits the IE policy case. The SIP is further found to fit the methodological transformative stance that this study took in order to address the main research question: *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?*

The SIP presents shortcomings for this study such as its emphasis of the other and assumptions that redrawing the social boundaries could lead to de-categorising. In this chapter, the researcher interpreted the SIP within the context of the current study. The researcher also emphasised the applicability of this perspective to the current study within a transformative mixed methods paradigm. The justification of the choice of this framework as the theoretical framework in this study is based on its position within studies in different fields and its nature to emphasise the need for positive identification. Lastly, the researcher developed the conceptual framework for

the current study that highlighted the perspective and methodological stance of this study. The researcher presents the literature reviewed for this study in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE:

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED TO GENERAL EDUCATION, IE AND GENDER NONCONFORMITY WITHIN AN AFRICAN AND NAMIBIAN CONTEXT

3.1   Introduction

Many countries (i.e., South Africa, Botswana, Kenya and Namibia) have come to understand the benefits of inclusion. They have also realised that all learners have rights that need to be protected for better learning. Thus, they have employed numerous efforts to achieve inclusion for all within their education systems. Nevertheless, there are numerous documented incidents of homophobic harassment in schools regardless of these countries' efforts to include all learners (Brikkels, 2014; Butler et al., 2003; Mostert et al., 2015; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013). On that basis, the researcher presents a review of related literature with a focus on the importance of general education and IE towards the realisation of access to education for all. Moreover, the researcher attempted to highlight the state of IE in some African countries including Namibia. In the midst of this chapter the researcher further discussed the Namibia educational policies. Since this study was aimed at exploring the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners, the researcher paid more emphasis on this policy with a focus on its legal framework, aims and principles. Importantly, the researcher tried to draw the link between the Namibian IE policy, a transformative mixed methods research paradigm used in this study and the SIP as the theoretical framework.

The researcher has reviewed literature on African beliefs and reactions towards homosexuality. The researcher reasons that these beliefs and reactions have a tremendous influence on the formulation of educational policies such as IE policy, thus there was a need to highlight these

views in this chapter. Further the researcher gives a review of literature on the attitudes of the Namibian society towards gender nonconformity. Even though there seems to be a scarcity of related literature on gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian context, there is a plethora of studies on this topic in various countries' contexts. Hence, towards the end of this chapter the researcher discusses the treatment of gender nonconforming learners and effects thereof in schools in the context of different countries (e.g., Botswana, Uganda, Kenya and South Africa).

In this chapter, through the relevant literature, the researcher aimed to demonstrate the impact of IE policy on the wellbeing of gender nonconforming learners. Hence, the researcher highlighted how inclusive education could make a vital contribution towards fostering respect for diversity and promote acceptance of gender nonconforming learners in schools. In that regard, the researcher concludes this chapter with research evidence of the impacts of the inclusive educational structures and IE policies on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners. The review of this literature provided a chance for the researcher to gain more knowledge about gender nonconformity within the education systems. Hence, this review had contributed more relevant knowledge to this study in regard to gender nonconformity. Moreover, this literature review has helped the researcher to identify the knowledge gap in the existing literature. The importance of general education is discussed in the next section.

3.2   Importance of general education and IE

In the context of the current study, education in general is believed to be a tool to achieve self-emancipation from social, economic and cultural restraints (UNESCO, 2014). Moreover, education is believed to bring about self-empowerment through achievement of freedom of mind as an individual comes to understand one self and others. UNESCO (2014) maintains that

education does help with understanding of democracy, promote tolerance and builds respect as well as empowers vulnerable people to overcome discrimination. Further, it is stated that the goal of education systems is to provide quality education to all learners regardless of their abilities, educational and socio-economic back grounds for a better future (MoE, 2014).

As it is indicated by Mitra (2011) and Cumming and Mawdesley (2013), individuals who receive quality education become productive citizens with stable families and do not become a financial burden for their countries. This implies that education does not only have social benefits for individuals by providing them with chances for lifelong learning, but it also has economically benefits. Therefore, in view of the present study, the researcher argues that the formal education system is expected to prepare young people to become responsible citizens that are mentally liberated. The researcher further argues that these young people should not only be ready for the world of work but also be prepared to function in a diverse society. In the current study, it is believed that to achieve this, an inclusive education system with established care and supportive strategies for all learners is needed.

Conventions and declarations such as UNESCO 2001, the 1966 United Nations (UN) International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human rights and the UN's 1959 Convention on the Rights of the Child have all declared education as a fundamental human right (Ainscow et al., 2006; Akinyi et al., 2015; Lindahl, 2006). Since most countries across the world ratified these conventions and declarations, it is of outmost importance for them to provide quality education free from discrimination. To heed the UNSECO's 1990 call for provision of education for all, most countries such as Namibia made efforts to address access to education, such as declaration of

compulsory primary education (MoEC, 1993, p. 25). In a Namibian context, education is believed to be fundamental to individuals and society well-being as well as a tool to enable citizens to effectively participate in the adult life of their societies (MoEC, 1993, p. 3).

It is evident that education is not only seen as a fundamental right for all but also as a foundation for a just society (Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow & Miles, 2009). Research (e.g., Chürr, 2015; Lindahl, 2006; MoEC, 1993) further revealed that it is through education that people are set free from ignorance, false notions and fear. The researcher in the current study acknowledges that basic education is the most important tool for realisation of human rights and tolerance as well as acceptance for diversity. From the foregoing arguments, it follows that education for all becomes a basis for IE to provide education that promote diversity and encourage acceptance and respect for all. As education systems are moving toward a more responsive system, IE has become an educational focus for most countries.

IE is believed to be an education that benefits all learners regardless of their differences (UNESCO, 1990). It is regarded as the process of widening the opportunities for all by responding to individual needs within the education systems (UNESCO, 1990). Moreover, authors such as Ainscow (2005) write that inclusion should be understood as a process that looks at learner diversity instead of looking at specific groups of learners with similar characteristics. This could be interpreted that inclusion is about responding to all learners' diversities and needs. This refers to, not only specific disabilities, but any barrier to learning that learners might encounter during their school years. Additionally, UNESCO (2009), states that IE is not about putting learners with different abilities, needs and disabilities in same classrooms without support. It involves improving inputs at all system levels including at planning, training and

implementation levels, to support the entire learning experience of every learner. Further, UNESCO (1994; 2009), advocates for full inclusion in terms of recognition of diversities, acceptance of all and respect for human rights.

In support of the above views, several researchers argue that inclusion is not only about learners with disabilities but the focus should be on all learners at risk of exclusion. For instance, Ainscow et al. (2013) referred to IE as a more broad reform that responds to the diversity of all learners rather than an education that focuses on disabilities. Similarly, Madan and Sharma (2013) maintain that inclusion is a process of increasing access, participation and achievement of all learners thus it should focus on all marginalised learners. Phasha et al. (2017) are of the opinion that IE will lead to increased awareness for human rights and reduced or no discrimination.

The researcher in this study maintains that given the above views it follows that inclusion could improve learning for all learners including those without physical disabilities but have other needs such as gender nonconforming learners. Further the researcher concurs with literature (UNESCO, 1994) that in the years of schooling, each child will need system support of some sort. Hence there is a need for educators to be explicit when establishing policy statements and strategies aimed at supporting vulnerable groups. It is expected that inclusive policy statements could lead to better inclusion practices and accord every child with an opportunity to access quality education.

Mohanty and Mohanty (2011) wrote that inclusive education has moved to a new dimension where educators should ask themselves what it is that they can offer through inclusion to enhance learning. They further indicate that inclusion is about a school culture that welcomes

diversity and celebrates differences. The current study was aimed to contribute towards the promotion of tolerance, acceptance and respect for diversity within the Namibian schools. In agreement with Mohanty and Mohanty (2011), the researcher envisaged this study to arouse awareness, achieve liberation of human mind and bring about changes in behaviour towards gender nonconforming learners.

The researcher in this study emphasises that inclusion is about identifying issues that act as barriers to learning and developing strategies to overcome those barriers. The researcher also agrees with Mohanty and Mohanty (2011) that the schools, structures and practices should be more flexible and inclusive in order to achieve inclusion for all. Human rights education is enshrined within the Namibian constitution as a process that can empower individuals to think independently and collaboratively to address discriminatory and injustice practices within the education system (GRN, 1990). Therefore, the researcher argues that the Namibian education system needs to build a foundation of respect for human rights for all children to embrace differences amongst them.

Inclusion is further seen as a process through which the schools instigate changes and become more inclusive. For example, Armstrong et al. (2011b) argue that an inclusive school seeks to serve a diverse population of learners and continually seeks to improve their achievements. Consequently, inclusion in the Namibian education system is aimed at removal of all learning barriers for the children to learn.

As Liasidou (2012) points out inclusion is aimed at a rights discourse that seeks to subvert exclusionary social conditions and disabling educational practices. Thus the researcher argues that it requires the educational systems to be radically restructured in responding to the

educational needs of all learners especially of the previously disadvantaged ones. The researcher further argues that inclusion within a human right discourse should be characterised by the positive attitudes that lead to recognition of all needs and the celebration of differences among learners.

The researcher in this study acknowledges that a curriculum is the most important component of the education institution, thus it should be inclusive to such an extent that it is accessible to all learners. This entails for the curriculum to be flexible enough to respond in a positive way to diversity such as different sexual orientations. Literature (Banks, 2017; UNESCO, 2009, p. 18; Winans, 2006) states that an inclusive curriculum takes into consideration gender and cultural identity as well as eradicates stereotyping at all levels. In that regard, the current study holds that an inclusive school should reflect a responsive environment. This should be an environment free from discrimination, harassment and fear for all learners including gender nonconforming learners.

The researcher argues that inclusion should be a means to achieve social change and to create a school community in which all learners can fully participate as respected members. This implies that the education systems should respond positively to all learners through creation of supportive environments within schools. The above views bear an influence on the content of the education curriculum. Thus in this study, the researcher stresses that the Namibian education system should be inclusive to such an extent that the curriculum at all levels reflects diversity. The researcher explores the state of inclusive education in Africa in the next section.

3.3   The state of Inclusive Education in Africa

Educational systems in most of African countries had been based on past colonial education regimes (Amukugo, 1993; Mart, 2011; Mosweunyane, 2013). Literature (e.g., McKinney & Swartz 2016; UNESCO, 1990) shows that inclusion is not a new concept in most African countries, however during the colonial eras it was not catering for all people in these countries. Further the policies that existed had no clear policy statements and guidelines on inclusive practices (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015; McKinney & Swartz 2016). Upon educational reforms in Africa, most of these countries (e.g., South Africa, Namibia and Botswana) recognised the benefits of IE (UNESCO, 1990) thus they embarked upon making efforts to make their education systems inclusive. The shift towards inclusion for all after independence of these countries brought challenges on how to practice inclusion. These included lack of knowledge about inclusion among educators, uncertainty of what inclusion entails, unclear policy statements and negative attitudes, just to name a few (Charema, 2010; Haitembu, 2014; Zimba et al., 1999). However, these countries embraced the notion of inclusion despite these challenges.

The literature (e.g., Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015; McKinney & Swartz 2016; UNESCO, 1990) points out that most of the African countries are currently still at theoretical levels of inclusion and still busy with drawing up policies to inform and direct practice. However there are some countries such as South Africa and Namibia that have gone as far as implementing these policies and inclusion statements (MoE, 2001; MoE, 2014). It is commendable that most of African countries are making efforts to embrace inclusion as it is believed to benefit vulnerable learners. These countries have defined IE and drawn up policy statements in line with UNESCO's definition of IE. However, the search for related literature for the current study has revealed that inclusion and its practices means different things to different people in different

contexts. For instance, the Kenyan Ministry of Education has conceptualised IE on elimination of bias in the educational system and respect for diversity (MoE, 2009). According to the MoE (2009) IE in Kenya is guided by a responsive learning system and materials hence learners are not be refused admission on grounds of whatsoever.

Bii and Taylor (2013) indicate several efforts by the Kenyan government toward inclusion such as enrolment of children with disabilities in schools. Adoyo and Odeny (2015) are in agreement with the above sentiments as they maintain that the Kenyan constitution, the developmental blue print and the vision 2030 are highly responsive to inclusion thus the educational reforms are aligned to these laws. They further point out that the rights of all people to education are affirmed in the article 43, section 1 (f) of the Kenyan constitution. Moreover, Bii and Taylor (2013) indicate that the constitution of Kenya, 2010 commits the government to make sure that children with disabilities are included in schools and receive quality education.

Adoyo and Odeny (2015) point out that all legal documents in Kenya focus on the inclusion of people with disabilities. They state that The Persons with disability act 2003, Education plan 2013-2018 and the Education act 2013 are all reflected in the Special needs education policy of 2009 by emphasising the creation of a learning environment that is conducive for learners with disabilities. Thus, the Kenyan curriculum and examinations are differentiated to cater for people with disabilities (Adoyo & Odeny, 2015). Bii and Taylor (2013) however observe that these documents' focus is more on people with disabilities thus they limit the full implementation of inclusion. Similarly, findings of studies conducted by Amalemba (2013) and Akinyi et al. (2015) indicate that efforts made in Kenya towards inclusion are still focused on addressing learners with disabilities.

UNESCO (2007) reported that due to lack of clear guidelines on policy, religious inclinations and cultural barriers, full inclusion is a challenge in Kenya. Apart from the abovementioned factors, unfavourable curriculum is discovered in a study by Mwangi and Orodho (2014) as another hindrance to inclusion in Kenyan schools. Based on the foregoing points, it could be concluded that even though these studies show efforts by the Kenyan government towards inclusion, the process of inclusion faces challenges in Kenya. Further it could be noted that the reviewed literature bear evidence that inclusion in Kenyan education system is more focused on disabilities. As it was indicated before, IE should not only be about inclusion of learners with disabilities but it should focus on creation of equal opportunities for all learners.

IE in Botswana is said to aim at "assisting all children to achieve their full potential irrespective of their economic conditions, age, stage of development, whatever their gender and life circumstances" (Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), 2011, p.6). The MoESD (2011) has listed emotional difficulties such as stress and isolation as some of the factors that prevent individuals to benefit from the educational provision. The Botswana IE policy's goal number four mandates that schools should be supportive and humane institutions that embrace and value all learners (MoESD, 2011). The policy further committed itself to provision of education to all through development of flexible education systems (MoESD, 2011).

A report on the development of education in Botswana states that the Botswana education system through curriculum diversification aims to address the psycho-social ills through creation of Life Skills including self-awareness, empathy and stress management (MoESD, 2008, p. 14). The ministry of education further states that the key stakeholders should provide support as well as a learning environment conducive for all learners (MoESD, 2008). Furthermore, the ministry has

established a Pastoral policy which aims to promote patriotism among learners as well as to improve discipline and retention within schools (MoESD, 2008). However, regardless of all these efforts, similarly to Kenya, studies done in Botswana show that the focus of inclusion is more on special needs in terms of disabilities. Studies by Chhabra et al. (2010) and Mukhopadhyay et al. (2012) indicate that the provision of IE in Botswana schools is taking place in terms of visual impairment and other physical disabilities.

In South Africa, the White Paper 6: special needs education, building an inclusive education and training system (2001) defined IE as acknowledging and respecting differences in learners (MoE, 2001, p. 6). The White Paper recognises that different learning needs arise from a range of factors including psycho-social disturbance and life experiences (MoE, 2001, p. 7). As in all other countries (e.g., Namibia, Botswana and Kenya), the white paper 6's principles are based on the country's constitution (Daniels, 2010). It is based on human rights and social justice as well as equal access for all learners to a single inclusive education system among others. Further, this policy calls for recognition and celebration of diversity to be reflected in the attitudes of people and in the nature of South African institutions (MoE, 2001).

Several studies done in South Africa bear evidence of educational reforms toward inclusion. Engelbrecht (2006) and Hall (2002) write that IE is promoted as an educational strategy to contribute to a democratic and just society. The abovementioned studies further state that a democratic system acknowledges the rights of all the previously marginalised individuals as full members of the societies.

The South African education system is also faced with challenges in implementation of inclusion regardless of the clear policy statements. Donohue and Bornman (2014) indicated that even

though the South African educational policies are highly praised worldwide for their positive move toward inclusion, they are not being fully implemented. A study by Ntombela (2011) in South Africa discovered that school teachers had limited experience with the IE policy statement. Du Plessis (2013) indicates that teachers' negative attitudes toward diversity are in contradiction to the basic human rights. Similarly to what is discovered in Botswana and Kenya (Adedoyin & Okere, 2017; Chhabra et al., 2010; Kochung, 2011), the South African school environments were found not to be in favour of an inclusive movement. Therefore, it is evident from the above discussions that these countries (i.e., South Africa, Kenya, Botswana and Namibia) are making efforts to realise inclusion. However, studies done in these countries discovered that limited knowledge and unfavourable environments are making it difficult for inclusion.

In view of these policies on IE, in the African countries that are discussed in this study, with the exception of South Africa and Namibia, educational reforms are focused more on inclusion of learners with disabilities. The current study contends that this focus on disabilities within these education systems might contribute to teachers' ignorance of other categories of vulnerability. Research (e.g., Murungi, 2015; Zimba et al., 1999) reveals that there are no clear policy statements to guide schools on inclusion practices. Moreover, in some cases, the definition of IE itself is more inclined towards disabilities. Thus one could argue that unclear policy statements coupled with lack of knowledge about inclusion could lead teachers to focus on what they are comfortable with and ignore issues such as gender nonconformity among learners. Additionally, it is reasonable to argue that these unclear policy statements could lead to exclusion of gender nonconforming learners in African schools as literature (e.g., Downie, 2014; Lorway, 2007; Oloka-Onyango, 2015; Quansah, 2004) indicates that the notion of gender nonconformity is not welcomed in most of these communities.

The researcher therefore argues that an inclusive policy statement should be clear on all categories of vulnerability in order to direct teachers on how to implement the IE policy in ways that respond positively to learners' needs. In that regard, the researcher notes that inclusion then challenges education systems to be responsive towards all learners' needs. It requires educators to adopt a transformative ideology. IE further calls for a shift in the value systems of school and society at large towards tolerance, acceptance and positive attitudes towards diversity. Most importantly, inclusion is about responding to all learners including those that are disadvantaged by situations created by socio-cultural contexts. In line with the SIP assumptions, the researcher argues that IE is about doing away with negative othering and encouraging the understanding of the other. Therefore, one can conclude that the education systems are expected to reflect a responsive stance towards diversity and do away with negative categorisation. This is believed to minimise discrimination and exclusion so that all learners could benefit from the process of learning. On that basis, the researcher explores the educational policies and the state of IE in the Namibian context in the next section.

3.4   Educational policies and IE in Namibia

The move towards inclusion has not been an easy process in the Namibian education system. The Namibian education system has to go through several reforms in order to provide the education that the Namibian child deserves. As it is mentioned before in this study (see section 1.2), the Namibia education prior to and upon independence, 1990, was based on a segregated approach of the Bantu education system. According to Amukugo (1993) and Jansen (1995), the Namibian curriculum policy was linked to apartheid South Africa.

Jansen (1995) states that The Eiselen Commission laid the basis for Bantu education in South Africa and later on The Odendaal Commission applied these administrative and ideological extensions to the Namibian education system. Thus the curriculum was premised on the white supremacy, racial and ethical segregation (Amukugo, 1993). This segregation created inequalities and disparities in education and did not respond to the needs and aspirations of the Namibian indigenous people (MoEC, 1993, p. 3). Therefore, since independence in 1990, the Namibian education system went through a reform to address these disparities.

Since the independence of Namibia, 1990, a large number of documents aiming for change in the education system had been written. The then Ministry of Education and Culture established the National Integrated Education System for Emerging Namibia: Draft Proposal for Education Reform and Renewal in 1990, Education in Transition: Nurturing our Future in 1990 and Change with Continuity: Education Reform Directive of 1990 (MoEC, 1991). Another document Pedagogy in Transition: The Imperatives of Educational Development in the Republic of Namibia was established in 1991 (MoE, 1991). In 1993, the then MoEC established the policy document Toward Education for all (MoEC, 1993). Consequently, in order to realise the goal of education for all in Namibia, several policies were established. The line ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (MoGECW) established the National Gender Policy in 1997, which is aimed at closing the gap in terms of gender inequality created by socioeconomic and cultural inequalities inherited from the apartheid regime which extended to access to education for all (MoEC, 1993; MoGECW, 1997).

In order to cater for people with disabilities, a National Disability Policy in Namibia was also established in 1997 premised on the underlying principles of inclusion and equalisation

opportunities. A National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children was also established in 2000 to temporarily address the needs of marginalised children. This policy is also aimed at responding to the Namibian constitution's goal of providing access to universal education to all (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MoBESC), 2000).

There are more documents that were written for educational reforms which include Education and Culture in Namibia: The Way forward to 1996 of 1991, Pedagogy in Transition: The Imperatives of Educational Development in the Republic of Namibia of 1991 and the Curriculum development for reform of 1992 which has to respond to most of the documents mentioned previously. Further, the MoBESC established an Education Act 16 of 2001 to lie down the foundation for a transformative education system. This document is to guide and regulate the educators in provision of accessible, equitable and democratic national educational services to all Namibians (MoBESC, 2001). The Namibian Vision 2030: Policy Framework for Long-term National Development established in 2004 calls for the strengthening of the quality of education and eliminating inequalities in the education system (GRN, 2004). All these efforts were aimed at addressing inequalities within the Namibian education system hence these above mentioned policy documents had one aim which is to make education accessible to all Namibians.

In an attempt to transform the Namibian education system in order to respond to the 21st century challenges more policies were written. These policies are not only focused on addressing the inequalities in education but honour and promote human rights and dignity of all Namibians. For example, the educational sector policy for Orphans and Vulnerable Children established in 2008 aims at:

Strengthening the capacity of children and young people to meet their own needs, ensure that all school-going aged orphans and vulnerable children attend school and are not deterred from full participation through lack of financial means, material or psycho-social need, stigma, discrimination or any other constraints (Ministry of Education (MoE), 2008, p. 10).

The National Standards and Performance indicators for schools in Namibia document of 2005 is another educational effort which is aimed at improving access to quality education. It states that a school as a social unit should create a climate that fosters a sense of identity, security, equality and fairness for all (MoE, 2005). This document highlights bullying, harassment, intimidation and swearing as unacceptable behaviours that have to be discouraged within schools (MoE, 2005, p. 20). Further, the document calls for the promotion of high ethical standards (i.e., openness, equity, justice and honesty) and fostering of mutual respect, care and tolerance for all at schools (MoE, 2005, p. 21).

The aim for all the efforts highlighted above, was for the Namibian education system to respond positively to the needs of all Namibian learners. The need to create favourable conditions comes to function as the basis for all educational reforms in the Namibian education system. Therefore the Namibian education system is expected to be based on social justice and not reflect the apartheid notion of discrimination based on colour, gender, ethnic background or sexual orientation.

The researcher reasons that given all these efforts for transformation, the Namibian education system is expected to reflect the climate of inclusivity through the curriculum and policy documents. Most importantly, all these efforts are aligned to the Namibian constitution's goal of recognition of all persons' rights to education, equality and freedom from discrimination (GRN,

1990). The Namibian constitution mandates in article 20 (1) that all Namibian people have the right to education (GRN, 1990, p. 14). Further, Article 20 (2 and 3) states that all children of a school going age should be encouraged to remain at school.

The above discussion clearly outlines the efforts of the MoEAC to attain a transformative education system for all learners in Namibia. Hence, one could argue that gender nonconformity in the Namibian context should be addressed in response to the Namibian constitution's call for respect for human rights and the aims of the said educational reforms to promote equality.

As Namibia strives to respond to the needs of all Namibians by providing quality and accessible education free of discrimination, a radical move was needed to tie up all these efforts into a policy document for inclusivity. This led to the establishment of the Educational Sector policy on IE, 2014. In that regard, the researcher presents a detailed discussion of the Namibian IE policy in the next section.

3.5   The Namibian Inclusive Education policy

The IE policy was established several years ago and has been going through a rigorous editing and refining process to respond to the Namibian nation's needs and socio-economic situations. The policy was final launched in 2014, thus providing educators with a tangible legal document for guidance on inclusion practices in Namibia at all educational system levels. This policy is based on several legal frameworks and states specific aims and strategies to attain full inclusion. Therefore, the next sub-sections explain the policy as related to legal frameworks, aims, principles and strategies.

3.5.1 Legal framework of the policy

Namibia is a signatory element to many notable international agreements and laws. Amongst these is the United Nations (UN) Convention on the rights of children, UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African charter, Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All, Dakar Framework for Action: Dakar World Education Conference and the Salamanca statement. As a country, when Namibia has ratified international convections on human rights, it is bound to honour, protect and uphold all people's rights as stipulated in these laws. The constitution of the Republic of Namibia is aimed at protecting all Namibian people's dignity. It states that "all persons shall be equal before law" and "no persons may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status" (GRN, 1990, pp. 10-11).

The provision of education in Namibia is therefore based on the principles stipulated in the laws and agreements mentioned above as well as in the Namibian constitution. Even though the issue of gender nonconformity is not explicitly stated in the Namibia constitution, one can argue that it is appended to the gender clauses. In this regard, one can expect the concept of gender to include sexual orientation in the Namibian constitution as well as in the UN convention on human rights and in the Salamanca statement. Additionally, the constitution affirms the rights of all Namibian citizens.

The establishment of the IE policy was done in the same line as all other Namibian educational documents and policies (refer to section 3.4) that aim at reforming the education system to cater for all people. This policy is based on the Namibian constitution, other national laws and policies as well as the international convections mentioned above and other international laws to which

Namibia has aligned itself. In that regard, the researcher argues that given the fact that gender nonconformity is not recognised in Namibia, this should be one of the issues to be addressed within the Namibian education system through the IE policy. On that basis, the researcher links the aims, strategies and principles of the IE policy to these legal frameworks' goals in the next sub-section.

3.5.2 Aims, strategies and principles of the Namibian Inclusive Education policy

Inclusive education in Namibia adopts the social model and rights discourse of inclusion. Hence, the Namibian IE policy aims for provision of support to all learners with special needs. The literature (e.g., Butler et al., 2003; Mostert et al., 2015; Sathiparsad, 2003) in the present study confirms that exclusion has deeper psychological effects hence it is logical to conclude that inclusion is also concerned with psychological aspects for better intervention. It follows that inclusion could enable the education system to include all learners within all educational levels in terms of support needed either material or emotional.

The learner enrolment rate in both primary and secondary school phases is reported to have increased significantly especially after the educational reforms in Namibia (MoE, 2009; 2008). However, statistics show that there is low learner retention for primary and secondary phases (MoE, 2010, 2013, 2014). This implies that the learner-dropout rate is high in Namibian schools and as a result some of Namibian learners do not complete schooling. The MoE (2010, 2014) has cited bullying, unresponsiveness of the education system to some learners and unwelcoming school environments as some of the causes for learner-drop out in the Namibian schools. Education is believed to foster principles of equality and socialism (Booth & Ainscow, 1998; Miles, 2002 as cited in Haitembu, 2014). Haitembu (2014) argues that education is a tool to
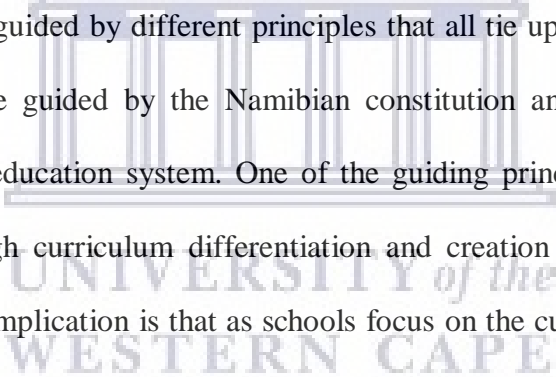
develop individuals' perspectives on life and build opinions about their surrounding world. Based on the above arguments, the researcher concludes that it is important to provide education to all Namibian people for personal growth.

The high rate of learner-drop-out in Namibian schools necessitates the MoEAC to engage in policy initiatives that can promote access to education for all and lead to improvement in education provided to the Namibian child to enable all learners to complete their primary schooling. These initiatives should be specifically aimed at eliminating barriers to learning and making the education system responsive to all children as well as call for the schools to create friendly school environments for all learners to complete their education for a better future. The researcher thus draws attention to the MoEAC's statement that the IE policy is not just aiming for catering to learners with special educational needs but to all learners (MoE, 2014). Hence, inclusive practices should be aimed at keeping all children in school until they complete their basic education.

The IE policy states that inclusion is not only about integrating children with disabilities into mainstream schools but it should aim to end exclusion on basis of gender, race, culture, lifestyle or disability (MoE, 2014). The policy responds to the new understanding of the inclusion in education that it is not only for children with disabilities as it was understood in the past but it is a process for all educational institutions and educational systems aiming for good inclusive practices across the board (MoE, 2014). It is worth mentioning that the MoEAC is responding to this call by recognising that learners have different socio-economic issues that can prevent them from learning and completing education. Hence, the researcher points out that within all these efforts the education system is addressing all challenging issue for learners. These efforts are

hoped to include gender nonconformity issues even though the topic is not explicitly referred to within the schools.

The IE policy aims "to expand access to and provide quality education" and "to support learners with a wide range of individual abilities and needs" (MoE, 2014, p. 15). More, the policy responds to the Namibian constitution's aims to promote respect for human dignity and create tolerance and acceptance within schools (MoE, 2014). The policy also responds to the Namibian Vision 2030 by ensuring that Namibia is a fair, gender-responsive, committed and caring nation in which all Namibian citizens are able to realise their full potential in a safe and decent environment (GRN, 2004).

The Namibian IE policy is guided by different principles that all tie up into the aims mentioned above. These principles are guided by the Namibian constitution and the Education for All ideology in the Namibian education system. One of the guiding principles of the policy is to respond to diversity through curriculum differentiation and creation of a positive climate in schools (MoE, 2014). The implication is that as schools focus on the curriculum related barriers, they should also ensure an overall safe and conducive learning environment for all learners. Another principle is to engage schools and communities in issues of human and educational rights. The researcher deduces that this calls for the MoEAC to engage in education awareness programmes nationwide to educate the nation on human rights within the education system.

The IE policy is also based on another important principle which is to identify and address challenges within the Namibian education system. Hence, the IE policy calls for removal of barriers to learning from all education settings. The ministry is expected to achieve this through creation of an enabling supporting environment in every school for all learners and teachers

(MoE, 2014). The researcher believes that identifying these challenges requires the educators to be open-minded and look into all social challenges that learners face in Namibian schools. The researcher argues then that gender nonconformity is one of the issues that educators need to address in order to ensure learning environments that are conducive for all learners in Namibian schools.

The IE policy is further based on the principle of application of inclusion at all levels in educational related programmes, planning and implementation (MoE, 2014). This could be interpreted to mean that the policy calls for all educational institutions whether at high education or basic education level to be inclusive in all educational activities. Thus the researcher argues that educational policies and programmes should all be based on an inclusive approach.

The Namibian IE policy is extremely dedicated to achieving the goals of Education for All, hence it pays particular attention to previously excluded children. The high number of school dropouts among learners has been one of the factors that necessitated the establishment of this policy. Hence it is hoped to address issues that prevent learners from completing their schooling. The learner-drop out in Namibia is reported to be high due to several reasons amongst which are teacher attitude and discrimination (MoE, 2010, 2013, 2014).

Most of the children who do not complete education are said to be educationally marginalised (MoE, 2014). To this regard, the MoEAC has listed children who might be educationally marginalised and are to be responded to by the IE policy as:

- children who are considered "over-aged";
- children of families living in extreme poverty;
- children in squatter, resettlement and refugee camps;

- children in remote areas;

- "street" children;

- children of farm workers;

- the learner-parent;

- children who head households;

- child labourers;

- children with learning difficulties;

- children with extreme health conditions or chronic illnesses;

- children with disabilities and impairments;

- orphans and vulnerable children;

- the girl-child;

- children with emotional and behavioural challenges; and

- children who are gifted/talented (MoE, 2014, p. 5).
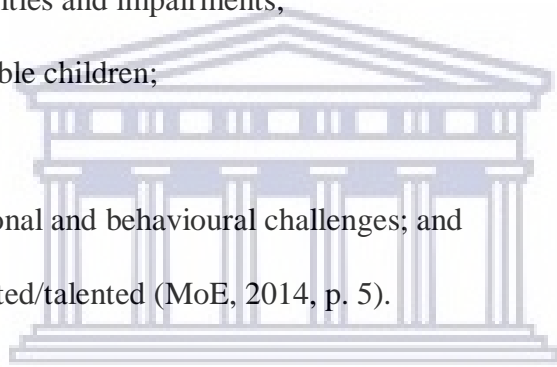
Most of these children were not accorded chances in the past to complete their education due to various socio-economic challenges that they experience (MoE, 2008). It was then needed to establish a policy document that encourages respect for human rights and dignity as well as promote equality and non-discriminatory climate within education, hence the establishment of IE policy in 2014.

The researcher infers from the aims of the Namibian IE policy discussed above that the policy is well aligned to national and international calls for the provision of education for all. However, despite all these laudable statements and notable efforts, one still notes that the Namibian education system is still characterised by some disparities in addressing the needs of all learners.

The researcher argues that there was a need to establish how gender nonconforming learners are responded to by the IE policy given the plethora of evidence on challenges faced by these learners. Borrowing from the assumptions of the SIP, the researcher assumes in this study that institutional othering could occur once the educational policies are not clear on issues of gender nonconformity. This could lead to exclusion of some learners and prevent them from getting appropriate educational services.

UNESCO (1994) states that in order to retain and attract children from marginalised and excluded groups, the education systems should respond flexibly and be inclusive toward all children's needs and circumstances. It is clear that barriers to learning include all conditions such as physical disabilities, school climates, life experiences and learning difficulties that will prevent learners from accessing equity in education. Thus, as it is indicated in the policy, efforts toward inclusion should not only be aimed at learners with disabilities but should include all vulnerable learners within the education systems.

The Namibian education system is therefore expected to respond positively to all learners including gender nonconforming learners. Hence through the IE policy, the education system needs to reflect a responsive approach towards the needs of all vulnerable children in schools. A negative attitude of teachers towards inclusion was discovered as one of hindrance to implementation of inclusive education in Namibian schools (Haitembu, 2014; Josua, 2013; Zimba et al., 1999). Hence the following section discusses gender nonconformity in African societies. This is done in order to understand the attitudes that can have effects on the response of the school community towards gender nonconforming learners.

3.6   Gender nonconformity in Africa

This study assumes the ontological assumptions of the transformative paradigm. Thus the researcher tried to identify the dimensions of diversity, in this case political, cultural and religious beliefs. These dimensions are relevant to determine the perceived legitimacy of versions of realities, in the view of the current study, gender nonconformity issues. Moreover the researcher builds on the epistemological assumptions of the transformative paradigm to build an understanding of gender nonconformity and raise awareness thereof. Therefore, as the present study aimed at exploring the responses of the IE policy to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, it is important to understand the stand of Africa including Namibia in terms of gender nonconformity. Therefore, the researcher discusses literature on tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity in Africa and specifically in Namibia in the next sub-sections. The tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity in Africa is discussed first in the next sub-section.
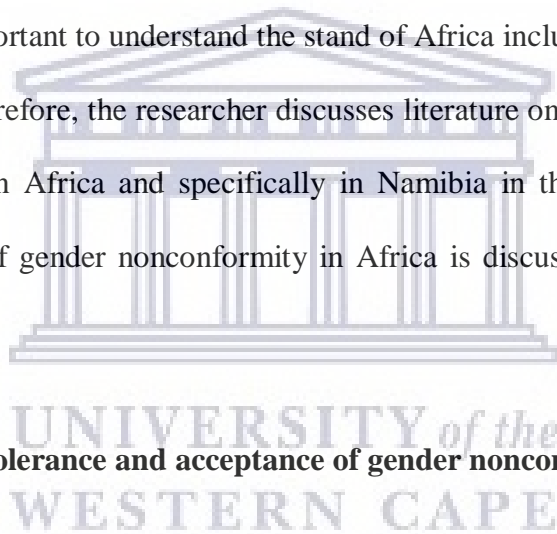
3.6.1   African societies' tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity

The researcher holds a strong view that the societies' beliefs, values and acceptance of certain issues are very crucial as these will be reflected in the national service systems such as education systems. Thus one cannot disregard the societies' beliefs as these could affect how policy statements are to be written out and implemented. The notion of gender nonconformity is a phenomenon which is regarded as immoral in most African societies (Downie, 2014; Du Pisan, 2012; Oloka-Onyango, 2015; Quansah, 2004; Shipo, 2010). Research also indicates that religious, political and cultural beliefs affect the acceptance of gender nonconformity in societies (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003). In support of the above discussions Applebaum

(2003) reveals that some religious teachers indicated that portraying gender nonconformity in a positive light undermines their integrity and of their society.

Several authors have written about the level of tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity in an African context. Most of the available literature on African attitude towards gender nonconformity presents a negative attitude and low tolerance towards sexual diversity. It is important to point out at this juncture that it should be understood that the above mentioned level of tolerance and attitude are not the all representation of Africa's stand on homosexuality. The researcher specifies at this point that for the purpose of the current study the literature that presents a negative attitude in Africa towards gender nonconformity is used as an outline of the background into public tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity in Africa. For the purpose of the current study, outlining the trends of tolerance and acceptance towards homosexuality in Africa from different authors is an important factor. The researcher envisaged this to help with understanding the level of gender nonconformity tolerance and acceptance in an African culture from different sources.

During colonial times, some of African countries (i.e., Uganda, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Namibia) where introduced to western laws and legal ideologies. Upon independence most of these countries have adopted these laws and still have some clauses left behind by the colonial regimes in their constitutions (Haskins, 2014; Nel, 2014). In these countries, within an African culture coupled with Christianity and a strong political influence, gender nonconformity is deemed unethical and an unbiblical behaviour, thus it is a topic that is not openly discussed most of the times.

Literature (e.g., Herek, 2004; Lee, 2018; Sutherland et al., 2016) shows that societal attitude towards gender nonconformity is changing globally and it is being reshaped by new ideologies on sexual orientation. Available evidence (PewResearch Centre, 2014; Smith et al., 2014) indicates that these trends are being absorbed into African societies. Thus tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity is undergoing through a gradually change in Africa (Sutherland et al., 2016). Based on available literature on homosexuality tolerance and acceptance in African context, recent research findings indicate a different trend which is positive as opposed to earlier literature which reports a negative attitude.

PewResearch Centre (2014) noted that there is a global divide on the view of gender nonconformity acceptance. For instance, North American and European countries have a wide acceptance of gender nonconformity. Whereas there is still rejection of gender nonconformity in most religiously and culturally influenced countries in Africa, Middle East and Asia (PewResearch Centre, 2014). Similarly, Smith et al. (2014), examining the responses in surveys done in different countries over two decades on public attitudes toward gender nonconformity, indicate that there is a positive change towards gender nonconformity acceptance and support in some countries including those in Africa. Some of these countries such as South Africa have legalised same sex marriage in an effort to adhere to their constitutions' prohibition of all types of discrimination.

Du Pisani (2012) points out that gender nonconformity was regarded as a sin and a sickness in an African culture. Authors such as Downie (2014) and Lorway (2006) echo Du Pisan by writing that gender nonconformity has been perceived as uncultured and religiously not acceptable. Pereira (2008) also writes that African political and traditional leaders have claimed that there is

no element of gender nonconformity in African societies. These leaders are said to believe that gender nonconformity is a foreign behaviour. For example, political leaders such as Sam Nujoma (Namibia) and the late Robert Mugambe (Zimbambwe) consider the topic of gender nonconformity as taboo in an African culture (Dunton & Palmberg, 1996; Kennedy, 2006). Pereira, (2008) supports the above sentiments by writing that several Botswana political, religious and traditional leaders have raised their disapproval of gender nonconformity and openly declared for gay people to be jailed.

Du Pisan (2012) points out that discussion of any sexual behaviour that was considered deviant was regarded as a social taboo and it was feared to corrupt the society and undermine moral values. Additionally, Lopang (2014) maintains that gender nonconformity in Africa is an issue that most people tend to ignore and the African literature on gender nonconformity is selective to an extent. He points out that some writers of African literature either depicted gender nonconformity as an evil and unAfrican practice or ignored the issue in an effort to project a strong image of a masculine married man. Murray and Roscoe (1998) reaffirm Lopang's sentiments by observing that most African anthropologists have denied the presence of homosexuality among the people they studied. They further point out that in cases where homosexuality is acknowledged, it is taken as due to lack of women presence or a part of a short live adolescent phase which is believed to cease at one point.

Downie (2014) outlines some factors that scholars pointed out as contributing to low level of acceptance towards gender nonconformity in Africa such as politics, culture and incomplete democratisation. Research (e.g., Amory, 1997; Okal et al., 2009) indicates that the constant gay bashing by political leaders is fuelling the notion of gender nonconformity as undermining and

challenging the powerful assumptions about masculine and what is seen as to be a "real man" in an African culture. In an African context, homosexuality is believed to be a threat to an African power distribution where a woman is presumed to be feminine and weak while a man is expected to be masculine thus a sign of strength (Amory, 1997). Therefore, deviation from these beliefs is seen as unAfrican, unbiblical and immoral.

Blaauw (2012) points out that most religious people whether in developed or developing countries are against gender nonconformity. According to Du Pisan (2012) certain verses in the Bible were read to reinforce the traditionalist religious outlook on gender nonconformity and emphasise its consequences in regard to entrance into heaven. Amory (1997) maintains that these homophobic attitudes function as an attempt by Africans to redefine their identity amid modern western cultural influences.

Higgins and Bourne (2018) write that people tend to be averse to change and anything that disturbs the status quo. As African societies are being introduced to new trends and different western ways of living it is expected for most African people to resist some changes. The openness about the notion of gender nonconformity is relatively a new topic in African societies. It could therefore be argued that these negative reactions are based on several issues which could be personal beliefs and a need for control over the perceived "other". It is however evident that, cultural beliefs and the religion's promises of the salvation to "the righteous" and not to "the other" are influencing the creation of an "us and them" mentality toward gender nonconforming people in African societies.

Research (e.g., Amory, 1997; Haskins, 2014; Murray & Roscoe, 1998) indicates that many Africans refuse to acknowledge gender nonconformity as an orientation but look at it as personal
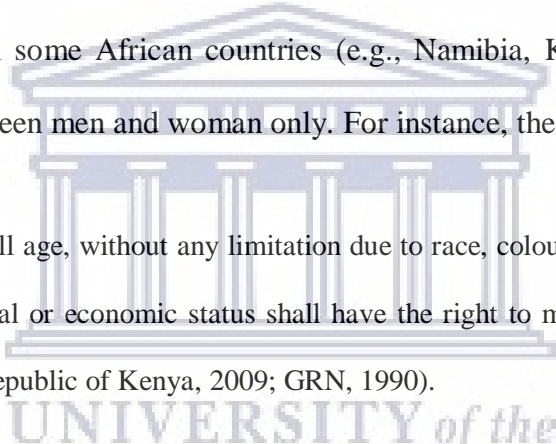
conscious choice. With these beliefs some religious people believe that gender nonconforming people can be guided to stop their misguided acts of same sex practices through counselling and biblical teachings (Gudel, 2009; Mohler, 2004). On the other hand some Africans are of the opinion that gender nonconforming people are wilfully committing wrong acts thus they should be punished (Ibrahim, 2015).

Apart from research, the researcher has a personal interaction with a religious person (A. Haufiku, personal communication, August 29, 2015) who claimed that her church has healed a lesbian school girl through biblical teachings and prayers. Nevertheless, research (Pepper, 2015; Punt, 2007) disputes these views by indicating that there is no substantiated reliable evidence that indicates that gender nonconformity is a choice and can be cured. Nortjé-Meyer (2005) also disputes these views by arguing that biblical literature does not consider sexuality as the basis for defining a person's identity. She further argues that an individual can interpret the biblical scripts to be either negative or positive just as well they can interpret a biblical script to be a liberation or suppression gospel for different situations. Punt (2007) argues that the Bible can play a role in restoring human dignity and values. Hence individuals can interpret the biblical scripts to fit their purpose in different contexts. Nortjé-Meyer (2005) argues that misinterpretation of the Bible readings will mislead biblical messages which in turn will not only harm the gender nonconforming people, but the whole community.

Quansah (2004) points out that sexuality in the community is predicated to heterosexuality thus gender nonconformity is seen as deviant behaviour and immoral. This notion is evident in some African countries (i.e., Botswana and Kenya) where gender nonconforming people are threatened or beaten as a result of engaging in sexual relations with people of same sex. Apart from social

rejection of gender nonconformity in Africa, some countries (i.e., Uganda) reject it through their laws. For instance Downie (2014) writes that gender nonconformity is illegal in 38 African countries in which a law against sodomy was passed during colonialism. Research (Beyrer, 2014; Downie, 2014; Nel, 2014) indicates that due to different laws in Africa regarding gender nonconformity, societies determine the degree to which homophobic harassments can go. In some countries (i.e., Kenya and Uganda) the laws clearly permit prosecution of gender nonconforming people (Nel, 2014). Therefore the aforementioned bears implications in terms of inclusion and respect for human rights.

Constitutional provisions in some African countries (e.g., Namibia, Kenya and Botswana) for marriages are stated as between men and woman only. For instance, these constitutions state that:

> Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, creed or social or economic status shall have the right to marry and to found a family (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2009; GRN, 1990).

In countries such as Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Kenya, the intolerance for gender nonconformity goes as far as prosecuting those who are found to be engaged in these supposedly deviant sexual relations (Karimi & Thompson, 2014). Cases of prosecution have been documented in Zambia, for example, the case of Philip Mubiana and James Mwape who were arrested and charged with committing a criminal act of sodomy (Van Klinken, 2014). Similarly, The Human Dignity Trust (2015) documents several incidents where Ugandan men were arrested for being suspected of being gay. However, Uganda went as far as to draw up an Anti-Homosexuality Act, 2014, which first carried out a death penalty when it was introduced in 2009 and later the penalty was reduced to life imprisonment (Karimi & Thompson, 2014).

Several authors (e.g., Finerty, 2012; Kodero et al., 2011) point out that cultural and political influences lead to incidents of harassment and imprisonment of gender nonconforming people in Kenya. Finerty (2012) points out that not all Kenyans enjoy the rights guaranteed to them by the constitution as some of them are imprisoned based on their sexual orientations. Additionally, the law in Kenya criminalises same-sex sexual relations and it refers to these relations as indecent practices between males.

> Any male person who, whether in public or private, commits any act of gross indecency with another male person is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for five years (Republic of Kenya, 2008).

In Nigeria, same sex marriage is prohibited in Same-sex Prohibition act and is punishable with 14 years' imprisonment. The act also declares a punishment of 10 years in prison for being a member of gender nonconforming societies (Chiroma & Magashi, 2015; Olanrewaju et al., 2015; Onuche, 2013).

The foregoing literature demonstrates that some countries' (i.e., Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria and Kenya) laws forbid gender nonconformity and some (i.e., Namibia) leave it open for interpretation. Thus it is of concern whether the prohibition and ambiguity of these laws on gender nonconformity in some countries such as Namibia does create a loophole for disapproval of the gender nonconforming people. This ambiguity could also be translated into educational settings which could lead to the education institutions not to address gender nonconformity issues openly.

Isaack (2005) writes that the former president of Zimbabwe, the late Robert Mugabe, has declared that gender nonconforming people are perverts, they have no rights and they disgrace

human dignity. Additionally, the president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni was quoted stating that gender nonconformity is learned and it can be unlearned ("Museveni 'seeks US advice on homosexuality," 2014; Boyd, 2013). The researcher reasons that categorisation of gender nonconforming people into a group of perverts with no rights could lead to discrimination and unequal treatment of some people in African countries.

Research (Chiroma & Magashi, 2015; Kodero et al., 2011; Shipo, 2010) revealed that gay men in African countries (i.e., Kenya, Namibia and South Africa) hide their sexual orientation due to fear of rejection from their families and society. These men give into social pressure to father children and marry women in order to avoid public humiliation and being blackmailed (Kodero et al., 2011; Shipo, 2010). Some women who do not conform to gender norms in Africa are reported to face social rejection and being subjected to corrective rape in an attempt to turn them into heterosexuals (Msibi, 2012). On the basis of the aforementioned research, it follows that gender nonconforming people in Africa face homophobic harassments due to repressive societal attitudes towards them. It is therefore possible that these harassments are a result of homophobic sentiments expressed by traditional, religious and political leaders as well as in some of African countries' (e.g., Namibia, Uganda, Botswana and Kenya) constitutional provisions.

The constitutions of most African countries such as Namibia, South Africa and Kenya prohibit discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity, gender and any other grounds. However, it appears that public opinions fuelled by individual and social attitudes are overriding the constitutions in some African countries such as Kenya, Namibia and South Africa. As Isaack (2005) argues, gender equality should encompass gender identity and gender expression in these constitutions. In this regard, Isaack points out the important African principle of Ubuntu. He reminds that at the

root of the African culture lies the spirit of compassion and not oppression. Equally, Ntlama (2014) believes that the spirit of Ubuntu should prevail in an African culture in laying the concept of inclusivity and the foundation for standards by which Africans regulate their lives. In line with the transformative paradigm that informs the present study, Ntlama argues that Africans should relook at their underrating of the value of human and bring forth their ability to use good for common cause and use this to establish laws that promote humanity.

Some of the African countries, with the exception of Angola, Botswana and South Africa, do not pronounce themselves on discrimination against gender nonconforming people (ALJAZEERA, 2019; Frykberg, 2019; Quansah; 2004). Research (e.g., Arndt & de Bruin, 2006; Pepper, 2015) indicates that South Africa has the most progressive and inclusive constitution in Africa, regarding gender nonconformity. The South African constitution has gone as far as legalising same sex marriage (Pepper, 2015). In line with this observation, Quansah (2004) states that South Africa is the only African country with laws that has taken a stand in protecting the rights of gender nonconforming people in Africa. The South African constitution, section 9 (3) calls for no discrimination of all people on grounds including race, gender and sexual orientation (Arndt & de Bruin, 2006; Pepper, 2015; RSA, 1996).

Several authors (e.g., Butler et al., 2003; Isaack, 2005) claim that even though South Africa has legalised same-sex marriages, there is lack of assistance from authorities in regard to homophobic attacks. Further, Van Ingen and Phala (2014) indicate that the South African laws are silent on hate crimes. This silence is said to increase the incidents of corrective rape and leads to unsuccessful prosecution of these incidents (Van Ingen & Phala, 2014). In accordance, Brikkels (2014) claims that despite the South African constitution's aim to protect all people's

fundamental rights; cultural attitude towards gender nonconforming people remains repressive. Further, several studies document the homophobic harassment the gender nonconforming learners face in South African schools (Butler et al., 2003; Mostert et al., 2015; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013).

The above discussions therefore bear evidence that despite the constitutional provisions for gender nonconforming people in South Africa, these provisions are not transformed into the individual attitudes. Additionally, Dreyer (2011) and Lee (2013) point out the disjuncture between the constitution and the inclusive policy framework's progressive and inclusive responses towards human rights and the practices. In light of the above discussions, the researcher emphasises the role of education as a tool for human liberation, hence the importance of inclusive policies to advocate for community positive regard towards diversity.

The above presented literature evidently shows that even though some countries' (e.g., Namibia) laws do not clearly prohibit gender nonconformity these laws also do not make provision for it. The researcher then argues that the silence of the laws in some African countries such as Namibia on the rights of gender nonconforming people and the ignorance of homophobic harassments could function as a tool for societies to treat gender nonconforming people as they see fit: "the other". Therefore the researcher relates the abovementioned silence in some of these laws to the assumption of SIP and point out that they contribute to categorisation of gender nonconforming people as "unfit" citizens. Sutherland et al. (2016) caution that people need to understand that gender nonconformity is a human identity. Similarly, Oloka-Onyango (2015) argues that sexual orientation and identity are both components of human rights to love. The

researcher concurs with literature (e.g., Amory, 1997; Murray & Roscoe, 1998) and argues that gender nonconformity should be looked upon as a personal identity for an individual.

Collins (1993) is of the opinion that for a long term social transformation there is a need to employ new ways of thinking accompanied by new ways of action. Hence, there is a need to understand the meaning of democracy and protection of human dignity for all within constitutions especially of the African countries. These transformations should then be reflected in the educational systems and policies. The researcher argues that by stereotyping and objectifying those we see different from us make us assume that they deserve the inhuman treatment subjected towards them thus compelling us to continue treating them differently. Hence there is a need for the educational systems and policies to make provision for the minority groups with hope to bring about change in societal attitudes and beliefs.

Research (see Cahill & Tobias, 2007; Cianciotto & Cahill, 2003; Russell, 2011) points out that being around supportive people and in a supportive climate are some of the factors with a strong influence on gender nonconforming people to lead a normal life. One can argue that individual attitudes are also determinant to acceptance of gender nonconformity in an African culture. Despite the Botswana's law on gender nonconformity at the time, the former president Festus Mogae urged the Botswana nation not to judge the groups vulnerable to HIV/AIDS in which he included gender nonconforming people. He further appealed to the nation not to allow culture and religion to be encumbrances (United Nations Development Programme, 2000). Mogae further called for legalisation of gender nonconformity in an effort to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS infection in the country ("Botswana's ex-President Festus Mogae defends gay rights,"

2011). He pointed out that gender nonconforming people are citizens and like all other human beings they need to be protected against HIV infections.

Mogae's sentiments are echoed by Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu when he described the homophobic harassments as equal to the racial and ethnical treatments of the apartheid era ("Archbishop Tutu would not worship a homophobic God," 2013; "Desmond Tutu: Uganda's anti-gay bill is as evil as Nazism and Apartheid," 2013). He went as far as apologising to the gender nonconforming people for the inhuman treatment they suffered and are still suffering from. It is worth mentioning that these leaders' stand for gender nonconforming people carry a significant message to the citizens. Therefore one hopes that this might influence African people to think differently about gender nonconformity. Recently, the government of Botswana has decriminalised homosexuality and removed the laws that called for a seven year prison sentence for those who engage in same sex relations (ALJAZEERA, 2019). Equally, Angola has removed the colonial regime's laws that ban homosexuality from their constitutions (Frykberg, 2019).

The above discussed literature presents evidence that there is a trend that is more leaning towards a negative side with a slow progressive attitude in most African countries. Research indicates that the acceptance of homosexuality varies from country to county and from region to region. In Africa for example the acceptance of homosexuality was found to be lower than in other regions globally (Hubbard, 2015). However, it was found that there are gender nonconformity rights organisations registered as human rights organisations in some African countries such as Namibia, Botswana and South Africa (PewResearch Centre, 2014; Quansah, 2004) even though gender nonconforming people are still discriminated in some cases.

The researcher argues that regardless of the positive sentiments discussed above, the wider individual acceptance of gender nonconformity remains a challenge in most African countries. There is still much to be done to realise attitude change in African societies to accept gender nonconformity as a human identity. On the basis of the above discussed literature, the researcher emphasises that education institutions should reflect the elements of social justice in all areas as well as promote the ideology of tolerance and acceptance for all including gender nonconforming learners. Pepper (2015) points out that the conservative attitude toward gender nonconforming people is found to not only have negative effects on gender nonconforming people but also to affect the community at large.

The above discussions bear evidence that embracing sexual diversity will not only help to reduce the repressive experiences of gender nonconforming people but will benefit all the community members. Hence, education should be the tool to promote human rights and dignity within the communities. Consequently, it is imperative for educational systems and policies such as the IE policy to reflect fully inclusion of gender nonconforming learners. In order to dispute the mentioned strong political, religious and traditional sentiments against gender nonconformity, there should be clear care and support strategies within the educational systems and policies for gender nonconforming learners. Given the above sentiments on gender nonconformity in some African countries such as Kenya, Botswana, South Africa and Uganda, the researcher discusses the tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity in Namibia below.

3.6.2   Namibian society's tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity

The implementation of IE in Namibian schools was found to be hindered by several factors such as unsupportive attitudes, lack of materials and lack of proper training in inclusion to name a few

(Haitembu, 2014; Josua, 201; Zimba et al., 1999). The researcher argues that individuals' attitudes of a certain issue are a crucial factor in determining the level of acceptance or rejection of such issue. Thus the society's attitude towards gender nonconformity could have an influence on how this issue will be addressed within the schools. Therefore, in this section the researcher aimed at highlighting the Namibian society's perception towards gender nonconformity. This is aimed at establishing how these views could either hinder or promote practices of inclusion in regard to gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian schools. Additionally, the researcher discusses the law provisions in regard to protection of human rights as well as provision of education for all in the Namibian schools.

Several resources (i.e., Beukes, 2016; Haskins, 2014; LaFont & Hubbard, 2007; Shipo, 2010) reveal that the issue of gender nonconformity is one of the issues that are dealt with differing feelings in the Namibian society. This study's literature (e.g., Brown, 2016, 2017; Francis et al., 2017) bears evidence that laws in Namibia are silent on the issue of sexual diversity. As in many African countries such as Uganda, Kenya and Botswana, gender nonconformity is an issue which is not discussed openly in Namibian society. Consequently, Namibia has adopted a silent stance towards gender nonconforming within its laws. This silence within the Namibian laws is coupled with sodomy being criminalised under the Roman-Dutch laws left behind by the apartheid era (Haskins, 2014). This law is functioning as the basis for law responses to gender nonconformity in Namibia. However it should be noted that this law is no reinforced in the country. It is therefore worth noting that even though there is a silence in the Namibian laws regarding gender nonconformity, there are no reported incidents of imprisonment due to involvement into same sex activities in Namibia. Consequently, the government refused to amend the laws in regard to sodomy on grounds that no person is prosecuted in Namibia on basis of sexual orientation and

everybody has a right to do as they please in the privacy of their homes (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2011).

There are numerous drivers toward gender nonconformity dissonance in Namibia. Namibia in particular is a country with multiple ethnic backgrounds and diverse religious affiliations and beliefs. Moreover, Namibia is a country characterised by political dominances in all spheres. The Namibian political leaders are not the exception when it comes to the issue of gender nonconformity bashing. Most of these leaders have publicly expressed their negation of any form of alternativeness to heteronormative practices. The founding President of Namibia, Sam Nujoma was quoted in local and international news strongly stating that gender nonconformity is a western and non-acceptable foreign practice ("Nujoma attacks homosexuals," 1997). In his address to the University of Namibia students, Nujoma said "The Republic of Namibia does not allow homosexuality, lesbianism here. Police are ordered to arrest you and deport you and imprison you" ("Nujoma declares war on gays and lesbians," 2001).

Jerry Ekandjo, a Namibian politician was quoted echoing the former president Sam Nujoma that gender nonconformity is a foreign practice which is not welcomed in Namibia (Maletsky, 1998). The then Deputy Minister for Finance, Natangue Iithete announced that the African culture does not tolerate gays and further said "You are either a man or a woman. Don't come from outside and tell us this is acceptable. They must keep their gay activities in their countries. We will not entertain any of this gayness" (Lister, 2015).

In response to the UN's call for Namibia to legalise homosexuality, abolish the common law crime of sodomy and include same-sex relationships in the existing Combating of Domestic Violence Act, the then Justice Minister Albert Kawana gave a conflicting response. He indicated

that he supports the referendum on the issue of gender nonconformity and went further to indicate that the Namibian laws can be changed but they are not changeable overnight (Beukes, 2016). He however went on to indicate that the Namibian constitution provides for men and women to marry thus there is no room for same-sex marriage to be allowed. Given the founding president, Sam Nujoma's involvement in the struggle for independence, most of the Namibians have a strong royal stance towards him. It is therefore not surprising that after three decades of independence and social reconciliation politicians are still echoing the founding president's sentiments towards gender nonconformity.

The researcher notes that it is of great concern that the extreme disapproval of non-heteronormative identities might be contributing to an unreceptive attitude towards gender nonconformity in the Namibian society. The formulation of policies and provision of education is determined by the political powers, influences and voices of the founding leaders. As these political influences are translated into policy formulation, they have an impact on the provision of the educational services for the Namibian people. Therefore, it is concerning whether without the positive influence of the founding leaders these politicians will have a change of heart and look at issues of gender nonconformity in terms of human rights. Based on the arguments carried out in this literature one may argue that the Namibian political leaders that are quoted bashing gender nonconforming people contravene the Namibian constitution as article 8 (2b) prevents inhuman treatment and degradation in Namibia.

Applebaum (2012) argues that on the basis of religion, a reasonable religious person is the one who is willing to listen and understand the worlds that are different from the one they uphold

true. An example of such religious reasonability could be drawn from Archbishop Desmond Tutu when he said:

> To discriminate against our sisters and brothers who are lesbian or gay on grounds of their sexual orientation for me is as totally unacceptable and unjust as apartheid ever was ("Desmond Tutu: Uganda's anti-gay bill is as evil as Nazism and Apartheid," 2013).

Similarly political leaders could also exercise understanding of human rights to influence how the societies view gender nonconformity. Notably, as it is mentioned before in this study (see section 3.6.1), the former president of Botswana Festus Mogae called for Botswana government to decriminalise gender nonconformity ("Botswana's ex-President Festus Mogae defends gay rights," 2011). He went as far as to point out that these men who look at other men are citizens. Surprisingly, one of the Namibian political leaders of the opposition parties, Venaani McHenry has publicly announced his political party's support for gender nonconforming people (Miyanicwe, 2013). Whether this was a genuine call or a campaign strategy to gain electoral votes, it made a positive impact and left a mark in the Namibian political history regarding acceptance towards gender nonconformity.

Research (e.g., PewResearch Centre, 2014; Quansah, 2004) found that even though gender nonconformity rights organisations are registered as human rights organisations in some African countries (e.g., Namibia, Botswana and South Africa), gender nonconforming people are still discriminated against and treated as outcasts. This was supported by LaFont and Hubbard (2007) who indicated that gender nonconforming people remain in the closet for fear of being discriminated in Namibia. They argue that traditional values are conflicting with the idea of human rights including sexual rights in the Namibian context. They further mention that some

churches do accept the notion of gender nonconformity but their voices are not loud enough to drown out those of the politicians.

The formal teaching of the cultures in the Namibian context entails the teaching of values, world views, the ways of knowing and understanding (MoEC, 1990). The Namibian people are expected to explore their diversity in order to become familiar with their likeliness and differences. This exploration could help them to value each other's differences as this is deemed the foundation of their unity (GRN, 1990).

In view of the current study, it is worth pointing out that political powers, religious and cultural beliefs should not function as chains that enslave us to the past but as tools to help us forge our future with understanding and respect for diversity. Research (e.g., LaFont & Hubbard, 2007; PewResearch Centre, 2017; Quansah, 2004) shows that several efforts are being made globally to address the recognition of gender nonconforming people in order to compact the effects of homophobic harassment. Thus the researcher should point out that those global efforts have implications for Namibia as it has aligned itself with most of the international laws for human rights. The Namibian IE policy has made provision for the minority groups hence it is expected to explicitly outline the care and support strategies for gender nonconforming learners. It follows that the IE policy is expected to function as a tool to advocate for a transformative education system regarding all challenging issues such as gender nonconformity.

The researcher, drawing from the above literature, reasons that the attitude towards gender nonconformity in Namibia is of mixed feelings. Even though politicians have a strong negative reaction towards the issue, the general reaction of the society is lesser negative. As opposed to the above discussed literature on some African countries (e.g., Kenya and Uganda) reaction to

gender non conformity, there are no documented incidents of death or harm done due to sexual orientation in Namibia. Additionally, organisations (e.g., OutRight Namibia; MPower Community Trust; Tulinam, a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender faith-based group; Wings to Transcend Namibia) that sympathises with gender nonconformity are established in Namibia and operate without intimidation from the society.

The provision of education in Namibia is aligned to its laws and the constitution. Currently there are no clear laws and regulations in regard to gender nonconformity in Namibia. Consequently, this could lead to educational policies to be silent on the topic of gender nonconformity as it is not addressed in the constitution and relevant laws. The researcher points out that literature on gender nonconforming learners in Namibia is scant hence it is difficult to establish facts in the Namibian context regarding gender nonconforming learners. Thus one can argue that this leads to silence and invisibility for these learners. In this regard, the researcher argues that this silence and invisibility could lead to lack of homophobic incidents being reported. In that regard, the researcher has attempted to establish the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools. Thus the next section presents discussions in regard to the treatment of the gender nonconforming learners in schools.

3.7   The treatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools and the effects thereof

Schools are expected to function as units of social acceptance and places where children discover their potentials. Inclusion calls for all learners to be valued, respected and accorded chances to be who they are (UNESCO, 2009; MoE, 2014). Therefore, the schools are expected to be inclusive in all areas and accommodate diversity. Thus the researcher argues that education policies should aim to protect learners from feeling threatened in schools so that they can benefit from the

education being provided. Even though literature on gender nonconforming learners in Namibia is scant, globally there is abundant research on gender nonconforming learners and how they are treated in schools.

Literature evidently shows that globally, gender nonconforming learners face the similar social consequences of transgressing gender norms regardless of in which country they are (Applebaum, 2003; Downie, 2014; Taylor et al., 2011; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013). In addition, Arndt and de Bruin (2006) maintain that homophobic attacks are evident on news and in newspapers even without research. Evidently, the media (e.g., Karimi and Thompson, 2014; Muraranganda, 2016) bears several incidents of gender nonconformity bashing by prominent leaders on numerous occasions. Thus it is sensible to argue that schools as miniature versions of society are to reflect these societies' sentiments and values within their structures regardless of broader educational values and policy statements on diversity and inclusion. Consequently, learners who are not conforming to the gender norms as expected by societies are likely to be bullied in schools.

There are several issues that lead to bullying and homophobic treatment of learners in schools. Several authors document that gender nonconforming learners are reported to be facing discrimination and mistreatment in education as a result of cultural and religious beliefs toward gender nonconformity (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003). A study by Naidoo (2014) maintains that socio-cultural issues and religious principles had compelled many South African youth to repress their sexual orientation even though they wanted to embrace their sexuality.

A study by Msibi (2012) in South African schools discovered that schools have become unsafe places for gender nonconforming learners because of malicious forms of violence and bullying

as well as an unresponsive education system. Brikkels (2014) further affirms that gender nonconforming learners were ignored and rejected from group discussions by heterosexual peers. Hillard et al. (2014) indicates that jokes and expressions made with undertones of homophobia are often made by teachers and other learners without being recognised as bullying. The findings of a study by Msibi (2012) support the above authors' views by asserting that gender nonconforming learners do experience continuous verbal abuse through derogatory name calling.

Butler et al. (2003) indicate that some gender nonconforming learners develop self-hatred as a result of their homosexual feelings. Research (e.g., Applebaum, 2003; Butler et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2011) maintains that these learners were found to suffer homophobic attacks in silence as they could not talk to their parents and teachers for the fear of rejection. Taylor et al. (2011) claim that one of the most hurtful incidents is the demeaning language used in everyday situations within schools such as "that is gay" for "that is stupid". One can argue that using this term, which is used to refer to these learners' identity, in a derogatory manner could negatively affect them. Research further reveals that homophobic attacks were found not to affect gender nonconforming learners only but heterosexual learners as well (Butler et al., 2003; Taylor, et al., 2011). These learners are said to be teased because they are considered to exhibit gay characteristics or because they have gender nonconforming friends or family members.

Homophobic bullying, like all any other kind of bullying, is a form of violence that affects all that involved. Bowers and Minichiello (2005) warn that the experience of homophobia on individual has long term implications on their adjustment into family, school and any other settings. Research (e.g., Almeida et al., 2009; Collier et al., 2013; Van Ingen & Phala, 2014) asserts that the passiveness of education systems to respond to homophobic bullying, coupled

with negative and violent experiences in schools often led to psychological problems such as depression, suicide and traumatic stress among learners. A study in South African schools by Butler and Astbury (2004) has discovered that homophobic bullying led to low self-esteem and self-hate among learners. According to Hillard et al. (2014) these learners are at risk of failure or dropping out of school. Moreover, Blaauw (2012) is of the view that gender nonconforming learners turn to alcohol, drugs and prostitution when they face homonegative victimisation in schools. Therefore, evidence show that the impact of violence on learners from sexual minority groups cuts across all domains: psychology, social and education.

Punt (2007) argues that issues of race and sexuality are all interlinked and they will only be addressed effectively once their interrelationships are acknowledged and policies as well as practices are devised accordingly. The Kenyan Human Rights Commission (KHRC) (2011) indicates that the need to hide one's sexually identity contributes to vulnerability of gender nonconforming people to be extorted and blackmailed in Kenya. In that regard, the researcher points out that learners are part of the large community thus everything that happens within their communities has an effect on them. Hence the stigma associated with gender nonconformity and the societies' negative reactions could be translated into schools. This could lead to vulnerability of gender nonconforming learners and as a result they could face educational challenges.

As research (Blaauw, 2012; Van Ingen & Phala, 2014) indicates, the process of accepting ones' sexuality which is deemed deviant from the norm could be a difficult one and will have an effect on overall mental health of an individual. It is evident from the above discussed literature that an individual will be struggling with feelings of denial as well as trying to repress these feelings in an effort to conform to the society's expectations. In the view of the above claims, the current

study contends that it is important for the individuals to learn to accept and embrace others' differences in order for all people to function in their given roles in the society.

The researcher argues that the above discussed stern societal norms and beliefs need to be addressed through inclusive education structures and inclusive policy statements. This is hoped to guide schools on addressing issues of gender diversity and employ better practices of inclusion in Namibian schools. Thus the researcher stresses a need for education systems and policies such as IE policy to provide strategies for support and care for gender nonconforming learners. As DePaul and Dam (2009) point out, awareness of sexual orientation issues in school will not only benefit gender nonconforming learners but all learners. Hence there is a need to realise that the stigma associated with gender nonconformity endangers the social and emotional wellbeing of all learners including the heterosexual ones.

Collins (1993) is of the opinion that once we realise that each one of us is affected by the oppression of gender nonconforming people then we will see the need for new ways of thoughts and actions. Pepper (2015) holds a view that the discrimination faced by gender nonconforming people will end with embracement of diversity. Similarly, Oswald and Engelbrecht (2004) believe that inclusivity should not only be seen as an option for education but as a strategy to achieve democracy. In agreement with the above discussions, the researcher reason that it is important for educators to address any form of treatment that can lead to oppressions in schools.

Literature (Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013; GRN, 1990) maintains that children being minors have additional rights. They are to be protected from any form of maltreatment and abuse. It is therefore important to note that when these children are maltreated because they do not walk, talk and behave as communities expect them to do; this has implications in terms of the

Namibian constitution. Additionally, this treatment might not only have an effect on their educational performance but also on their success in life as adults. Therefore educators are expected to devise responsive strategies and policies to address diversity within the whole education system. In that regard, the next section presents educational responses to gender nonconforming learners.

3.8 Educational responses to gender nonconforming learners

Several researchers (i.e., Hudgins, 2012; Lee, 2013; Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015) maintain that schools are important places where learners learn about their basic human rights in society and conceptualise understandings of citizenship. Schools today are also places where learners understand their membership to communities and their relationship with others (Potgieter & Reygan, 2012). From the above statements one could argue that schools have an influence on individual's outlook on the world and own relation to others. It is for this reason that in this section the researcher presents literature on different countries' (i.e., South Africa, Kenya and Botswana) educational structures in response to gender nonconformity issues. As much as the schools are becoming inclusive by making learners aware and tolerant of others' cultural backgrounds and circumstances, some gender nonconforming learners are reported to be still experiencing exclusion in schools (Butler et al., 2003, Evans & Chapman, 2014; Msibi, 2012). Deacon et al. (1999) holds a view that homophobia remains a prominent feature in the African education institutions.

As Potgieter and Reygan (2012) point out, the school systems are not vocal on the potential obstacles that are faced by gender nonconforming learners. They further state that this silence leads to sexual minority learners not being recognised as a vulnerable group of individuals. It

could be interpreted that regardless of the education systems efforts to cater for all, literature (Butler et al., 2003; Deacon et al., 1999) shows little noticeable provision for support and care to respond positively to the needs of gender nonconforming learners. This is specifically in terms of policy statements and strategies within the education systems at all levels.

Dowler-Coltman (1995) believes that as long as the educators do not recognise the unique needs of the gender nonconforming learners and start addressing the issue, these learners will remain victims of homophobic harassment. Some researchers (e.g., Bhana, 2015; Munyuki & Vincent, 2017) claim that schools are becoming more of a place for social isolation for gender nonconforming learners. Blaauw, (2012) and Cianciotto and Cahill (2003) point out that as much as schools are trying to be a safe environment for all learners, they contribute to the disastrous effects of homophobic harassment by ignoring the issue of gender nonconformity. Blaauw (2012) further argues that even though there are schools that have policies on anti-homophobia, these policies are not based on concrete plans. Therefore, the researcher in this study argues that there is a need for schools to engage in more concrete actions to implement anti-bullying policies. These policies could positively influence learners and teachers' treatment of gender nonconforming learners. The researcher argues that an IE policy with clear statements on gender nonconformity will be the starting point on which schools can base these anti-bullying school based policies.

Sathiparsad (2003) holds a view that violence towards gender nonconforming learners in schools has negative impacts on learners thus it acts as a barrier to learning. Butler et al. (2003) confirm the above sentiment by stating that the societal views that condemn the identification and recognition of gender nonconformity in schools could harm the psychological development of

the learners. Research (Mostert et al., 2015; Sathiparsad, 2003) further maintains that failure for schools to adopt a pro-active approach to support gender nonconforming learners will lead to major psychological problems for these learners. It should be pointed out at this juncture that inclusive education defies the exclusionary educational practices and policies in schools. To this regard, the researcher concludes that the education policies should be accompanied by responsive programmes for effective inclusion.

Literature (e.g., Engelbrecht et al., 2016; Möwes, 2007; Zimba et al., 1999; Zimba et al., 2004) provides evidence that some of the African countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Kenya and Namibia are trying to honour their constitutional pledges for recognition of children's rights to education through inclusion and provision of education for all. Brikkels (2014) found that some teachers where open and supportive toward gender nonconforming learners. Even though these learners were still being harassed, she indicated that there was a decrease in the homophobic harassment. However, research indicates that in most of these countries in exception of South Africa, Angola and Botswana, the laws have implications on the realisation of inclusion within the educational context.

A report by KHRC (2011) documents alarming incidents of gender nonconforming learners' expulsion from schools in Kenya. Similarly, a study by Kodero et al. (2011) indicates that the Kenya ministry of education has called for expulsion of learners who are to be found engaged in homosexual relations. Research further reports that some universities do restrict students from carrying out internship practices with organisations that sympathise with gender nonconforming people. Students who undertake their internship in these organisations are said to be refused coursework by universities. Additionally, these universities are reported to go as far as

blacklisting organisations such as KHRC and Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya for supporting gay rights. It can therefore be inferred from these facts that the Kenya education system shows little support for gender nonconforming learners. Consequently, this raises a concern in regard to the education systems' aims toward respect for human rights and inclusion of all learners.

Brikkels (2014) writes that the South African Act of 1996 is the only educational policy document that responds to the constitution's pledge for human rights protection. This educational policy states that no learner should be discriminated against on the ground of sexual orientation. The South African education system has gone as far as adapting the curriculum content to address social injustice by addressing sexuality through sex education in Life Orientation textbooks (Brikkels, 2014; MoE, 2001). However, research shows that regardless of these efforts, sexuality is barely addressed during sex education lessons and gender nonconforming learners still experience harassment (UNESCO, 2014). Butler and Astbury (2004) concluded that the South African education system does not promote equality nor does it eradicate discrimination as gender nonconforming learners are still being discriminated and harassed based on their sexual orientation.

Kennedy (2006) maintains that incidents of learners expulsion based on their sexuality identity are prevalent in newspapers. With the constitution that recognises sexual orientation as a human right, it is evident that practice does not comply with laws in South Africa. A study by Mostert et al. (2015) revealed that most of the South African educators were not aware of the homophobic attacks among learners even though this is happening on a daily basis. Literature (MoE, 2001; Van Vollenhoven, 2013) maintains that the education policies clearly state that it is a duty of

teachers to see to it that children are not physical and psychological harmed while at school. It is thus alarming if educators do not notice the bullying that is taking place in schools while they are supposed to protect these children. MacGillivray (2000) is of the same opinion by indicating that educators and schools play a role in perpetuation as well as in creation of discrimination. He further argues that gender nonconforming learners are denied access to safe educational environments free of homophobic harassment.

Researchers such as Butler et al. (2003) and Mostert et al. (2015) indicate that in an educational system which is recognised for its embracement of diversity and respect for sexual orientation, discrimination combined with religious intolerance and cultural practices are restricting the learners' sexual rights in South Africa. On the basis of the above views, there is a noteworthy similarity within African education systems and some developed countries in terms of gender nonconformity responses.

The school curriculum content is one of the important elements in education to address issues of diversity. Evans (1999) purports that, the school curriculum materials function as a place where heterosexuality is positioned as predominant framework. Similarly, Andrews (1990) refers to lack of sex orientation in all aspects of the school curriculum as extensive oppression. In relation to the above views, some researchers (Butler & Astbury, 2004; Page, 2017; Winans, 2006) suggest that the education systems should address gender nonconformity within the sex education context.

Bhana (2015) points out that Life Skills in South African schools focuses on minimising violence and promote respect for others as well as human rights as sanctioned in the constitution. However, the content of the Life Orientation lessons was found to be repetitive, out of touch with

learners' needs and heterosexuality functioned as the default position in South African schools (Mthatyana & Vincent, 2015). Additionally, a study by Brikkels (2014) supports the above views by stating that the teaching of sexual education focuses on bad touches and good touches. These findings conforms with other studies (e.g., Kitchen & Bellini; 2013; Mthatyana & Vincent, 2015) that discovered that in most schools sex education does not include sexual orientation but focuses on good and bad sexually morals. Beyers (2010) is of the opinion that teachers shy away from teaching crucial sexually information due to their cultural and moral beliefs thus they limited their teaching of sex education to moral behaviour.

During the educational reforms for Botswana, gender awareness is one of the suggested emerging contemporary issues to be integrated into the curriculum (MoE, 2008). However, similarly to the situation discovered in some of African countries such as Kenya, gender awareness is focused on the teaching of female and male societal expected behaviours with emphasis on morality (LaFont & Hubbard, 2007) in Botswana schools. Similarly, Kasonde (2013) discovered that gender awareness in Botswana schools is focused on the correct use of contraceptives. Therefore it could be inferred from the above assertions that even though the curricula for these countries (i.e., Botswana, Kenya and South Africa) adopted a positive response to all learners' needs, the teachers are not extensively addressing issues of sexuality education in classrooms as it should be done.

The teacher training programmes play a role in the preparation of teachers for diversity in the classroom. As Healey (2004) claims, preparation for open-minded teachers should start at university level and in turn they inform other educators, parents as well as communities including learners about diversity and tolerance. He claims that lack of sexual orientation

education in the curriculum of universities does not prepare future teachers for sexual diversity in schools. It is therefore important for teacher training programmes to reflect inclusive content on different issues. The ultimate aim of inclusion in the education systems is to address all areas of exclusion at all system levels. Therefore inclusion of gender nonconformity issues should not only focus at school level but it should also be addressed at planning and teacher training level.

The researcher infers from the above literature that the limited sexual orientation content in the curriculum for the teacher training programmes could lead to lack of awareness among teachers. As a result, this absence of sexual orientation content in the school and universities curricula could lead to marginalising of gender nonconforming learners. Consequently, the education system at all levels then fails to address the concept of sexual orientation. Therefore there is an acute need to intervene not only at school level but also at teacher training level in order to strengthen the teachers' understanding of gender nonconformity. Thus the education system at all levels should reflect an inclusive content in all areas previously excluded.

Literature (e.g., Almeida et al., 2009; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013) shows a concern that the minority youth face stress and school dropouts when they do not see themselves reflected in the curriculum. Van Vollenhoven and Els (2013) believe that including the sexual orientation content in the curriculum will function as a tool to shed a positive light on gender nonconformity. In that regard, the Namibian education system is at a position to respond to this need as the Life Skills subject curriculum at Junior and Senior Secondary phases had made provision of child friendly content on sexual orientation (MoE, 2016). Therefore the researcher envisages inclusion of extensive sex orientation in curriculum at all levels to provide

opportunities for teachers and learners to understand diversity in sexual orientation rather than positioning the heteronormative as the norm.

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological model system demonstrates the important role that the school play in the self-concept of a child. Bronfenbrenner (1994) maintains that the child's learning, emotional development, exploration of his/her own world, ability to understand it and identify one's place are determined by the interactions and engagements with the given environment over a period of time. Within the SIP framework, the child's environment such as school, community, social and institutional patterns of culture have an impact on the child's development throughout life (Haitembu, 2014). It can thus be inferred that the school curriculum content has an influence on the younger people's outlook of the world in which they need to function as individuals that belong to a society. In that regard the assumptions of the SIP hold value for an inclusive education system as promotion of a positive identity becomes a crucial factor within these systems.

Kitchen and Bellini (2013) holds a view that the safe school initiatives such as Gay-straight alliances reflected in the Ontario Ministry of Education equity and inclusive policy put homophobia at the forefront of discussions. However, Kitchen and Bellini (2013) further points out that regardless of the ministry of education addressing equity and inclusive education, little is mentioned on the strategies to handle homophobia. Therefore it is vital for schools to establish clear strategies on diversity as this could contribute to successful inclusion of gender nonconformity.

Literature (e.g., Healey, 2004; Kitchen and Bellini, 2013; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013) further maintains that the silence, misconception and disregard surrounding the gender nonconformity

discourse create a hidden curriculum in schools that violate the gender nonconforming learners' rights and dignity. These authors further state that the external factors such as religion infiltrate schools and send out a wrong message thus they promote homophobic harassment. Therefore it is important for educators to come up with strategies to address factors that negatively influence the success of inclusion. To this end, the researcher is of the view that advocating for teaching of sexual diversity in schools could be one of the needed responses to promote acceptance of gender nonconformity.

Studies done by several authors (e.g., DePaul & Dam, 2009; Zander, 2011) maintain that as efforts are made to address racism in schools, sexual orientation is often ignored. Further, Joubert et al. (2011) found that even though policies against sexual discrimination are in place in some schools, implementation is not effective. Additionally, lack of training among teachers on inclusion issues was found to pose a challenge. The foregoing literature maintains that without efforts for schools to curb these attacks, the school environments become unsafe for most learners, including those who have accepted gender nonconforming learners as their friends.

On the grounds of evidence provided by the foregoing literature the researcher in the current study maintains that most of the educational systems, particularly in Africa, are still a long way in responding towards gender nonconforming learners. Hence, the researcher concurs with literature that inclusive education and educational policies could be tools to provide necessary support for gender nonconforming learners. Thus, the researcher is of the view that fully inclusion of gender nonconforming learners is possible if necessary strategies are put in place.

Hatzenbuehler et al. (2014) writes that positive changes in schools had provided supportive school climates in some USA schools. Some of these changes are the relevant topic areas on

gender nonconforming in the educational curriculum, the policies that prohibit homophobic harassment as well as the encouragement of staff to attend relevant trainings. Similarly, Nel (2014) indicates that the inclusion of sexuality, gender and human diversity in psychology curriculum for some of the South African universities is helping with awareness of the oppressive system.

The above discussions therefore provide evidence that there is a need to address the issue of gender no conformity and provide support to gender nonconforming learners in schools. This is hoped to equip the school communities with better information on gender nonconformity which is anticipated to promote acceptance within the school environments. Healey (2004) mentioned how the Canadian youth she interacted with appealed for one simple need: for family, friends, peers, educators and leaders to know that they are who they are regardless of their sexual orientation. These young people pointed out that they are not different from any other teenagers; they did not choose to be gender nonconforming and question why would someone choose a life of isolation, discrimination and abuse.

In view of the above sentiments, one can undoubtedly conclude that there is a need for the schools to educate the societies on issues of gender nonconformity. This awareness could also be hoped to be extended to political leaders and policy makers to be informed on the plight of these children. It is imperative for the societies to be aware that sexual orientation is not the person but just an identity. Unfortunately, one might argue that the hostility to alternative forms of gender could lead to a silence around this discourse. Hence the researcher hopes for this study to bring about recognition that gender nonconforming learners deserves a non-discrimination school environment that can grant them opportunities to learn as stipulated in the Namibian constitution.

In relation to the above views, the researcher highlights the educational responses in the Namibian context in the next section.

3.9   Educational responses to diversity within the Namibian schools

In principle, the Namibian laws and regulations are based on recognition of equal human rights. These are translated into educational policies and regulations on provision of education to the Namibian people. MoEC (1993) maintains that prior to independence the Namibian laws and regulations have been phrased on language of democracy for centuries but excluded most of the Namibian people. The MoEC (1993) further indicates that the struggle for independence was for all Namibians to be citizens in their own societies. As Collins (1993) states, even though it is easy for us to assess our own victimisation within some systems of oppression whether in context of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, we tend to oversee the effects our actions and thoughts uphold on someone else's subordination.

The Namibian education system went through reform to do away with the oppression system. However, regardless of all these efforts to make inclusion a reality, there seems to be a disjuncture within these educational inclusion policies in regard to gender nonconformity. Even though the purpose was to fight oppression from the education system, the researcher is of the same view as Collins (1993) that the system still has to address the oppression of gender nonconforming learners. On the basis of the above discussions the current study assumes that addressing gender nonconformity might address the existing disjuncture between policy and practices in Namibian schools.

The researcher should point out at this juncture that the Namibian education system is making progress in terms of inclusion. As mentioned before in this study, the Namibian education system like the education systems of countries such as South Africa is based on transformative process of inclusion. It is evident that in response to the UNESCO's goal for education for all, Namibian has made tremendous efforts to provide quality education for all. It is thus imperative for the government of the republic of Namibia through the Ministry of Education to fulfil its obligations toward access to quality education for all and uphold human rights. Hence it is important to explore how the education system supports all learners including gender nonconforming learners in schools.

The provision of education in Namibia is aligned to the national goals: equity, justice, democratic participation and respect for human dignity (MoEC, 1993), thus education in Namibia aims for access, equity, quality and democracy. Consequently, the Namibian education system has introduced inclusive education courses at teacher education level, university of Namibia. The curriculum for inclusive education at the teacher education level focuses on providing the student-teachers with knowledge regarding the importance of inclusion and new international developments in areas of inclusion (University of Namibia (UNAM), 2020). The curriculum also introduces student-teachers to different types of disabilities and difficulties that learners are likely to experience. They are also introduced to content adaptation strategies in the classroom as well as procedures to refer learners to relevant services.

The student teachers are also introduced to guidance and counselling practices for general knowledge on handling learners in need of emotional support (UNAM, 2020). The modules on Guidance and Counselling One and Inclusive Education One are offered as a core module for all

student teachers. Moreover, students are introduced to Child Development and Educational Psychology. Another response to diversity in the university curriculum is the introduction of Life Skills as a module. The Inclusive Education Two and Life Skills modules are electives (UNAM, 2020). That means only students that are interested in inclusive education and life skills can enrol for either the Inclusive Education Two module or Life Skills module in their fourth year of study. Hence, these two modules are not making much impact on all student teachers in terms of sensitisation on issues of diversity.

The curriculum content of the abovementioned modules shows that regardless of these changes in the university programmes, the curriculum is silent on sexual orientation (UNAM, 2020). Thus it could be concluded that the student teachers leave the training with little knowledge, if any at all, of addressing this sensitive issue; gender nonconformity. The assumption is therefore that the curriculum content at teacher education level might be contributing to the Namibian schools to be nonresponsive towards gender nonconformity issues.

The Namibian curriculum at the basic education level has a component on awareness about sexual orientation (MoE, 2016). Furthermore, the MoEAC made efforts to adopt the junior curriculum into the supplementary curriculum for IE. Additionally, Life Skills as a subject became compulsory as from grade 4 up-to grade 12 (MoE, 2016). Importantly, the Life Skills Curriculum for schools aims to focus on the optimal and holistic development of all learners (MoE, 2016). This subject is believed to teach young people to understand their identity, be able to function effectively in the society, to develop and enhance respect as well as develop tolerance towards other people in all spheres of life (MoE, 2016). Additionally the Life Skills curriculum aims to provide orientation, exploration and skills development through self-awareness and a

positive self-image for learners (MoE, 2016). In Namibian schools bullying in general was identified as the main cause of emotional problems among learners (Sam, 2011). Hence, the researcher argues that these efforts could lead to understanding of diversity among learners and curb incidents of bullying.

The MoEAC made provision to appoint full time Life Skills teachers in schools even though not all schools have appointed Life Skills teachers yet (MoE, 2014, 2018). Apart from provision of permanent life skills teachers' teaching posts, there are Regional School counsellors for all regions in the country. Additionally the MoEAC made provision for the training of teacher counsellors based at schools to help learners cope with moderate challenging situations (Mbongo et al., 2016; MoE, 2014). The Life Skills curriculum is complemented by the additional curriculum for grades 5 "My future is My choice". This curriculum aims to educate young people about the dangers of HIV/AIDS thus it focuses on reproductive health education. It is commendable that these two curriculums both have a topic on homosexuality and the need to respect others' diverse sexual orientation. Unfortunately, the additional curriculum of My Future is My Choice is not compulsory in Namibian schools and only a few schools offer it.

The researcher, on the basis of above discussions, deduces that the Namibian education system is committed to achieving inclusion. The Namibian curricula, at university level and basic education level all advocate for tolerance and acceptance of diversity. It is therefore worthy noting that the Namibian education system has moved towards the realisation of inclusivity in some areas. However, there seems to be a lack of curriculum content at university level in terms of how to handle issues of homosexuality in schools. The researcher argues that lack of gender nonconformity content in the teacher training curriculum could contribute to the hidden

curriculum on gender nonconformity as educators will use their own beliefs and discretion to focus on the topic of sexual diversity as they see fit.

The researcher further argues that lack of gender nonconformity content in the teacher training curriculum could lead to the Namibian teachers to be not prepared for gender nonconformity issues in schools. This could be one of the factors discovered by research (Haitembu, 2014; Mbongo et al., 2016) preventing them from teaching the Life Skills lessons properly during which they are supposed to addressing gender nonconformity among other issues. This is so regardless of the fact that the Life Skills curriculum at both phases Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary education has provided ample possibilities for the exploration of homosexuality content.

The researcher in this study argues that educational policies might also have an impact in regard to advocating for tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity among outside communities. As literature (*Answer* Ed, 2015; Corter & Pelletier, 2005; Kintz, 2011) indicates, some schools are successful in creating supportive environments as parents and communities are helping with inclusive sex education. However, this might be a challenge in Namibian communities with diverse cultural beliefs and political affiliations. The literature (Shipo, 2010; Brown, 2016) reviewed for this study indicates that some of the Namibian prominent politicians strongly oppose the notion of gender nonconformity. Additionally, the discussed literature points out that most of Namibian people are influenced by societies' expectations, thus public support for inclusive sex education might be looked up on as an abomination act by many. At the other hand the Namibian politicians have a strong political hold on most policy making decisions thus they might influence the policy content. As research indicates, most of parents were found to be

uncomfortable to talk about sex with their children in fear of awakening sexual curiosity in children (Jearey-Graham, 2015). Moreover, some churches and parents in Namibia have shown disapproval of the Comprehensive Sex Education programme by demanding for that programme not to be introduced in the Namibian schools (Mogotsi, 2019). Based on the above arguments, the researcher therefore argues that schools might be the answer to bring about change within communities. This chapter is summarised in the next section.

3.10   Chapter Summary

The researcher highlighted the context of the present study in the existing literature. Hence, in this chapter, the researcher paid attention to literature on the importance of general education and inclusive education, gender nonconformity in Africa and Namibia. The researcher believed that it is important to establish an overview of how African's beliefs and acceptance toward gender nonconformity could affect the African education systems. In so doing, the researcher in this study uncovered the versions of reality that sustain oppression and unveiled those that lead to social justice. At the same time the researcher established the social and cultural constructed knowledge about gender nonconformity. This led to new knowledge that can challenge discrimination and improve social justice as well as human rights in education systems.

The researcher provides a discussing on the African stand on gender nonconformity as opposed to globally responses towards homosexuality. The researcher also highlights the current trends in attitudes towards gender nonconformity by looking at law provisions and the shift in public tolerance and acceptance of sexual diversity. By highlighting these trends, this chapter outlined the positive changes that have taken place in regard to homosexuality tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity in Africa.

There are some countries such as South Africa that are making efforts to respond to gender nonconforming learners within their education systems. Education in general is said to be the most important instrument for achieving human liberation and empowerment. The discussed literature has revealed that African countries such as Namibia, South Africa, Kenya and Botswana do face challenges when it comes to implementation of IE. Some of these challenges include unclear IE policy statements, cultural and religious beliefs as well as lack of knowledge in terms of inclusion and response to diversity.

The reviewed literature presented a mixed attitude towards gender nonconformity in some African countries such as South Africa, Botswana and Namibia with a positive trend gaining momentum. The literature presented in this chapter revealed that there are deeper psychological effects of homophobic treatment on learners. The positive impacts of inclusive curriculum content and policies are also highlighted in this chapter. There are positive changes reported in education systems of the countries such as South Africa that included inclusive sex education in their curriculum even though there is still an element of homophobia in these countries.

The discussions done in this chapter present that the Namibian IE policy is aligned to several international and national legal frameworks for human rights' protection. However, this chapter identified a gap in knowledge such as that in some countries such as Namibia there is a silence towards the issue of gender nonconformity in terms of laws and educational policies. This chapter also outlined another existing knowledge gap in literature which is lack of research and studies on gender nonconformity in the Namibian context. The researcher has highlighted the effects of failure for schools to adopt a pro-active approach to support gender nonconforming

learners. These include major psychological problems, suicide and traumatic stress among gender nonconforming learners. The methodology that is used in this study to explore the IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR:

METHODOLOGY

4.1   Introduction

Creswell (2014) writes that before a researcher embarks on the actual process of research, they need to decide on the research approach which they think is appropriate for their study. He indicates that there are several facts that guide a researcher when choosing an approach. These facts include the philosophical assumptions of the researcher, the researcher's experience, the nature of the problem under study and the specific research methods of data collection, analysis and interpretations (Creswell, 2014). On the basis of the above assertions, the nature of the current study has necessitated the convergent parallel transformative mixed methods case study design as an appropriate approach to explore and understand the problem under study.

This study was aimed at exploring the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Hence the researcher sought out to answer the main research question: *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?* This main research question was answered through the following research sub-questions.

1. In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

2. What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?

3. From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat the gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

4. How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

5. What elements would form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of the Namibian IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The nature of the topic being addressed has necessitates the use of a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach. The philosophical assumptions of this approach are aligned to the objectives of this study to bring changes in schools. Moreover, this approach responds to the objectives of the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) which are to address the social categorisation and improve the minority groups' wellbeing.

The researcher, in this chapter, presents discussions of the epistemological, ontological and methodological stances of the transformative approach used in this study. The researcher further discusses the methods used to collect and analyse data for the current study. The researcher also describes the two designs; qualitative and quantitative paradigms that are used concurrently in this study. These two paradigms are explained separately in terms of their relevance for the study. Furthermore, the researcher has justified the use of a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods case study design in the present study. The researcher further presents the population, sample and sampling procedures used in the study. Moreover, the research instruments used and field constraints encountered during the data collection are highlighted. A summary of the pilot study that was conducted, the procedures and data analysis used in the pilot study are also presented in this chapter. Finally, the researcher presents the ethical issues

considered in the current study as well as validity and reliability followed by the summary of the main points discussed in the chapter. The research design is discussed below.

4.2   Research Design

Several authors (e.g., Creswell, 2012; Litchman, 2013; Okeke & Van Wyk; 2015) write that a research design is a detailed plan of how the researcher intends to conduct research starting from identifying the problem through to reporting and publishing the results. They further indicate that it is important for the researcher to identify the type of design to be used from the onset as this will provide specific directions for the purpose and procedures of the research. In line with the above views other authors (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013) further emphasise that the research design should be determined from the start as this is the blueprint of the study and it informs every step of the study. Following the above views, the researcher discusses the paradigms used in the present study to enable the justification of the social identity perspective theoretical assumptions and beliefs underpinning the transformative paradigm in the current study. The research paradigm is discussed in details below.

4.2.1   Research paradigm

This study follows a convergent parallel mixed methods paradigm thus it employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches to enable the exploration of how the Namibian IE policy responds to gender nonconforming learners in schools. Lichtman (2013) and Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) write that a research parading is a set of fundamental beliefs and assumptions about the world and what is perceived as real or truth. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) add that a paradigm is a set of generalisations, values and beliefs of a community that guides the inquiries.

Johnson et al. (2007) define mixed methods research as a type of research in which a researcher combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. They write that a mixed methods research makes use of the qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, data analysis as well as inference techniques for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding as well as corroboration (Johnson et al., 2007, p.123). Creswell (2012, 2014) maintains that a mixed methods research is an approach that combines both statistical trends and stories to study social and human problems. Gunasekare (2015) corroborates the above definitions by stating that mixed methods research paradigm is a procedure to collect and analyse data using both qualitative and quantitative rese-arch approaches within a stage or across the two stages of the research process to understand the research problem. This helps to address various research questions for better understanding of the problem (Lichtman, 2013).

Creswell (2014, 2016) points out that a mixed methods research uses rigorous procedures in conducting qualitative and quantitative research in order to understand the problem from both perspectives. Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) have included methods and a philosophical orientation in the definition of mixed methods research. They see a mixed methods research as a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of enquiry (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.5).

The above definitions give clear evidence that a mixed methods research paradigm uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches to address the research questions. It is also evident that it helps the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the problem under study. Further, it is evident that a mixed method paradigm employs different techniques to collect and analyse data from both approaches. Moreover, a study could be classified as a mixed methods approach if

there is an integration of both approaches at any stage. This could be during the questions development, data collection, analysis procedures, interpretation or conclusions (Creswell et al., 2003; Lichtman, 2013).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) indicate that a mixed methods paradigm uses different designs that provide useful frameworks for researchers such as embedded, exploratory sequential, multiphase, explanatory sequential, convergent parallel and transformative design. However, Creswell and Plano Clark had reviewed the typology of the mixed methods and narrowed these designs into three core designs which researchers can use within larger frameworks such as social justice perspectives, case studies and others. These three core designs are convergent, exploratory sequential and explanatory sequential (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

The researcher in the current study used a convergent parallel mixed methods case study approach encased in the transformative framework to understand the research problem and answer the research questions. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) write that a convergent parallel transformative design entails that the researcher weights both methods equally, collects both quantitative and qualitative data in the same phase, analyses the two components independently and interprets the results together with a purpose to advance for social change.

A transformative mixed methods paradigm is said to be based on assumptions that knowledge is not neutral but influenced by our interests and it reflects the power as well as relations in the societies we construct (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Mertens, 2007). Moreover, Meterns (2007) and Taylor et al. (2012) claim that a transformative paradigm assumes that realities are constructed by social, race, gender, cultural, political and economic values as well as beliefs. All these factors are considered important in construction of realities as they differ from one culture

and society to another (Mertens, 2007; Taylor et al., 2012). Further, Mertens (2007) writes that the transformative paradigm assumes that the purpose of knowledge construction should be to lead to improvement of societies.

On the basis of the above discussions, the transformative paradigm provided a lens through which the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative (QUAL+QUAN) approaches to explore the positioning of gender nonconforming learners within the IE policy. Meterns (2007) is of the opinion that the transformative paradigm uses methods that require the discussions of social justice matters with communities such as focus groups, interviews and at the same time it uses methods that collect quantitative data as appropriate. This paradigm was deemed appropriate for the current study as it is informed by theories such as critical, race, identities and feminist as well as postcolonial discourses which include the studies of social justice and gender issues.

In response to the SIP' assumptions, this paradigm helped the researcher in the current study to advance for social change and social justice for gender nonconforming learners through involvement of the educators. The researcher anticipated that individuals' understanding of gender nonconformity is different from those of other teachers and other educators thus the researcher used the transformative paradigm in this study to understand all participants' perspective. Another merit of this paradigm is that it encompasses the assumptions of the SIP that informs the current study as this theory aims at social emancipation and transformation through participatory research. The philosophical perspective of the SIP validates and supports the key aspects of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Further, the position of methodology in this paradigm is for research to destroy myths and misconceptions in order to

empower marginalised groups and lead to social transformation. In the case of the current study, the transformative paradigm provided a means to gather data which is not only useful to the school community members but also credible to education stakeholders and policy makers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

In agreement with literature (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plato, 2011; Mertens, 2007), the researcher adopted a transformative mixed methods paradigm. This is on the basis that this paradigm supports the theoretical stance of the present study that many constructions we have about certain issues are social creations and some are more privileged than others. The Social Identity Perspective (SIP) is used within this paradigm to address the issues of gender nonconformity and to bring about change in schools in regard to gender nonconforming learners. Literature (Creswell & Plato Clark, 2017; Meterns, 2007) further positions the theoretical assumptions of the current study within the transformative paradigm as it focuses on the experiences and lives of the marginalised groups and explorations of power of relationships. A discussion of the qualitative approach is done in the next sub-section.

4.2.1.1 *Qualitative approach*

The researcher used a qualitative approach as a component of the mixed methods paradigm in the current study. A qualitative research explores the problem and develops a detailed understanding of the phenomena under study. The qualitative approach's basis for the current study lies in its exploratory nature to social reality and the search for understanding of the lived experiences of human beings (Creswell et al., 2003; Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Authors such as Creswell (1994, 2011) and Gay et al. (2012) maintain that a qualitative approach builds from the views of the participants but not from the researcher's point of view, thus it provides

more realistic data. Hence, in the quest of exploring how gender nonconforming learners are responded to by the IE policy, the qualitative approach helped the researcher to understand the participants' perceptions of this issue within their context. Additionally, a qualitative approach was deemed beneficial to capture the social context of gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian schools.

The qualitative approach involves gathering details about people's views, feelings and emotions which is not possible with the quantitative approach. In order to gather qualitative data, the researcher used two research instruments; questionnaire (Appendix K) and an interview schedule (Appendix L). Hence the researcher distributed a questionnaire and engaged in face-to-face interviews to establish the participants' views on the IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners. As Gay et al. (2012) and Springer (2010) point out the qualitative research approach provides the researcher with an opportunity to obtain a detailed perspective of few people. Thus, this approach had helped the researcher to obtain an in-depth understanding of the problem under study through conducting face-to-face interviews with four participants.

As Fassinger and Morrow (2013) points out, a qualitative research design in a social justice study can be useful as it tends to stimulate collaborative social change efforts by communities. Moreover, a qualitative research frames dissemination of information in such a way that the whole community benefits immediately (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Lichtman, 2013). Therefore, this approach was deemed instrumental to the current study to provide information that can be used for social change. Hence, the use of open ended questions to determine the participants' views on gender nonconformity issues within the Namibian education system. Additionally, this approach was instrumental in the establishment of the nature and elements of a supplementary framework

for supporting the implementation of IE policy in terms of addressing the social justice challenges that gender nonconforming learners might face in Namibian schools.

The researcher, regardless of the merits of the qualitative approach mentioned above, acknowledges that a qualitative research has its limits. The qualitative data cannot be generalised to a large population as it studies a small number of people. It is also highly interpretive and the reliance on participants limits the researcher's expertise due to the fact that it relies on the researcher's interpretation of the participants' responses (Creswell, 2014). Regardless of these limits, the qualitative approach had merits for the present study that outweighed the limits mentioned above. It provided the researcher with a lens to have an in-depth look at gender nonconformity issues in Namibian schools. Moreover, these shortcomings are mitigated by the use of the quantitative approach discussed below.

4.2.1.2   *Quantitative approaches*

The researcher has also used a quantitative approach together with the qualitative approach discussed above to carry out this study. A quantitative approach draws conclusions from a large number of people and allows for efficient data analysis (Creswell, 2013). This approach is further described (Creswell, 2014; Lichtman, 2013) as an approach that involves gathering numerical data from a large number of participants. Thus it relies on experiments, tests, numbers and statistics to answer the research question. Literature (Gay & Mills, 2016; Newby, 2010) indicates that information from the quantitative data can be presented through statistic descriptions such as percentages and frequencies. These two abovementioned statistic descriptions are used in the current study to present information from the quantitative data (see section 5.3).

Creswell (2012) writes that one of the characteristics of a quantitative approach is describing a research problem through description of trends. In exploring the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners, quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire (Appendix K). This was done to determine how these learners are perceived and treated in Namibian schools. The researcher also used a quantitative approach to establish how gender nonconforming learners are responded to in the Namibian schools through the IE policy. A quantitative method had its merit within the current study as generalisations can be made about a large population based on the trends and statistical analysis (Muijs, 2011). Further, in line with Fassinger and Morrow (2013) the researcher acknowledges the merits of employing a quantitative research in a social justice study that lies in its ability to provide a large sample that represents the multi-cultural communities.

The researcher however acknowledges that just like any other research approach, the quantitative approach has its limitations. It is said to limit the understanding of the context of the participants (Creswell, 2016). At the same time it does not provide the researcher an opportunity to hear the words of the participants. Additionally, quantitative research is largely driven by the researcher. Nevertheless, the fact that quantitative research allows for data collection from a large number of the subjects and can be generalised to the large population made this research approach relevant to the present study. Most importantly, the use of the qualitative approach discussed above had complemented the quantitative approach to obtain more reliable data. The researcher gave more details on the approach used in this study by discussing the case study mixed methods approach in the next sub-section.

4.2.1.3   The case study mixed methods approach

The researcher used a QUAL+QUAN descriptive and exploratory single case study design in this study to explore the IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners. A case study research design is defined as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system which could be a single case, activities, process or individuals (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Springer, 2010). A descriptive case study aims to describe a phenomenon in the real life context, while an explorative case study investigates and explores situations with unclear outcomes (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Fraenkel et al., 2012). A descriptive and exploratory case study design benefited this study as it led to a discovery of a different kind of knowledge (Gay et al., 2012) which brought about a new understanding of issues concerning gender nonconformity in Namibian schools.

The study was aimed for an exploration of the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools hence a single case study was employed to answer the research questions. It was deemed appropriate to provide an in-depth exploration and understanding of the educators' perceptions within their environments (Creswell, 2012; Springer, 2010). In the current study, a case study allowed the researcher to study a phenomenon which might not have been easily studied by other research methods. It helped the researcher to explore the issues of gender nonconformity in the Namibian schools through in-depth interviews and questionnaires.

Kitchenham (2010) states that a case study is ideal within a mixed method approach as the researcher can apply data collection and analysis procedures from both approaches to data. He further states that a case study within a mixed method approach helps to answer the quantitative questions of "how and why" which are usually neglected in case studies of a qualitative nature. Thus the researcher capitalised on the advantages of a mixed methods case study to yield richer

data as both inductive and deductive reasoning are employed through a rigorous data collection process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Kitchenham, 2010; Lithcman, 2013. Hence, a mixed method case study was useful in this study as it employed a convergent parallel design (QUAL+QUAN) to collect data at the same time but separately and then integrate the data through interpretations (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015).

Gay and Mills (2016) and Gay et al. (2012) point out that a case study is appropriate for a study that is interested in determining the extent to which a particular programme has been implemented. Thus a case study was used to focus on the implementation of the IE policy by determining how it responds to gender nonconforming learners. The researcher envisaged the case study to provide rich descriptions and contextualised views about the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. Even though inability to generalise data from one case to a larger population is one of the potential limitations of a case study, the use of a mixed methods approach generated information that readers can relate to their own situations. The researcher provides a more detailed justification of the use of a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods case study design in the next sub-section.

4.2.2   Justification of a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods design

Gay and Mills (2016) suggest that a researcher should provide a rationale for the use of a mixed methods approach. Thus, in this sub-section the researcher justified the use of a mixed method approach in the present study. A mixed methods research approach combines the qualitative and quantitative research approaches in a single study. Literature (e.g., Creswell, 2011; Driscoll et al., 2007; Johnsons & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) point out that researchers have been using mixed methods for decades but referred to it with different names such as integrated, multi-methods and

others; eventual mixed methodology research. The use of mixed methods in research is documented in several studies.

There are some authors (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Johnsons & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) who indicate that the debate about this method has been going on for decades. Hunter and Brewer (1989) in their book "Multimethod research: a synthesis of style" wrote about the concept of using qualitative and quantitative methods in one study. Moreover, Cronbach (1975) when writing "Beyond the two discipline of scientific psychology" argues that social research should be more concerned with interpreting information within the local context and less with testing hypotheses. He advocates for a mixed method approach by arguing that research can benefit by moving beyond the testing and going outside laboratories to study human behaviour. Additionally, other researchers such as Creswell have been writing about mixed methods research as early as 1990s.

Literature (e.g., Gay & Mills, 2016; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Lichtman, 2013) indicates that even though there are several studies that used both quantitative and qualitative components for decades, researchers started using the mixed methods more actively in the 21st century. Literature revealed a plethora of studies that used a mixed methods approache in different disciplines. For instance, Newman et al. (2006) carried out a mixed methods research to understand the characteristics of young people who drink alcohol and of those who do not drink alcohol in order to advise for educational programmes that can reduce alcohol related health problems. The use of a mixed methods approach in their study yielded data that helped them to suggest ways in which policy and educational initiatives can be used to reduce alcohol risks among adolescence (Newman et al., 2006).

Hodgkin (2008) through a mixed methods approach carried out a study on differences between women and men in terms of their social capital with the main aim to demonstrate how a mixed methods approach could be applied to a feminist study. The use of mixed methods approach helped her to demonstrate the power of a mixed methods approach in discovering gender inequalities hence affirming the applicability of a mixed methods approach to a social justice study. Similarly Barnhardt et al. (2018) used a transformative mixed methods approach in an effort to assess the educational access and opportunities for marginalised students in the South-eastern United States' colleges. Their main purpose was to exemplify the power of a transformative mixed methods approach in understanding how the oppression of vulnerable populations is institutionalised in organisational settings.

Philips and Malcolm (2010) have also employed a mixed methods approach to study the health risk behaviours related to violence among girls in South African schools. Through a mixed methods approach they have discovered that high school learners were exposed to different forms of violence. Maciver et al. (2017) have employed a mixed methods approach to determine the inclusive support provided to learners with disabilities. Hence this approach proved useful to achieve data on how learners with disabilities were supported in schools and offer strategies for improvement of inclusion. Other researchers such as Zagona et al. (2017) have also employed a mixed methods approach to study teachers' understanding of their experience and preparedness for inclusion. Their study have also demonstrated that a mixed methods approach does provide a deeper understanding of the problem under study as Zagona et al. (2017) were able to determine that teacher training had an effect on the level of teachers' preparedness for inclusion.

The purpose to use mixed methods approach since then and still has been to expand the breadth and depth of research to offset the weakness of either approach alone (Creswell, 2016). On the basis of the aforementioned, literature demonstrates the unlimited use of a mixed methods approach across all disciplines. Literature provides enough empirical evidence that this method is gaining momentum and popularity among researchers. Thus the researcher, in conformity with literature, points out that a mixed methods approach had benefited the current study. The quantitative data was useful to describe trends about a large number of people (Creswell, 2014). On the other hand, the mixed methods approach had offered a variety of perspectives by obtaining actual words of people's views through qualitative data (Creswell, 20016, Lichtman, 2013).

The researcher, for this this study, employed a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods case study design in which a Social Identity Perspective (SIP) provided an overarching framework to explore the IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners. The mixed methods approach considers objects in both quantitative and qualitative as socially shared as well as general to a large social group (Gay & Mills, 2016). Similarly, the SIP posits that realities are socially, historically and culturally influenced and are general to the large society (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Stryker, 1977 & Spivak, 1985b). Thus one can conclude that the SIP supports the use of a mixed method in search for knowledge that can lead social change.

The researcher explored the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners from multiple perspectives rather than one (see figure 4.1). This enabled the researcher to make generalisations and inferences from both perspectives. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) indicate that combining qualitative and quantitative data yields data of more value. Thus, using a mixed

method approach capitalised on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research since each approach can compensate for the weakness of the other (Conrad & Serlin, 2011; Fraenkel et al., 2012). As Gay et al. (2012) state, a mixed method helps the researcher to understand the phenomenon under study by building on the synergy and strengths of both methods rather than employing either one alone. Hence, this provided a full contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study which is better than having used either a qualitative or quantitative design alone.

Some writers (Gay et al., 2012; Gay & Mills, 2016) posit that quantitative approaches are helpful to discover the effects of a certain programme while qualitative approaches are useful in making us understand how the programme successes or fails. Mertens (2012) emphasises that a qualitative component in a transformative paradigm is of the outmost importance as it involves interaction between the researcher and the community members. Therefore, applying a mixed methods research embedded in the transformative framework heightened the quality and depth of the discussions of findings in this study. This has also contributed to a richer understanding of how gender nonconforming learners are responded to in the Namibian schools within the IE policy. Moreover, a transformative paradigm aims at increasing social justice by focusing on the unequal distribution of power within the area of interest. In the context of this study, the transformative paradigm is aimed at addressing the educational responses for the less empowered learners.

Fassinger and Morrow (2013) maintains that due to the nature of a social justice research, which is contextually driven, the mixed methods approach is beneficial as it helps the study to create a unifying tread toward a social change. Thus, using a mixed methods approach had enormous

benefits for the present study as it helped to compensate for uni-paradigmatic limitation and offered maximum flexibility to gather data that made a contribution towards social change in terms of addressing gender nonconformity issues in Namibian schools.

The researcher acknowledges that regardless of the benefits outlined above, the mixed methods approach has some methodological challenges like any other research approach. As it is pointed out by Gay et al. (2012), the use of a mixed methods approach could be complex and needs a researcher with extensive knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. Similarly, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, 2017), caution that using a mixed methods approach requires skills in quantitative and qualitative approaches, time as well as resources as this approach involves extensive data collection and analysis. They further indicate that in order for the mixed method study to be accepted by the scholarly community, it will require the researcher to be convincing on the need to use a mixed method approach. Further, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) write that on top of the limitations associated with a mixed methods approach, a transformative mixed design faces other challenges. These include little guidance available in literature on how to implement this design and the need to explicitly justify the use of a transformative approach.

The position of the transformative mixed methods design in social justice research discussed above and its use in an abundant research in different areas as well as its strengths outlined in this section has demonstrated why the researcher found it relevant to apply this design in the current study. As the current study was hoped to contribute toward social change, a transformative mixed methods was appropriate as it has the potential to combine the best of both quantitative and qualitative methods. It should be understood at this juncture that the use of two

approaches concurrently was to provide a complete and comprehensive understanding of the research problem in order to provide better results. The strengths of both approaches serve a strong basis for exploring the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. Therefore, the current study used a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach.

In order to understand how the mixed methods approach was employed in the present study the researcher deemed it necessary to illustrate the process in a form of a diagram. Thus the following diagram (Figure 4.1) presents the methods used in the current study to explore and understand the problem.

Figure 4.1

The mixed methods approach employed in the study
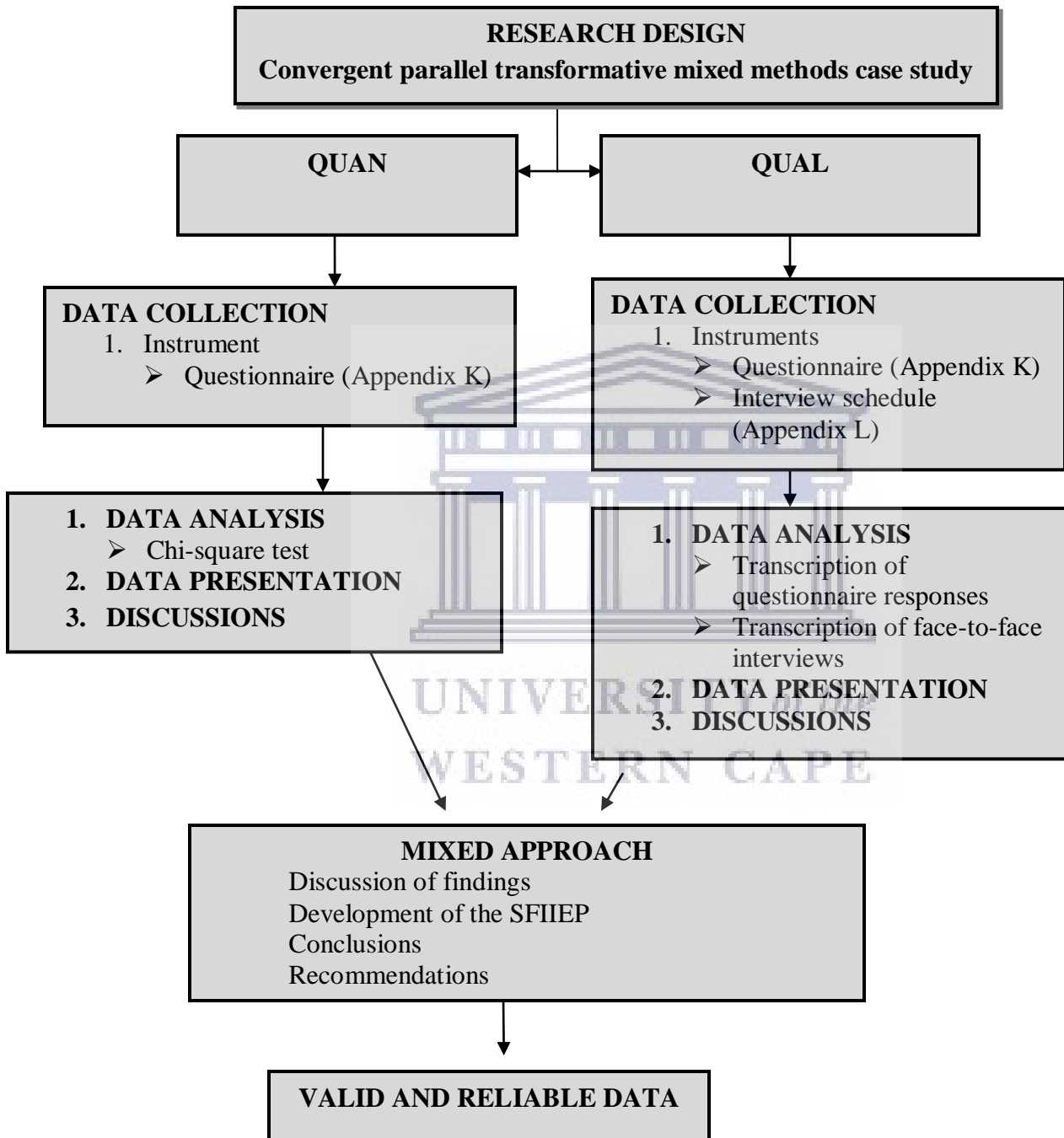
Note: This figure functions as the model that guided the use of the mixed methods approach to collect, analyse and discuss data in the present study. Source: Researcher's own drawing. The population of the study is presented in the next section.

4.3   Population

The population of the current study included education officers and teachers in Erongo region, the Deputy Directors for Special Programmes and Schools (SPS), the IE Officers at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) and the Deputy Directors for Diagnostic, Assessment and Training Services (DATs) (see figure 4.2). Hence the target population of this study was Regional School counsellors and grade 8-12 teachers in the Erongo region, Deputy Director for SPS, Deputy Director for DATs and IE officers at NIED (see figure 4.2).

Several authors (e.g., Gay et al., 2012; Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015) highlight that the population of a study is the larger group of objects, people or items from which the sample is selected. Creswell (2014) defined population as a group of individuals with same characteristics. Gay et al. (2012), advise that the researcher should define the population in enough details to enable the readers to apply the findings to their situations. This is also believed to help the researcher to be able to determine the accessible population out of the target population.

In line with literature (e.g., Gay & Mills, 2016; Newby, 2010) the researcher considered the nature of the topic, thus in order to avoid sampling bias the participants selected in to the sample were drawn from schools with grade 8-12 only (see figure 4.3). The researcher believed that the majority of the learners in grades 8-12 are more mature and at the stage where they are embracing their sexuality as opposed to lower graders. Thus teachers of the upper grades (8-12)

were expected to provide relevant and valid data on how the policy is responding to the learners in terms of their sexual diversity. There were 72 schools in total in Erongo region and 27 of these schools had grades 8-12 (MoEAC, 2018).

The Erongo region was selected purposely for this study. The nature of the topic under study and the social setting of this region have played a role for the current study to be done in Erongo region. As literature (e.g., Maletsky, 1998; Muraranganda, 2016) shows, homosexuality is still a sensitive topic among the Namibian society thus the choice of region to conduct the current study. The multicultural composition of the population in Erongo region compared to other regions of Namibia was a determining factor for this region to be the focus of the current study. The population in this region was anticipated to be more open to respond to a study that focuses on gender nonconformity as compared to the rest of the regions in the country. Therefore, the researcher anticipated to get a better representative of the main population and a better return rate of the questionnaire from Erongo region teachers. The population of the present study is presented graphically in figure 4.2 below.
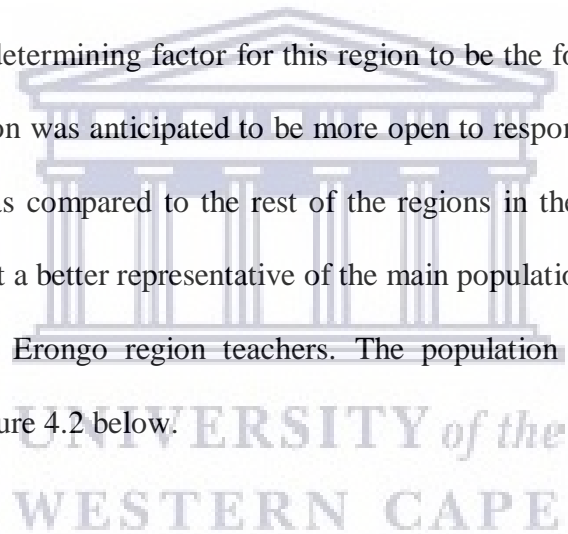
Figure 4.2

The population of the study

POPULATION
➢ Education officers
➢ Deputy Directors for DATs and SPS
➢ Teachers

TARGET POPULATION

➢ Grade 8-12 teachers and regional school counsellors (Erongo region)
➢ IE Officer at NIED
➢ the Deputy Director for SPS
➢ the Deputy Director for DATs)

ACCESSIBLE POPULATION

One Regional School Counsellor, 608 teachers, one Deputy Director for SPS, one Deputy Director for DATs and one IE officer at NIED

Note: This figure presents the population of the present study from which the sample population is drawn. Source: Researcher's own drawing. The researcher describes the sample and sampling procedures used in this study below.

4.4 Sample and sampling procedures

The researcher has used two sampling procedures, purposive criterion and simple random sampling to obtain two different samples. A purposive criterion sampling procedure was found to be relevant for the sampling of the education officers and deputy directors as they all met the

same criteria of being the policy makers and responsible for monitoring of the IE policy implementation. Given the smaller number of education officers that are responsible for the formulation and evaluation of the IE policy in Namibia, the researcher followed Creswell and Plano Clark 's view on the use of purposive criterion sampling. They write that purposive criterion sampling involves selecting all cases that have knowledge and experience about the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Since there were only two Regional School counsellors, one Deputy Director for SPS, one Deputy Director for DATs and one IE officer at NIED, they were all selected into the sample for this study through a purposive criterion sampling procedure. However, only one Regional School Counsellor formed part of the main sample as one of these officers was sampled for the pilot study.

Some authors (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), write that purposive criterion sampling is done intentionally with a purpose to select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. Newby (2010) and Springer (2010) write that purposive criterion sampling is not aimed at obtaining a balanced sample. He states that this sampling rather focuses on rich understanding of the phenomenon under study as participants are chosen on criteria of being experts in the field with relevant experiences. Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) are of the opinion that purposive criterion sampling is done to select the population based on the intention of the study, thus the researcher samples the best rich information population.

The present study focused on the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools hence education officers and deputy directors that are responsible for IE policy development and evaluation were hoped to provide information needed for the study (see figure 4.3). In agreement with literature (Palinkas et al., 2015) these education officers and the

deputy directors are believed to have rich information in virtue of their roles and experiences hence they were sampled through a purposive criterion sampling procedure.

There were a total of 72 schools in Erongo region and 27 schools out of the 72 schools had learners in grade 8-12. Hence, through a purposive criterion sampling, all the 27 schools with grades 8-12 were selected from the total number of 72 schools in Erongo region. These schools were selected as they fit the criteria of enrolling learners in grades 8-12 (refer to section 4.3). The population sample of teachers was selected through a simple random sampling procedure (see figure 4.3) from all the 27 schools with grades 8-12. The 27 selected schools had 608 teachers in total. Newby (2010) writes that the sample size should not be too small nor should it be too big as it can overwhelm the researcher. The researcher attempted to make sure that the sample is a representative of the population as close as possible but not too big to overwhelm the researcher in terms of finance and time. Thus, the sample size was set at 30% of the target population which was obtained by setting the confidence level at 99% and the margin of error at 8%. The researcher had confidence that this sample size could yield findings that can be generalised to the population.

The sample consisted of six to seven teachers from each school to give a total of 182 teachers to participate in this study (see figure 4.3). The researcher used the staff registers at schools to assign random numbers to teachers. These numbers were put in a box for each school and six to seven numbers were randomly drawn from the box per school. The teachers assigned to the numbers that were picked from the box formed the sample to which the questionnaire (Appendix K) was distributed.

Gay et al. (2012) define simple random sampling as the basic sampling technique where a group of subjects is selected for study from a larger group. It provides the sample that is highly representative of the population under study. A simple random sample allows for the generalisation of findings and the use of statistical methods to analyse sample results (Cohen et al., 2018; Thomas, 2003). A simple random sampling is also believed to be beneficial (Gay et al., 2012) in sense that it allows for a variety of statistical analyses thus it gives the researcher an opportunity to make inferences about the target group based on the responses of the sample. Further Gay et al. (2012) are of the opinion that a simple random sampling procedure guarantees a high probability of sample representation rather than any other sample procedures.

In agreement with Creswell (2014) the researcher believed that a random sampling was useful by selecting a diverse group to maximise exploration of different perspectives on gender nonconformity issues within the group setting. The teachers were selected to participate in this study as they are believed to be the rich source of data. This is so since they are the implementers of educational policies and they are responsible for the inclusive practices in schools, thus they are in the position to provide relevant data regarding the issue under study. Out of 182 sampled participants only 178 participated. All the efforts made by the researcher to collect back the remaining four questionnaires were unfruitful. The same sampling procedures were also used to sample for the participants on whom this study was piloted.

The topic under study is of a sensitive nature, thus it was deemed appropriate to pilot this study with education officers and teachers of similar characteristics as the target population. Thus the pilot study was conducted with one education officer and 30 grade 8-12 teachers in Erongo region (see sub-section 4.6). This was done with an understanding that participants in the pilot

study possessed the attributes of the participants in the target population (refer to section 4.6). Since there were only two Regional School Counsellors in Erongo region, one Deputy Director for SPS, one Deputy Director for DATs and one IE officer at NIED, the interview schedule (Appendix L) could only be piloted with one regional school counsellor in the region. The researcher has deemed it appropriate to graphical illustrate the sample and sampling procedures used in the current study for easy understanding. Therefore, the following diagram illustrates the sample and sample procedures used in this study.

Figure 4. 3

The sample population of the study

ACCESSIBLE POPULATION

Two Regional School counsellors, 608 teachers, one Deputy Director for SPS, one Deputy Director for DATs and one IE officer at NIED

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Purposive criterion sampling:
- ➤ 27 schools
- ➤ 1 regional school counsellor
- ➤ 1 IE Officer at NIED
- ➤ 1 Deputy Director for SPS
- ➤ 1 Deputy Director for DATs

Random sampling:
- ➤ 182 teachers (30%)
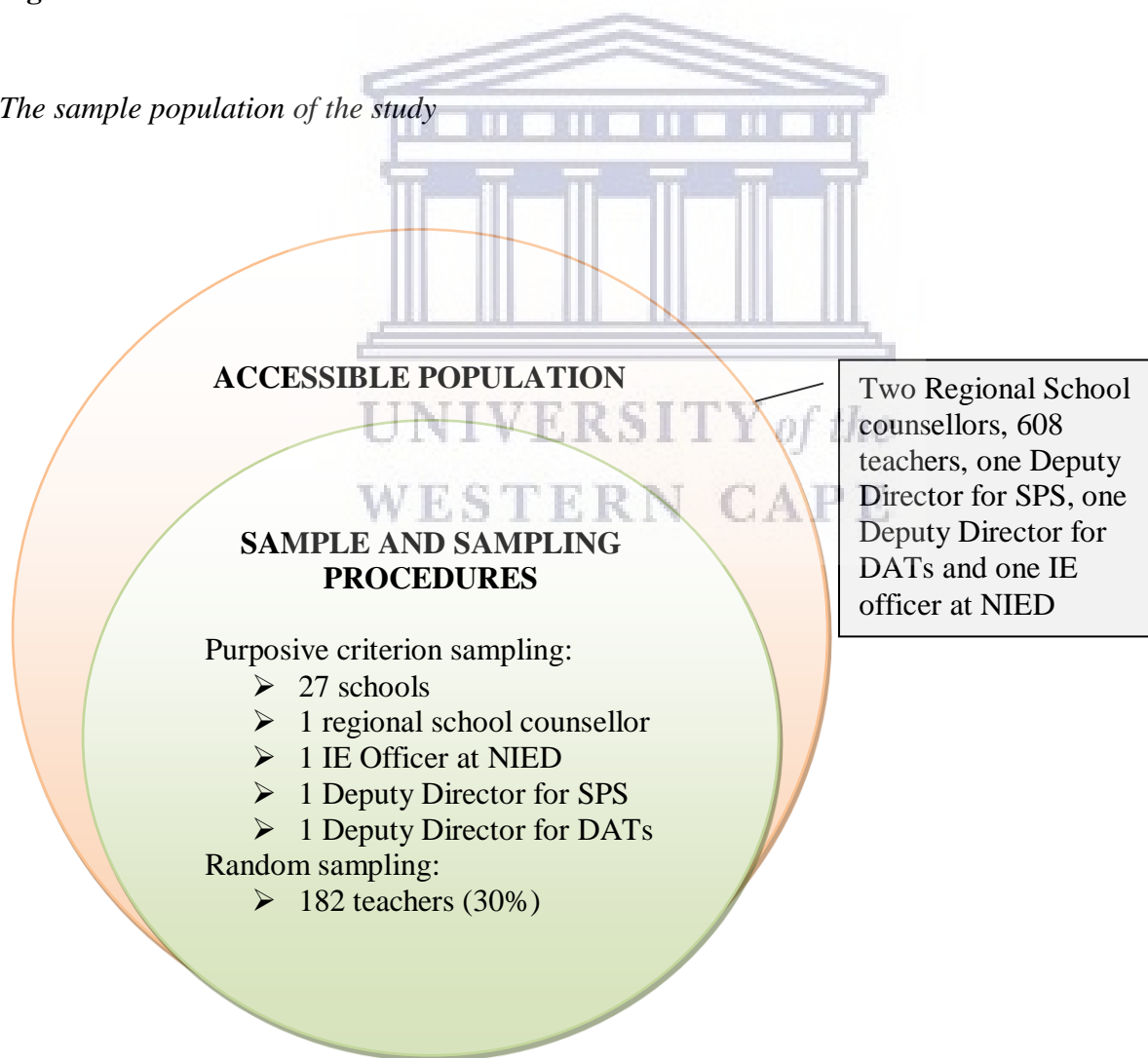
Note: This figure presents the sample population of the study and the procedures used to obtain this sample. Source: Researcher's own drawing. The researcher discusses the instruments used in the study below.

4.5 Instruments

As Baxter and Jack (2008) write, research instruments are strategies and measurement tools designed to collect data on the topic of interest in the study. These tools include questionnaires, tests, interview schedules, observation guides and others. Two of these instruments were used to collect data in this study, namely a questionnaire (Appendix K) and an interview schedule (Appendix L). These instruments were used based on Zohrabi (2013) view that using different instruments and procedures to obtain data helps the study as different instruments will supplement each other and lead to collection of trustworthy and reliable data. Also data collection in quantitative and qualitative research takes different forms thus there was a need to use different appropriate instruments for each approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Therefore, the researcher gives descriptions of the different instruments that were used to collect data in this study in next sub-sections. The questionnaire (Appendix K) is described first as follows below.

4.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire (Appendix K) consisting of open-ended and closed-ended items was distributed manually to 182 teachers (see section 4.4 and Table 4.1). A questionnaire is a widely used and straight forward instrument that allows for data collection without the presence of the researcher (Cohen et al., 2011). The fact that teachers are in daily contact with learners at schools throughout the year and they are the policy implementers, the questionnaire (Appendix K) that

was administered to them has focused on all the research questions of the study (see Table 4.1). It was believed that teachers will provide rich data on all the questions of the study. Thus the questionnaire (Appendix K) consisted of qualitative and quantitative type of questions.

A questionnaire was used in this study as it was considered to provide flexibility for the participants (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015). It was further deemed appropriate to provide the researcher with relevant data which is easy to analyse. Moreover, a questionnaire allowed the researcher to collect a large amount of data at once. The questionnaire used was in a form of a semi-structured, consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions (see Appendix K). This was based on the view of literature (e.g., Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Zohrabi, 2013) that a good questionnaire should include open-ended questions as they allow the participants to voice exactly what they think instead of being confirmed to pre-determined answers.

The use of open-ended questions was necessary as the researcher needed the participants to voice their views on gender nonconformity issues without being restricted by closed-ended questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). This helped the researcher to obtain meaningful data from the participants. The open-ended questions also provided the participants with a chance to explain the measures in place to curb bullying as well as suggest strategies for the schools to respond positively to gender nonconforming learners.

The researcher took into consideration the fact that too many open ended questions might lead to non-responsiveness or unclear responses thus they were limited to five questions. The researcher also acknowledges literature (e.g., Cohen, et al., 2018; Gay, et al., 2011; Newby, 2010) that analysis of open-ended questions might be difficult as opposed to predetermined items. Apart

from this short coming, questionnaires are also deemed to present difficulties for the participants if they are not worded properly and can also affect the return rate. Nevertheless, the researcher agrees with literature (Cohen, et.al, 2011; Newby, 2010) by believing that the use of both types of questions in one questionnaire complemented each other to provide rich data. Additionally, the pilot study has addressed the issues of ambiguity of questions and minimised misunderstandings to increase participants' motivation to complete the questionnaires. At the other hand, closed-ended questions also motivated participants to complete the questionnaire as they were less time consuming thus increasing the response rate. The following table presents the characteristics of Appendix K: the questionnaire for the teachers.

Table 4.1

Characteristics of Appendix K: the questionnaire for teachers
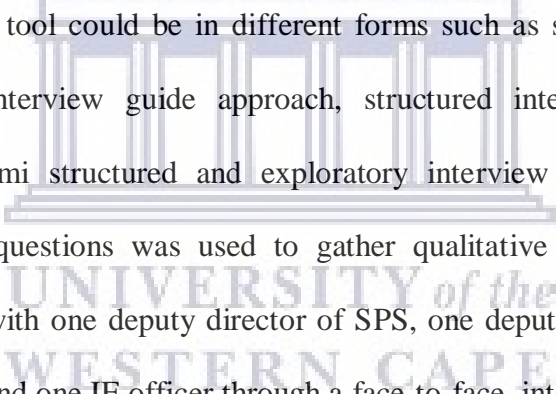
SECTION	THEME/SUB-THEMES	RESEARCH QUESTION	TYPE OF QUESTIONS
A	Demographic information		Closed-ended items
B	IE policy's responses	1	Closed-ended items
C	Educational responses	2	Closed and open--ended items
D	The treatment of gender nonconforming learners	3	Closed and open-ended items
E	The participants' perception	4	Closed and open-ended items
E	Strategies for the SFIIEP	5	Open-ended item

Note: This table presents the characteristics of the questionnaire that is used to collect data.

The first section (A) of the questionnaire (see Appendix K and illustration above) presented the demographic information of participants. The second section (B) focused on collecting quantitative data on the position of IE policy in response to gender nonconforming learners. The third section (C) focused on the quantitative and qualitative responses in regard to the

educational responses for gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The fourth section (D) collected quantitative and qualitative data on the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The last section (E) of the questionnaire obtained quantitative data on the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools. This section also collected the qualitative data on the strategies that formed part of the framework which is developed to supplement the implementation of the IE policy. The second instrument (the interview schedule: Appendix L) that was used to collect data in this study is discussed below.

4.5.2   Interviews

An interview as a research tool could be in different forms such as semi structured, informal conversation interviews, interview guide approach, structured interviews or closed fixed response interviews. A semi structured and exploratory interview schedule (Appendix L) consisting of open-ended questions was used to gather qualitative data in this study. The interview was conducted with one deputy director of SPS, one deputy director for DATs, one regional school counsellor and one IE officer through a face-to-face interview (see section 4.4).

Gay et al. (2012) write that an interview is a purposeful interaction in which one person obtains information from the other. Additionally, an interview is said to help with obtaining in-depth views on the subject under study by giving the participants a chance to describe detailed personal information (Creswell, 2012). Thus, an interview was conducted to understand the feelings, opinions and thoughts of the educators. Additionally, through an interview the researcher gathered information that is directly from the knowledgeable participants. Another merit of the

interview for the present study lies in its ability to gather data that is inaccessible through observation and questionnaires.

Literature (Cohen et al., 2011; Merriam, 2009) positions the interviews within the transformative parading and the SIP, by indicating that interviews provide the researcher with a chance to understand what and how participants perceive and interpret their world. Thus the interview was deemed appropriate to complement the questionnaire (Appendix K) in exploring the educators' views on IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. Additionally, literature (e.g., Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014; Fassinger & Morrow, 2013) outlines one of the important characteristics of interviews to the present study which is exploration and conformation of ideas. Authors such as Gay et al. (2012) write that an interview approach has an advantage of allowing the interviewer and interviewees to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. Hence an interview was beneficial to the current study as the researcher had a chance to clarify and make follow up questions. This clarification yielded useful information and the researcher gained more insight into the gender nonconformity issues within the Namibian education system from the educators' point of view.

Okeke and Van Wyk (2015) write that a semi-structured interview approach is useful in providing the participants with flexibility to respond and it consists of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored. Given the nature of the issue under study, it was necessary for participants to have a clear understanding of the intention of the interview. This approach allowed for rewording in questions as the situation dictated thus it provided the participants with a chance to view their understanding on the issue more broadly. The flexibility of this approach further allowed the interviewees to provide additional information without being

probed. One major benefit of using an interview was the participants' eagerness to dig deeper into their experiences and feelings beyond what the researcher expected. This helped the researcher to get a variety of suggestions on strategies to be employed in order to address the issues of gender nonconformity in the Namibian schools.

The education officers and directors are the custodian of the education policies and curriculum. They are involved in formulation as well as review of policies and curriculum thus the interview schedule (Appendix L) has addressed all the research questions of the study. This was necessary as the researcher was interested in finding out how the IE policy supports and cares for gender nonconforming learners. Additionally, the education officers were in a position to give information regarding how the education system responds to all learners in terms of policies and curriculum content. These two instruments were piloted before the actual data collection (see section 4.6 below).

4.6   Pilot study

The questionnaire (Appendix K) and the interview schedule (Appendix L) were submitted to two experts in the field of inclusive education and counselling to check for content validity before the pilot study was conducted. Gay et al. (2012) point out that piloting a study involves testing the main study procedures on a min-sample to test for feasibility and validity. In order to ensure the content validity and reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was carried out with a small group of people with the similar characteristics in the Erongo Region. Due to the nature of the current study, a pilot study was necessary as it determined the contextual sensitivity (Gay et al., 2012; Okeke and Van Wyk, 2015), which was useful to adopt the content of the main study procedures as needed.

Gay at el. (2011) point out that testing the instruments provides useful information on their shortcomings as participants provide the researcher with suggestions for instrument improvement. The results obtained from the pilot study were beneficial to the research as they helped the researcher to determine the validity of the tools. In line with Okeke and Van wyk (2015), the researcher adopted the tools to reflect what is more important in the study. Over all, the pilot study helped to bring out all possible shortcomings that could lead to the failure of the main study. In that regard, the piloting of the instruments is discussed below.

4.6.1   Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix K) was distributed to 30 teachers in Erongo region education. These teachers were deemed to fit the characteristics of the participants that took part in the main study. This is based on the fact that they are all involved in teaching and are responsible for implementing the IE policy in the Namibian schools. The questionnaire was administered to the selected 30 teachers under the similar conditions that are used in the main study procedures. The data collected through the pilot study was analysed using the same data analysis procedures to be used in the main study (see section 4.8).

The pilot study helped the researcher to determine if the data to be collected through the questionnaire could be interpreted or there was a need to re-phrase and improve the structures of the questions. This was done to determine the extent to which the instrument focused on relevant information; would solicit the type of data anticipated by the researcher; whether the type of data to be collected could be meaningfully analysed in accordance to the research questions and the language used was appropriate and formal (Best & Kahn, 2014; Johnson et al., 2007). This also helped with determining whether the participants will understand the questions and the

instructions in the questionnaire as well as how much time will be required to answer the questionnaire (Gay et al., 2012; Okeke and Van Wyk, 2015).

As Cohen et al. (2018) indicate, there is always a chance of possible error in designing of a research instrument. Consistent with this observation, the results of the pilot study revealed that there were parts of the instrument that needed to be revised. There were too many open ended questions and participants indicated that they could not finish the questionnaire within the 30 minutes anticipated duration. Thus some items were revised to capture all the relevant data with a reasonable amount of items. Further the pilot participants indicated that there were not comfortable with the use of words such as homosexuality thus the wordings have to change from homosexuality to gender nonconformity. Thus the feedback from the pilot study was used to improve the main study procedures and address the questionnaire structure and content before it was administered to the participants. The revised version of the questionnaire (Appendix K) was then administrated to the main study's participants. The piloting was also done with the interview schedule (Appendix L) as described below.

4.6.2 Interviews

The interview schedule (Appendix L) was piloted in similar situations as the main study collection data procedures dictated. The interview was conducted with one education officer due to the fact that there are not many education officers in each region (see section 4.4). The items on the interview schedule (Appendix K) were found to be relevant and covered the intended content thus no alterations were done to the interview items. Hence it was administered to the main study's participants as it is. The next section presents the procedures followed in this study to collect data.

4.7 Data collection procedures

The data collection procedures used in this study followed one phase during which qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently (see figure 4.4). The data collection process started with obtaining ethical clearance (see Appendix A) from the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of Western Cape. The researcher used this clearance to obtain permission (Appendix C) to conduct the current study in the Namibian schools from the Permanent Secretary for the MoEAC and the inspectors of education as well as from the school principals through the Regional Director (Appendix G). The data collection in this study is done during one phase and the researcher used two approaches; face-to-face interviews and questionnaire. The researcher collected the data after making arrangements for the psychological support for the participants from the Ministry of Health and Social Services (Appendix E). The administration procedures of the questionnaire (Appendix K) to the participants are discussed below.

4.7.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix K) was revised based on the feedback from the pilot study. After refining the questionnaire the researcher has distributed it to the 182 participants that were selected randomly from the target population. Newby (2010) writes that distributing questionnaires directly to the participants has an advantage of increasing the return rate. The researcher has capitalised on this advantage by taking the questionnaires to the participants' places of work. The return rate in this study was high as only 2.2% of the participants did not return the questionnaires despite the several efforts by the researcher to get back these questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected four days later from the day they were

distributed to the participants. This was done with a purpose to give the participants enough time to complete the questionnaires. The participants were provided with the information sheet (Appendix I) together with a questionnaire (Appendix K) to explain the purpose of the current study. All participants consented in writing to taking part in the study (see Appendix J). The administration procedures of the interview schedule (Appendix L) to the participants are discussed below.

4.7.2   Interviews

The researcher had conducted face-to-face individual interviews with the education officers and the deputy directors. In accordance with Newby (2010), the semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix L) is structured in a manner that reflects all the research questions. The participants had freedom to diverge and they provide more information regarding the topic as they saw fit. This helped the researcher to determine the responses of the IE policy to gender nonconforming learners from the educators' point of view. The researcher has used an audio recorder to capture the interviews. The participants were provided with the information sheet (Appendix H) before the interviews which explains the purpose of the current study. The participants consented in writing to taking part in the study (see Appendix J). The summary of the data collection procedures is presented below in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4. 4

Graphically summary of data collection procedures
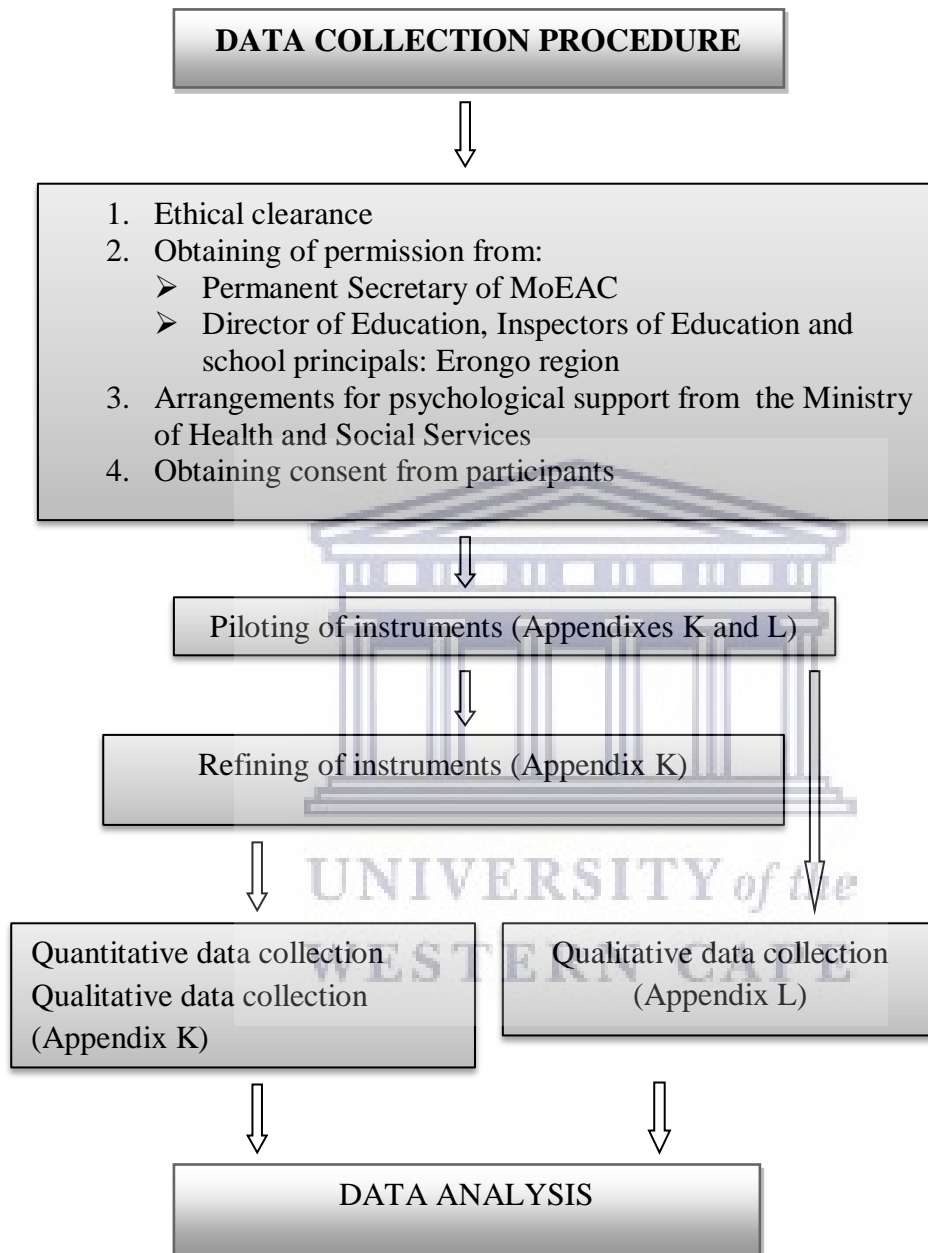
Note: This figure presents the procedures used in the current study to collect data. Source:

Researcher's own drawing. The procedures used to analyse data in this study are discussed

below.

4.8   Data analysis

A number of authors (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Driscoll et al., 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Lichtman, 2013) write that mixed data analysis involves the use of both analytical techniques to analyse data which could take place either prior to, during or post data collection. This analysis could either be aimed at meeting one of the mixed research analysis rationale such as triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation or expansion (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Lichtman, 2013). For the purpose of the present study the researcher employed a mixed analysis with a rationale of complementarity to obtain depth and breadth understanding of both qualitative and quantitative data (Driscoll et al., 2007; Newby, 2010). A mixed analysis for complementarity purpose is done by analysing the qualitative and quantitative data concurrently but separately (Onwuegbuzie & Combs, 2011).

The data in this study is collected from the teachers and the education officers. These two groups of participants are involved in the provision of education at different levels thus they view and experience the impacts of the IE policy on learners differently. Hence, a mixed method has helped to obtain data that complement each other in terms of the IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners. This is believed to have enhanced the quality of the data by generating more meaning out of both qualitative and quantitative data. In the current study, quantitative data and qualitative data were analysed separately and then the researcher related the two sets of data during the discussions (see sections 5.2, 5.3 and 6.2 as well as figure 4.5). The next sub-sections 4.8.1 and 4.8.2 discuss the two types of data analysis done in this study.

4.8.1 Qualitative data analysis

As Gay et al. (2012) put it, qualitative data analysis is one of the time consuming exercises but very much important for any researcher as one has to make sense out of the collected data. Other authors (e.g., Cohen et al., 2011; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) state that qualitative data analysis is about making sense of collected data in terms of the participants' definition of the situations. In accordance with research (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Merriam, 2009), the researcher identified patterns out of the responses and grouped data into categories and developed themes.

The qualitative data from the questionnaire and the interviews were directly analysed by writing down the important materials from the original source. The researcher followed Creswell's (2014, 2016) and Springer's (2010) advice on qualitative data analysis by carefully reading the data on questionnaires and listened to audio recorded data from which necessary memos were made. The data were transcribed, organised, coded and classified into themes (see section 5.2 and figure 4.5). Hence, the data are organised into themes that emerged and codes that were identified during analysis.

Cohen et al. (2018) and Springer (2010) point out that organisation of the qualitative data into themes during analysis is helpful to the researcher. This organisation has helped the researcher to focus on the important materials rather than concentrating on too many details. The emerged themes from these data are later discussed with relevant quotes from participants and relevant literature is cited to support the findings of the current study (see chapter six). The qualitative data are discussed together with the quantitative data (see section 4.8 and figure 4.4 as well as

figure 4.5). The researcher explains the analysis procedures used for this study's quantitative data in the next sub-section

4.8.2 Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analysed using statistical data analysis package software, Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS). This descriptive statistics allows for easy and quick interpretation of large data as well as understanding (Belli, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2012) thus this was deemed relevant for the present study. The quantitative data analysis involves tests of significance such as analysis of variance, the t-test, Chi square and others. Some writers (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Gunasekare, 2015; Merriam, 2009) indicate that it is important to select an appropriate test of significance in order to arrive at correct conclusions. Therefore the purpose of the mixed data analysis in this study directed the researcher to select the Chi square test for the quantitative data analysis.

The Chi square is a nonparametric test of significance which was appropriate as the data collected is in a form of frequencies (Gay et al., 2012; Muijs, 2011; Springer, 2010). The Chi square test was used to determine the frequencies of occurrences of the participants' responses in regard to the IE policy and educational response to gender nonconforming learners, the participants' perspective on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners as well as the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools (see section 5.3 and figure 4.5). A descriptive summary statistic such as percentages is used to identify general characteristics of the participants. The data are presented in tables and graphs for easy interpretation (see section 5.3).

The researcher has used a mixed-methods approach in this study hence the quantitative and qualitative data are integrated at the discussion phase. This helped the study to yield reliable and valid data. The researcher deemed it necessary to present a graphic description of data analysis and discussions. Thus the data analysis and discussion procedures are presented in figure 4.5 below. The researcher had attempted to explain procedures used to ensure validity and reliability thus validity and reliability is discussed immediately after the graphical presentation of data analysis and discussions.

Figure 4.5

Data analysis and discussion procedures
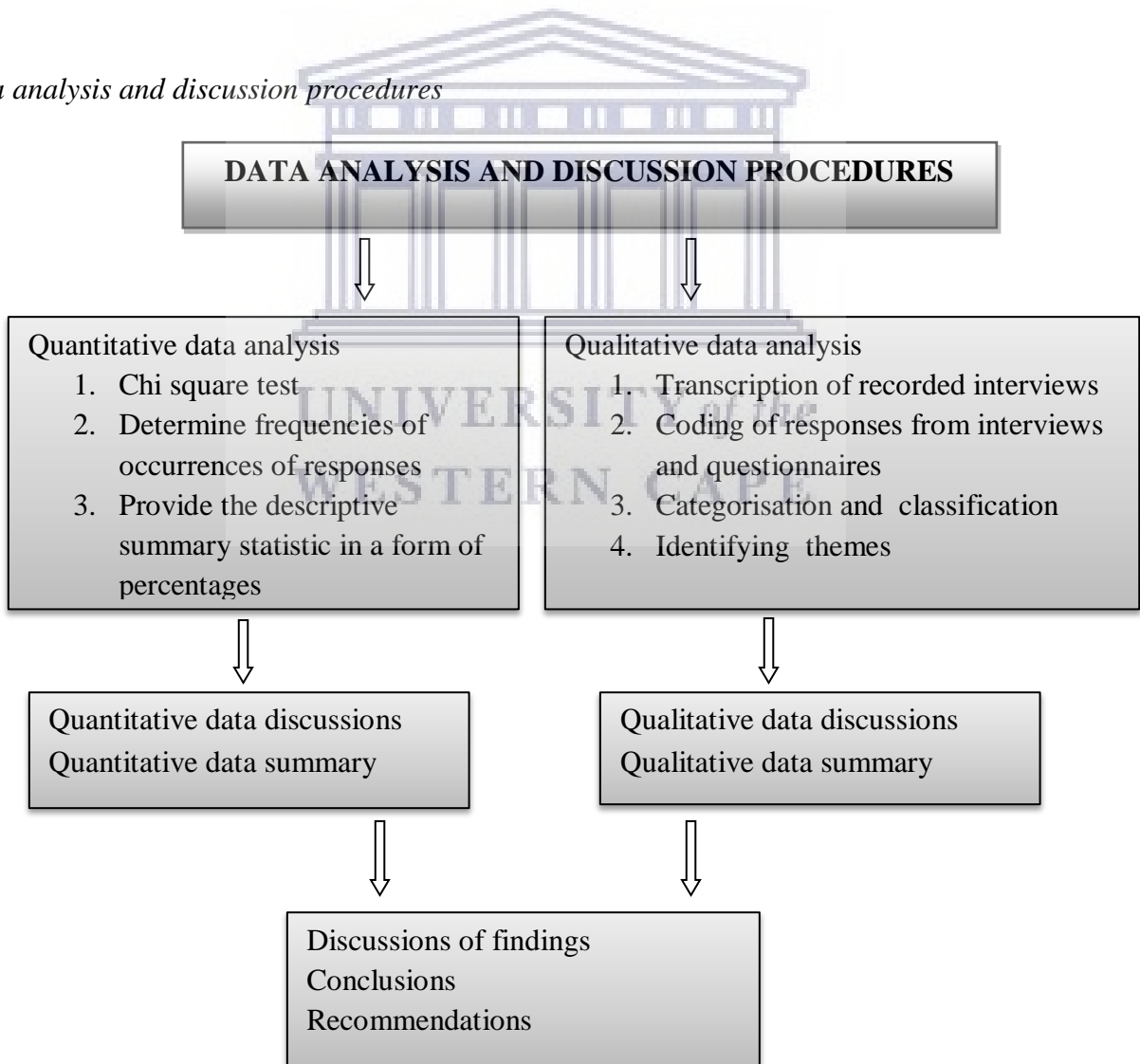
Note: This figure presents the procedures followed by the researcher to analyse and discuss the data collected in the current study. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

4.9   Validity and reliability

Creswell (2014, 2016) stresses the need for the researcher to ensure accuracy and credibility of the results. Literature (e.g., Cohen et al., 2018; Newby, 2010, Springer, 2010) asserts that the validity and reliability of the research instruments are important for the researcher's interpretations of data to be valuable. It is said that threats to validity and reliability cannot be avoided completely, but the researcher could try as much as possible to minimise these threats. The researcher explains the attempts made to ensure validity and reliability of this study's data below. The procedures used to ensure validity are discussed first in the next sub-section.

4.9.1   Validity

Validity is defined by Cohen et al. (2018, p. 179) and Gay and Mills (2016, p. 186) as a degree to which a particular instrument measures what it purports to measure or an account accurately represents what it intended to describe to allow for appropriate interpretations. The researcher took into account the internal, external and content validity.

The researcher aimed to make sure that the instruments used yielded credible results that can be accurately interpreted and be generalised within the underlying setting hence ensuring internal validity. Zohrabi (2013) recommends that using different instruments can help with internal validity, hence, the researcher deemed a questionnaire (Appendix K) and interview schedule (Appendix L) as the appropriate instruments to collected data. These two instruments were relevant to collect accurate and representative data. These instruments are based on the reviewed

literature and the researcher tried to word them as accurately and precisely as possible. The items on these instruments were also varied in type as per Gay and Mills's (2016) recommendations on ensuring internal validity. The results of the current study appear to be accurate and comprehensively reflect the responses of the IE policy to gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian schools.

The researcher also tried to ensure external validity by trying to obtain data that is transferable beyond the current context so that they can be generalised to the wider population. This was done by obtaining a sample which is a representative of the target population (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2016; Zohrabi, 2013). Since the instruments focused on the IE policy responses to gender nonconforming learners in schools, the findings of this study could be generalised to all the schools in Erongo region.

The instruments were assessed by two experts in the field of inclusive education and counselling as Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) recommend for researchers to ensure content validity. The two experts have reviewed the process used to develop the instruments and also the extent to which the items in the instruments represented the intended content. Moreover, ambiguity of instructions, terms used and questions was addressed through piloting the instruments. The suggested validations were incorporated to improve the instrument (Appendix K). Further, the researcher made use of the literature and IE policy content to ensure that the content and the questions asked responded to the current situation in the Namibian schools in regard to inclusion of learners. Additionally, the use of two different approaches helped with validation as the strengths of one approach compensated the weakness of the other. Therefore the researcher is confident that validity of the instruments in this study was ensured to yield findings that

accurately represent reality. The procedures followed to ensure reliability of the results are discussed in the next sub-section.

4.9.2   Reliability

Reliability is referred to by Cohen et al. (2018) as the consistency and dependability of results. This is the degree to which the instrument consistently measures what it is supposed to measure. Some authors caution that a reliable instrument should yield the same data when used at a different time or when used by a different person to test the same people (Cohen et al., 2018). However, Zohrabi (2013) cautions that for qualitative data, producing the same data is a difficult and demanding task as these data are based on people's narratives and they are subjective. He recommends then that dependability and consistency of the data are enough to determine the reliability of the instrument.

The researcher followed research's (e.g., Creswell, 2016; Merriam, 2009; Zohrabi, 2013) recommendations and attended to reliability by explaining explicitly the different processes of inquiry used in this study. The researcher has also collected information through different sources in order to ensure reliability. Moreover, through the pilot study results, the researcher had attended to reliability by addressing issues such as ambiguity of items that mighty affect dependability of the data. The researcher made use of the pilot study results to make adjustments to ensure that the reading level, language level and content are appropriate to the participants. Thus the researcher is confident that these efforts mentioned above led to the findings of this study to be reliable.

4.10 Field constraints

The search for related literature revealed that even though there is copious research done globally on gender nonconforming learners, there was lack of studies done on this topic in the Namibian context. This lack of research studies on the topic in the Namibian context posed a challenge for the researcher in relating the topic under study to the existing literature in Namibia. Nevertheless the researcher critically reviewed available literature on gender nonconforming learners in other countries (e.g., South Africa, Kenya and Botswana) and a few studies that could be located on the Namibian context to present the status of the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners.

The nature of the topic being a sensitive and controversial issue in the Namibian context has also posed a challenge in terms of the participants' willingness to complete all items on the questionnaire. Some participants declined to answer certain items on the questionnaire and cited religious and cultural reasons for skipping items. However, the researcher had tried to minimise this by phrasing questions in such a way that there were no items that appear to be offensive. The researcher also tried to minimise the issue of social desirability through wording by making sure that responses are of equal social desirability. The researcher also tried to mitigate this challenge by explaining the purpose of the study clearly and ensuring participants' confidentiality as well as anonymity (see section 4.11 and Appendixes H and I).

The researcher also faced another constraint during the data collection process. This was some participants' unwillingness to participate in the study or return the questionnaire. The researcher has to attend morning briefings at some schools to explain the importance of this study for the entire school community as it focuses on inclusion within education. In cases were some teachers

have refused to participate in the study and gave reasons that they do not support homosexuality, the researcher had to go back to the target sample and re-draw a few number of teachers to meet the sample size. The ethical considerations in this study are discussed in the next section.

4.11 Ethics statement

The researcher in the present study took into consideration ethical issues pertaining to involvement of human participants in research. The researcher obtained an ethical clearance and approval of the methodologies (see Appendix A) to be employed in this study from the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of Western Cape. Further, permission (see Appendix C) to conduct this study was sought from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture.

The researcher also sought permission (see Appendix G) to enter the schools from the inspectors of education, school principals and teachers through the Regional Education Director as of Erongo Region. These permissions were sought through letters (Appendixes B and F). This was done in consistency with Cohen et al. (2011) who maintains that access and acceptance to the research sites are important aspects of the data collection as they offer the researcher opportunities to show their credentials and ethical considerations for the intended research. The purpose and intentions of the study were outlined and explained during the process of obtaining permission.

Several authors (e.g., Cohen, et al., 2011; Creswell, 2016; Gay et al., 2012; Newby, 2010) write that research participants are not to be harmed in any way, either physically, mentally or socially. The nature of this study had required for the participants to be assured of access to psychological

support. Thus the researcher made arrangements with social workers from the Ministry of Health and Social Services (see Appendixes D and E) to provide psychological support if needed.

Creswell (2014) indicates that data collection in qualitative research involves participants discussing their private life and situations that apply to their lives. He emphasises the importance of protecting the confidentiality and privacy of participants as well as respecting their wishes at all times. In accordance with the literature (Best & Kahn, 2014; Check & Schutt, 2012; Creswell, 2014) to ensure anonymity of every participant, not any form of identification such as names of their schools or their own names appear in the research documents. Moreover, for ethical reasons, the nature of the current study was explained to all participants before they participated in the study. They were also provided with the information sheet (Appendixes H and I) that explained the study and what was expected from them.

The participants were informed that they are to participate in this study voluntarily hence they could withdraw from the study at any time without obligations. In accordance with literature (e.g., Creswell, 2016; Okeke & Van Wyk, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2013) the researcher assured participants that their responses will remain confidential. The participants were also informed that the data to be collected is solely to be used for the purpose of the current study. Hence their responses will not be shared with any other person except to form part of this study's results, discussions and any publications to be derived from this study. The participants were asked to consent to take part in this study. Hence a consent form (Appendix J) was presented and explained to the participants. They indicated their agreement to take part in the study by signing the consent form before they participated in this study.

These data are stored in a form of recordings and hand note forms for the interviews while some are in the form of questionnaires. Thus to further ensure confidentiality and privacy of the participants, these data will be kept to the maximum of five years after the collection date in a lockable drawer by the researcher. The data will be disposed by deleting the recordings and shredding the questionnaires after five years.

4.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the methods and procedures that were utilised in the current study to collect and analyse the data. The researcher presented the research design which is a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods research approach. The researcher established the link between the ontological, epistemological and methodological stances of the transformative paradigm to this study's objectives, assumptions, purpose, research questions and theoretical stance. The two paradigms that were used in this convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach to collect and analyse data; qualitative and quantitative are explained separately in terms of their relevance for this study. The use of a mixed methods approach is said to have benefited the current study as it enabled the researcher to obtain a full contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study which might not be the case if the researcher had used either a qualitative or quantitative design alone.

The population of the study includes teachers in Erongo region, deputy directors and the education officers responsible for establishment and evaluation of the Namibian IE policy. The sample and sampling procedures used in the current study are also presented. Two sampling procedures; purposive criterion and simple random sampling are used. The sample has consisted

of 182 teachers, one Regional School counsellor, one Deputy Director for SPS, one Deputy Director for DATs and one IE officer at NIED.

The researcher also presented the questionnaire (Appendix K) and the interview schedule (Appendix L) as the research instruments used in this study. The pilot study that was conducted has necessitated for the improvement of the questionnaire (Appendix K). The procedures of collecting and analysing data used in the main study are also presented in this chapter. The data were collected and analysed separately then merged during the discussion phase. The researcher further explained the procedures used to ensure validity and reliability. The lack of research studies on the topic in the Namibian context and the nature of the topic presented constraints during the data collection of this study. Finally, the researcher presented the ethics statement of the study in this chapter. The researcher gives the presentation, analysis and discussion of the research results in the next chapter.
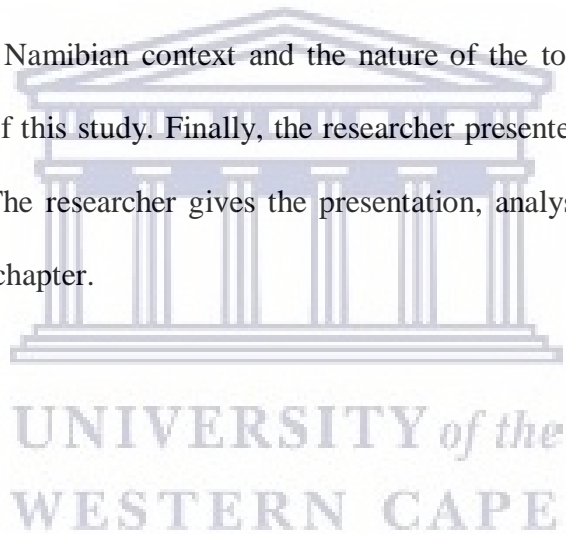
CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

5.1   Introduction

The researcher has used a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach encased within a social identity perspective as the theoretical lens to explore the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. The use of this paradigm in this study is justified in sub-section 4.2.2. The reviewed literature (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Johnson et al., 2007; Mertens, 2007) asserts that data collected through a convergent approach have to be analysed separately. These data then have to be converged during the interpretation or discussion phase in research. Since the researcher in this study has used a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach, the analysis of data collected in this study follows the above suggested procedures. The data in this study were collected qualitatively and quantitatively during one phase of data collection. Thus the data are analysed and discussed separately and later discussed together, hence in this chapter, the researcher presents analysis and discussion of data separately.

The reviewed literature has demonstrated the importance of general education and inclusive education in response to diversity within the education institutions. Moreover the literature presented the state of inclusion within education systems of the African countries including Namibia. Additionally, the literature highlighted the African and Namibian societies' level of tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconformity. The theoretical literature further highlighted the effects of social categorisations on groups. The literature reviewed for this study has also presented knowledge on how these categorisations could be used to embrace diversity instead of being a catalyst for discrimination against the "other". In the discussions of this literature, a

knowledge gap was identified which is lack of information about how the Namibian IE policy is responding to gender nonconforming learners as well as lack of research on this topic in the Namibian context. Therefore the researcher presents the collected data in response to these important themes mentioned above and in response to the research questions in this study.

This study was aimed at exploring the responses of the Namibian Inclusive Education (IE) policy to gender nonconforming learners. Hence, in this chapter the researcher presents the data that answer the main research question through the five research sub-questions of the study. The researcher in the current study sought to answer the main research question:

How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The main research question is responded to through the following research sub-questions.

1. In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?
2. What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?
3. From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat the gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?
4. How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

5. What elements would form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of the Namibian IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The researcher has employed a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach in this study. Consequently, this chapter is structured into two sections. The first section presents the analysis of the qualitative data from the questionnaires and interviews as well as the discussion and summary of these data. The qualitative data section also presents the strategies suggested for the supplementary framework to support the IE policy implementation. These strategies are also discussed and summarised in the first section. Thereafter, the second section of this chapter presents and discusses as well as summarises the quantitative data. The summary of the chapter is presented at the end. The next section presents the qualitative data.

5.2   Presentation, analysis and discussion of the qualitative data

The qualitative data were collected through a questionnaire (Appendix K) for teachers and an interview schedule (Appendix L) for the deputy directors and education officers. Mills and Gay (2016) write that qualitative data analysis involves examining the data in order to categorise, code and identify potential themes so that it could be grouped into themes. In accordance with Mills and Gay (2016), the researcher has listed the five main themes that emerged in the literature review and in the data collection. The themes also correspond with the research questions of this study. These themes are the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools and the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender

nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The strategies that constituted the elements of the supplementary framework for the IE policy implementation formed the fifth theme.

The qualitative data presented here are later discussed together with the quantitative data presented in section 5.3. The researcher has earlier justified the need to employ the convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach (see sections 4.2.2 and 4.8). The data concerning the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools are presented first in the following sub-section.

5.2.1 The Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

IE has benefits to all learners regardless of their differences and it aims at responding at learner diversity in the classroom (Ainscow, 2005; UNESCO, 1990). In that regard, several authors (e.g., Answer Ed, 2015; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014; Nel, 2014; Russell, 2011) write that countries that have accepted gender nonconformity have made efforts to include inclusive sex education into their policies and curriculums. However, it is discovered that policies that existed in some African countries such as South Africa and Namibia were inherited from the colonial eras hence they had no clear policy statements and guidelines on inclusive practices (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015; McKinney & Swartz 2016). This was said to present challenges in realisation of inclusion (Charema, 2010; Haitembu, 2014; Zimba et al., 1999). Hence these countries have drafted IE policies that are aimed at responding to all their citizens regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. In that regard, this sub-section presents the data regarding the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners.

The participants were asked to express their opinions regarding the responsiveness of the IE policy towards gender nonconforming learners. Hence, this section sought to answer the first research sub-question:

In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

This question was broken down into interview questions that were presented to the participants for them to be able to share their views on how the IE policy responds to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools (see Appendix L).

The participants indicated that the IE policy does not clearly refer to gender nonconformity but this issue is appended to gender clauses in the policy. The participants all indicated that even though the IE policy is not pronouncing itself on gender nonconformity, it is positively responding to these learners indirectly as it is aimed at addressing all learners' needs. The majority of the participants, (75%), further indicated that even though the policy does not pronounce itself clearly on gender nonconformity, it is hoped that individual teachers will interpret the policy and frameworks around inclusivity and address gender nonconformity as such. They pointed out that the policy is based on the Namibian constitution which requires the schools to respond positively to all learners and consider human rights. The above sentiments support the call for provision of education to all and respect of human rights in Namibia (GRN, 1990, MoE, 2014). The above views are demonstrated by the following quoted verbatim from the participants.

Researcher: There has been a wide global view on how inclusive education should be practiced and Namibia has established and launched an IE policy. How does this policy pronounce itself in terms of care and support for gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

Participant A: The policy does not specifically point out certain vulnerabilities but promote inclusion and aims to responding to all learners. The policy is not disability based but it is aimed for all learners. It is not specific about sexual orientation, but it does so in general, the policy is based on the constitution and on human rights so indirectly it responds to them.
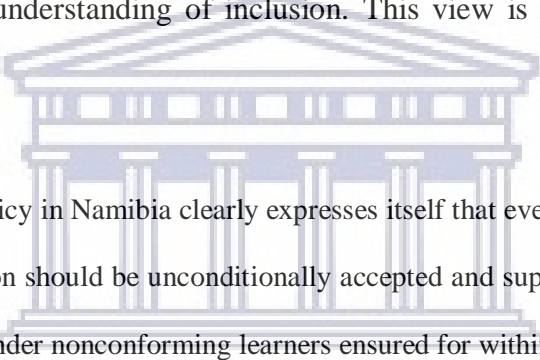
Participant B: Not real, I cannot say the policy talks to gender nonconformity issue but this policy is not only disability based. It addresses all needs that our children face in schools. But cultural norms and personal beliefs about sex is not making it easy for teachers to talk about homosexuality. Even the sexual reproductive health itself is an issue in schools. It is a challenge, for instance the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) programme was met with opposing views from the community. We had talks with school principals, heads of departments and we even had to go talk to traditional leaders. You know, teachers need support from the top in order to address these issues. Without the support of all these people it will be difficult for teachers to talk about issues concerning sexuality especially homosexuality.

Participant C: The policy is not specific on gender nonconformity, but it is inclusive, it is assumed that inclusiveness includes that and we hope teachers will interpret the policy as such. Yes, the policy itself does not say anything about these issues, but with the Comprehensive Sexuality Education programme we are trying to address that. This programme speaks directly to gender based issues. We do not shy away from the topic, we are addressing it. This issue is addressed in the curriculum also so we hope learners are given chances to understand others' challenges and what they are going through to support each other.

Participant D: Gender nonconforming learners are not considered in educational policies, no legal framework to protect them and some schools do discriminate them. The policy is not specific on the issue of gender nonconformity; it is hidden within the gender reference. However, even

though it is not in our laws during trainings with the teacher counsellors we do touch on this issue, the teacher counsellors need to accept all learners even though they (teacher counsellors) do not support the issue. You are a school counsellor and if a learner comes to you being bullied because of their sexual orientation or they are being mistreated at home because of this you need to support them even though it is against your belief.

In line with findings by Charema (2010), Haitembu (2014) and Zimba et al. (1999) the majority of the participants, (75%), further pointed out that there is no common understanding of what is "inclusion" in Namibian schools. They also pointed out that the policy is interpreted differently by teachers based on their understanding of inclusion. This view is reflected in the responses below.

Researcher: The IE policy in Namibia clearly expresses itself that every learner regardless of their background or condition should be unconditionally accepted and supported in education settings. How is inclusion of gender nonconforming learners ensured for within this policy?

Participant A was of this view: Teachers do not real understand what inclusive means. They think it is just putting learners with disability in front of them. But we can say that things seem to be a little bit fine based on the minimal complains we are receiving from schools in regard to the inclusion practices. So they are handling these learners with disabilities even though they are not trained in specific disabilities. As I said before gender nonconforming learners are also include in the policy, just not clearly mentioned.

Participant B: In Namibia inclusive education is misunderstood, teachers look at it around disability rather than inclusive of all issues. The lack of understanding and lack of information about sexual diversity plus culture as well as lack of motivation to be open is making it difficult

for the policy to respond to these learners. They are not specifically pointed out but they are included.

The data of this study are in agreement with literature (i.e., Brown, 2016, 2017; Francis et al., 2017) as the participants pointed out that the national silence surrounding the topic of gender nonconformity and the lack of explicit legal frameworks on gender nonconformity in the country is hindering the IE policy to respond openly to gender nonconformity issues.

Researcher: What challenges does your department experience in regard to ensuring that the IE policy is aimed at protecting the learning and development of all learners in schools especially the learners who are not conforming to gender norms?

Participant A: The constitution of Namibia does not pronounce itself on gender nonconformity thus the silence of the IE policy in regard to this topic. This is a challenge for us as there is no legal framework to support the policy on gender nonconformity.

Participant B echoed Participant A's view by saying: The issue is not specifically addressed, the policy is based on other legal frameworks and gender nonconformity is not catered for in those frameworks, thus the IE policy cannot really pronounce itself on that while the frameworks on which it is based are not explicitly referring to the issue. It becomes a challenge for us and for the teachers in the schools especially with culture which is against this.

Participant B further pointed out that the policy formulation failed to talk to reality in some areas and poses challenges in addressing issues such as gender nonconformity. This participant had more to say on policy formulation as it is demonstrated in the following verbatim:

It is a good thing you thought of researching on this issue, it is something that is overlooked when the policy was formulated, it is not really talking to reality concerning some issues but now you reminded us of this issue, I will make a note, to include it in the current Namibia's National Safe School Framework that we are busy drafting. These children are in our schools but they are not catered for as some are bullied and discriminated against but the issue is not taken serious as some people do not want to get involved in homosexuality issues.

Participant C had a similar view as Participant B. This participant said:

This is a practice which is not welcomed in Namibia and there are no legal frameworks that are responding to that challenge. Hence the IE policy did not consider that as an issue. As long as this practice is not welcomed in the community and in absence of legal frameworks that address this issue then individual learners who are gender nonconforming are suffering as they have no legal ground.

The participants all indicated that the IE policy is not distributed to all schools in Namibia and it is difficult for some teachers to implement the policy as they did not receive the policy yet. They also indicated that teachers are not trained on the implementation process of the IE policy. The following verbatim read:

Researcher: Your department is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the IE policy in Namibian schools. How are the teachers empowered through the IE policy to provide an enabling learning environment for young people who are gender nonconforming?

Participant A: We still need to train teachers on how to implement this policy. Educators are not trained in the IE policy implementation before the launching of this policy. Only primary school teachers and management were given an idea of the content only but not practices. There is no

budget to train all teachers even though that is the aim of the ministry. But the good thing is they are trying, the issue is the money as we need funds to distribute the policy and train the teachers in schools.

Participant B: Many areas such as how to address certain issues still need to be addressed, we also need to distribute the policy to all teachers and visit schools to support and discover if the policy is talking to reality.

Participant C: Is the policy accessible to all for it to be implemented? It is difficult to implement a policy that you do not have. There is no money to distribute the policy to all schools. Yaa, some schools have it but some do not. We do support them to respond to all learners but now not all of them have the policy and they are not trained on how to implement this policy.

Participant D: The policy is not given to all schools in Namibia and no training is done. There is no money to duplicate and distribute this policy to all schools. Training is also costly and with this economy it will not be done in near future, we are waiting. You know the purpose is to train all teachers on how to implement this policy but now we have only trained the school principals on content with hope for them to guide the teachers while we are waiting to train all teachers when we get money.

The participants' views regarding the educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools are presented in the next sub-section.

5.2.2   The educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Schools are regarded as important places where learners learn about their basic human rights in society and conceptualise understandings of citizenship (i.e., Hudgins, 2012; Lee, 2013;

Rothmann & Simmonds, 2015). Authors such as LaFont & Hubbard (2007) and Kasonde (2013) emphasise the importance of inclusive curriculums and policies in attaining positive educational response to all learners. However, literature (Butler et al., 2003; Deacon et al., 1999) shows little noticeable provision for support and care in some schools to respond positively to the needs of gender nonconforming learners. This sub-section presents the data that looked at educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in the Namibia context. This was achieved by answering the second research sub-question:

What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?

In order to respond to this question, the participants were presented with interview questions (see Appendix L) and a questionnaire (see Appendix K) that helped them to express themselves on the above question. In support of the literature (Brikkels, 2014; Butler et al., 2003; Mostert et al., 2015; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013) that pointed out the efforts by schools to respond to the call of inclusion, the participants who responded to the interviews all indicated that the Namibia education system is responsive towards all learners including gender nonconforming learners. They also felt that the Namibian schools are responding to the global call for inclusive education. This is demonstrated in the following discussions.

Researcher: The IE policy is the guiding document for all educational services, activities and actions happening in schools. What are the educational responses established within the Namibian education system for the teachers to support gender nonconforming learners in schools as per mandate of the IE policy for the realisation of education for all in Namibia?

Participant A said: There are policies that address vulnerability such as policies on orphans and vulnerable children. There are also regional school counsellors to offer psychological support for learners at regional level. The MoEAC is busy drafting the Namibia's National Safe School Framework (NNSSF) which is to protect all learners in schools by enabling a safer environment for our children. Apart from that, there are school counsellors that are providing counselling at school level.

Similarly Participant C said: Inclusive education in Namibia is committed to legal frameworks such as sustainable development goals and rights to educations. We have the policy on inclusion which aims to create enabling environments for all children in schools. There are also guiding documents on inclusion for teachers to follow in schools.

Participant D agreed with the above views by saying: The schools are responsive towards all leaners. For instance, the learners are provided with counselling at regional level. The Life Skills as a subject is offering education on sexuality in schools. There is also counselling provided at school level for all learners.

The participants' views in this study conform with literature (e.g., MoE, 2016) by mentioning several efforts by the MoEAC to address inclusion issues. These include the development of the Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework (NNSSF), incorporation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) developed by the United Nations Population Fund into the Namibian school curriculum and training of Life Skill teachers to use such a manual. Additionally, the participants indicated that the MoEAC is also busy developing a School Health Policy to address safety and health issues in the schools. The participants indicated that the University of Namibia is not offering training to student teachers on handling issues of gender nonconformity. The

participants had more to say on the educational responses towards gender nonconforming learners as demonstrated below.

Participant A said: The current reform touches on gender issues, but only those who are coming from the field will be able to refer to gender nonconformity. The Life Skills as a subject new syllabus is intensive on sex education, but implementation might be an issue as teachers shy away from sex topics, but sexual orientation is a topic on its own given much attention. We hope that cross curricular issues might help for these teachers to talk about this topic during their teaching.

Participant B said: There are no specific strategies to respond to gender nonconforming learners but learners are exposed to information. They are provided chances to learn about sexual orientation issues. This is done through social clubs at schools and Life Skills as a subject.

Participant C echoed the above responses by saying: The new Life Skills subject curriculum addresses sexual orientation in details and the University of Namibia is on par now with the ministry as they are training student teachers in Life Skills as a subject. However, teachers are not comfortable to talk about sexually issues, they do not teach these topics and the learners are also not equipped with proper information and they are not empowered. The Comprehensive Sexuality Education programme is also not addressed fully in schools. Some teachers are not comfortable with the topics in Comprehensive Sexuality Education programme but provision is made for schools to respond to all learners.

Participant D said: Gender nonconforming learners are not specifically addressed in national education policies but the Comprehensive Sexuality Education manual addresses the issue of sexual orientation. The education department is responding to all learners by first empowering teachers to help learners through workshops, training and meetings.

The participants all indicated that the education system does respond to learners by advocating for anti-bullying rules in schools. They indicated that generally bullying is prohibited through school rules and disciplinary procedures. The researcher quotes the following verbatim:

Researcher: Globally, there are documented incidents of homophobic bullying and violence against gender nonconforming learners in schools. How do Namibian schools respond to incidents of homophobic violence and bullying?

Participant A: Learners are offered counselling and the school counsellor is there to deal with such cases. During counselling sessions, they are both (the bully and bullied) educated about their rights and that of the other person. Life skills teachers also raise awareness on the dangers of bullying.

Participant B was of this opinion: The Education Act calls for the establishment of Learner Representative Council in schools. Through this process the schools do equip learners (leaders) to help others on the school grounds. All learners are encouraged to report bullying activities to their class teachers, class captains or Learners' Representative Council member. Learner representatives are given the power to deal with cases of bullying and report to the teachers.

Participant C said: Schools are supposed to create platforms to encourage learners' tolerance toward gender nonconforming learners. They are also expected to put up very strong policy to prevent homophobic bullying from happening and all teachers and learners should take care of each other. Sexual orientation should also be taught at tender age to avoid bullying.

The second research sub-question was also qualitatively presented to the participants who responded to the questionnaire (Appendix K). The participants were asked to answer the following question:

What measures are in place at schools against homophobic bullying?

The participants who responded to the questionnaire (Appendix K) indicated that there were no specific measures to address homophobic bullying but the schools do employ several strategies

to protect all learners. Moreover, in support of Collins's (1993) view on the provision of protection for gender nonconforming learners, most of the participants (91%) indicated that the school rules on prevention of bullying are based on the Namibian constitution's stance in regard to human rights.

> Participant Nine for instance wrote: The anti-bullying policies are in place in schools. Also the school and hostel rules are there to protect all learners. There is no learner who is allowed to hurt another learner verbally, psychologically or psychically regardless of his/her sexual orientation because all learners are equal in school.

> Participant 20 indicated: The constitution of Namibia made it clear that no person must be discriminated against in terms of gender or race, colour, age, religion and other basis.

> Participant 88 also supported Participant Nine's view by writing: The school treats bullying on basis of sexual orientation in the same manner as any other case of bullying. They are given verbal warnings, written warnings and parents are called in to be told about their children's behaviours. Those who bully others are suspended from school for a certain period of time.

Research (e.g., Applebaum, 2003; Butler et al., 2003; Taylor et al., 2011) supports these findings by pointing out that learners failed to report incidents of homophobic bullying in fear of being rejected by peers. There were some participants (40%) who indicated that learners do not always report incidents of homophobic bullying. They felt that in those cases the schools are not aware of the bullying incidents among learners. Moreover, in agreement with Mostert et al. (2015), some participants (21%) also indicated that they were not sure how the schools are dealing with homophobic bullying. There were also some participants (34%) who felt that there are no gender nonconforming learners at their schools thus there are no specific measures in place to protect these learners. The following verbatim reads:

Participant Two wrote: No bullying is tolerated at school. Unfortunately, we do not always know what happens among learners as not all learners open up about negative experiences. We often do not know how learners do it amongst each other and whether they are open about it.

Participant 30 wrote: They are not accommodated in the disciplinary policy. We do not have such learners at our school so we do not need to put up protective measures for them.

Participant 50 wrote: None, I am not sure if the school has any measures in place. There are no specific ones on sexual orientation. I honestly have no idea and I am unaware of such measures.

Participant 60 also wrote: I am not sure. As an educator who does not discriminate against gender nonconforming learners I try to prevent any type of bullying from happening. I do not however know if other educators are doing the same.

Participant 176 confirms the above sentiments by writing: There is nothing because we do not really experience cases of this nature at least not openly. We have not had such incident at our school yet. We do not real experience such bullying unless learners are doing it behind us.

The researcher presents the data concerning the participants' views on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools below.

5.2.3 The participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Inclusion is about valuing, respecting and according chances to all learners so that they can be who they are (UNESCO, 2009; MoE, 2014). However, literature (e.g., Applebaum, 2003;

Downie, 2014; Taylor et al., 2011; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013) indicates that gender nonconforming learners face social consequences of transgressing gender norms in most countries across the world. Due to bullying that gender nonconforming learners face, Hillard et al. (2014) caution that these learners are at risk of failure or dropping out of school. Therefore, in order to determine the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, this sub-section sought to responds to the third research sub-question:

From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat the gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

This question was presented to the participants through interview questions (Appendix L) during the interviews and also through a qualitative question in the questionnaire (Appendix K). The participants who responded to the interviews had different perspectives concerning the treatment of the gender nonconforming learners in schools. There are participants (55%) who indicated that gender nonconforming learners are treated equally in schools while others (25%) indicated that these learners are being teased due to their sexual orientation. Further, some (20%) of the participants, in line with the findings by Brikkels (2014), indicated that gender nonconforming learners are ignored as long as heterosexual learners do not feel intimidated by them. These views are demonstrated through the following discussions.

Researcher: Your department receives all reports regarding counselling and how learners are being responded to in schools. Even though these are confidential reports, in general what do they reveal on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

Participant A said: Some of the learners who are not conforming to gender norms are treated equally and some are not. So some of them are bullied and ignored. The measures that the

MoEAC advocated for on how to implement policies such as orphans and vulnerable children policy and IE policy seems to be working but not real working since violence at schools continues.

Participant B responded: The gender nonconforming learners are not discriminated against in schools. Other learners do respect gender nonconforming learners if they are not intimidating other learners who are heterosexuals. The school environments are supportive for all learners. However, the teachers are not trained on this policy, only primary school principals and some teachers are trained and they were only introduced to the content in the policy, but these school management members are not the ones that deal with learners. So if we have to ensure that these learners are treated unconditionally, we need to capacitate everyone at school.

Participant D said: These learners are not open but they are in schools and just ignored, they are not prevented from attending school. Yes they are there in schools but people do not want to acknowledge these children. They ignore them, yes they get bullied, but others do not exclude them from activities in schools but they do not engage them either. Homosexuality is not illegal but sodomy is illegal in Namibia but then by effect that makes homosexuality illegal hence people are not comfortable with the issue. The general feeling is "do not mess with us we will not mess with you".

Literature (e.g., Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003; Spivak, 1985a; Tajfel, 1979) concurs with current findings as the participants in the interviews also indicated that culture and religion have an influence on how gender nonconforming learners are treated in schools.

Participant A for example elaborated further to say: Schools are a part of the community, learners and teachers are influenced by the bigger society. The country's set up against gender nonconformity also has an influence on how gender nonconforming learners are treated in

schools. Learners are coping what parents are doing in the community so they are treating others who do not conform to gender norms as they see parents doing outside there.

Participant B said: Gender nonconforming learners are well accepted by girls but boys tend to hesitate to include other boys that are regarded gay and call them names instead. The culture and religion of parents are having a big impact on how children treat each other. When parents refuse to accept their children's sexual orientation and treat them badly this escalates into the school community.

Participant D indicated that: Gender nonconforming learners are not excluded but they are also not engaged on the topic due to culture. Different communities are responding differently toward gender nonconformity, for example, schools in urban are fine but in villages it is worse. People in the villages do not understand this issue and they do not talk about it. You have to hide your sexual identity if you are gay but in town is not a big issue to be gay.

The participants who responded to the questionnaire (Appendix K) were presented with the following qualitative question:

How are the gender nonconforming learners treated within the school community?

The majority of participants (90%) felt that gender nonconforming learners are accepted and offered protection in schools. The majority of participants (75%) also felt that the schools are treating learners according to the constitution's call for equal treatment of all Namibians. These views are demonstrated by the following quotes:

Participant 69 wrote: Gender nonconforming learners are not treated differently from other learners and they are accepted by the school community. These learners should be encouraged to

be free about their sexuality. They are living in a democratic country so they have rights just like they have rights to speech, education and movement.

Participant 33 said: Everyone deserves to be treated equally but in some cases these learners are bullied. Learners need guidance but not judgment so schools should have laws in place to protect these children.

In agreement with the above opinions, Participant 101 indicated:

The school as a community institution is functioning in accordance to the constitution which is the supreme law. The constitution protects the rights of each individual and the right for every child to education. So these children are protected and they are treated just like all other children in school. They are not discriminated against and learners that tease others are dealt with accordingly.

Participant 120 was of the following opinion: People need more awareness on same sex education. This topic is not really spoken of in schools as teachers we do see the learners and they are treated equally but some of them are not liked by peers and are discriminated against. This issue could be handled better in schools than what is happening now if teachers are well equipped with the knowhow at any level in the school set up. This school will help lesbians and gays to boost their confidence and feel accepted in society.

The researcher presents the participants' perceptions towards gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools.

5.2.4 The participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Research (i.e., Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003; Downie, 2014; Du Pisan, 2012) indicates that gender nonconformity is regarded as immoral in most African societies and due to religious, political and cultural beliefs it is not an acceptable phenomenon in these societies. The social acceptance of certain issues is highlighted in the assumptions of the SIP as determinant to dealing with diversity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Stryker, 1977 & Spivak, 1985b). Hence, this sub-section sought to obtain data regarding the fourth research sub-question:

> How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

This question was qualitatively presented to the participants during the interviews and also to those who responded to the questionnaire (Appendix K). The following responses demonstrate the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools.

> Researcher: The last two decades in Namibia is marked with political dissonance on homosexuality. However, regardless of those sentiments gender diversity is progressively and positively framed in the school curriculum to an extent. How do you position yourself within this contested space?

> Participant A answered: I personal do not discriminate people who are gay or lesbian. They are like that as a result of the background in which they grow up. The culture of their society and the people they interact with also made them like the way they are that is why you find more gay

people in certain tribes. But for me gender means a male and female however they are people also so I do not have anything against them.

Participant B's response reads: I feel that this issue should start with the politicians so that we can all be guided by policies. I don't have anything against these people but I feel the government should carry out the issue in parliament to introduce same sex education at schools and more public education. The constitution should clearly support the issue so that people can open up. People do not talk about it because it is not supported in the constitution.

Participant C pointed out: Sexual diversity for me is just normal like all other diversities we have as human beings. However, Namibia has developed an attitude of turning a blind eye towards gender nonconformity issues, it is more like you don't bother "us", we won't bother "you" situation. Most people are not bothered by these people as long as they keep to themselves. The whole concept is ignored and people go on with their lives as long as these people don't offend them. I do not discriminate against anyone we are all human beings regardless of our sexual preferences.

Participant D said: We need to understand where people that are against homosexuality are coming from. Some people in Namibia lack understanding of the issue, especially on how to disclose and they develop the fear of society's reactions thus they negatively influence others including parents and teachers. They need to understand the issue instead of instigating the whole nation against gay people. Being gay is not a sin as some people believe.

The participants for the questionnaire (Appendix K) were asked the following question:

In your own opinion, how should gender nonconforming learners be treated in the Namibian schools?

The participants for the questionnaire had different views regarding gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools as demonstrated by the following responses.

Participant Seven wrote: I believe if you are different you will have a hard time because society will put pressure on you. If you are gay, blind, too dark or too short, people will bully you and I think it will be and always was like that. So these learners will have to develop tough skin to get through it all.

Participant 19 was of this opinion: Parents should be encouraged to allow their children to express themselves in a way they feel comfortable and they (parents) should offer their support to the children. Cultural beliefs also need to be attended to for these people who do not conform to gender norms to be accepted in communities.

Participant 56 wrote: Gender nonconforming people are human beings and should be considered as such. They should not be considered or seen as taboo in society. The society should be educated about gender nonconformity so they may act accordingly towards such people. It is a human rights issue.

Participant 70 responded: Gender nonconforming individuals are normal, smart, intelligent beings who don't have the motive to harm or promote anything outside the norms of society. They are not murderers or criminals. Anything pertaining to their sexual issues should be left upon them to decide. Just like we decide about our own sexual concerns, they should also be left to do that.

Participant 99 wrote: If a person is like that (gay) nobody should try to hurt him because of his sexual orientation, it is what the person feels and wants in his life and that is what makes him happy.

Participant 119's response reads: I have no negative thoughts on gender nonconformity. In my opinion every person has the right to love and be with whomever they see fit. What others do in their lives has nothing to do with my life. However, I do not condone any short of discrimination of any from and I will fight for the rights of the learners who are being mistreated in any way, shape or form.

The participants were also asked to express their views on gender nonconformity. They were asked to respond to the following question:

Could you please make any other suggestion by viewing your opinion on gender nonconformity?

The participants responded to this question as follows.

Participant One: I personally do not agree with nor do I support the issue of gender nonconformity. One is either male or female. We should not entertain homosexuality identity of learners, it is evil and taboo and it should not be encouraged as being normal.

Participant 104 wrote: I embrace diversity simply because I believe to fit into this perfect picture society has created for us is simply impossible.

Participant 107 wrote: Gender nonconforming learners should be accepted and tolerated at school but they should not be encouraged to be open about their sexuality. It is a rural area and the liberty of gender nonconforming people's rights are overpowered by religion, culture and traditions.

Some participants made reference to the Bible and culture as the foundation for their feelings about gender nonconformity. These findings support the research findings (i.e., Creswell &

Plano Clark, 2017; Mertens, 2007; Taylor et al., 2012) that claim that realities are constructed by social, cultural and religious beliefs. This is demonstrated in the following responses.

Participant 18 wrote: Culture is forsaken these days, therefore creating a loophole for more damage to the kids. Let us respect culture and norms plus values of our tradition. This practice of homosexuality should not be allowed and it should not be encouraged in schools.

Participant 43 wrote: As a Christian, gender nonconformity is against God's commandments and principles, but that does not make the gays and lesbians less worthy of His love, I strongly believe it is this cruel world taking its toll on these people just like all other wrong things that we engage ourselves into. One just learns to tolerate gender nonconformity, but not support it.

Participant 59 was of this opinion: As a multicultural school with learners of different backgrounds and beliefs it is a bit difficult as not all learners will accept gender nonconforming learners.

Participant 61 said: Learners should be treated as such just learners. Just because a learner is gay does not mean they should be treated differently or special from the rest. Teachers and other learners should accept them because they are humans after all. They can be allowed at school but relationships of such learners should not be tolerated in schools.

Participant 80 wrote: We should focus on biblical principles; same sex is a sin and must be discouraged. People must seek God so that these things cannot occur. We operate too much in flesh and we failed to see the spiritual side of these acts. These learners should go back into their shells and try to be normal. Parents need to be educated so they teach their children to behave like men if they are men and the lower primary teachers need to be guiding these learners.

Participant 98 wrote: I see it as a wrong and sinful act and would never encourage it, such people are sick and need help with identification of gender functionality. I am not actually supporting this gay thing. I believe there is only a man and a woman. It never existed long time, why only now.

Participant 100 said: I believe only in a man and woman. Gender nonconformity is in the society but I will never encourage anybody to do that. But since we are dealing with this kind of people we just have to treat them the same as other people but we need to discourage it.

Participant 172 wrote: My true opinion is based on Genesis 1:27. God only created a man and a woman beyond that I am not supporting. Genesis 2:24 said marriage is between man and woman. Ethically, I think gender nonconformity is not allowed and is unacceptable in society, it is a moral decay.

There were some participants that refused to respond on this question citing religious and cultural beliefs. For instance the next verbatim read:

Participant 109: No suggestions from my side, it is a sensitive matter, culture and religious should be considered.
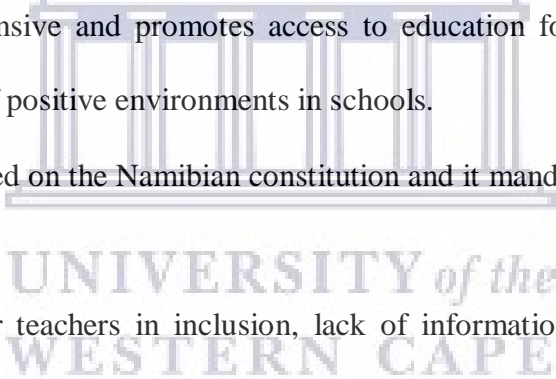
Participant 178: As a Christian I am not in support with homosexuality identity and therefore my input and suggestions cannot be given towards this topic. Thank you, good luck. It is against my culture and religion therefore I don't support it at all.

Participant 144's response reads: No suggestions, I believe every person has the freedom (free will), however I do not believe or support them.

On the basis of the data presented in the above sections, the next sub-section presents the summary and discussion of the qualitative data from the interviews and questionnaires.

5.2.5 Summary and discussion of qualitative data

The following qualitative discussions are made in regard to the data presented above on the IE policy's responsiveness towards gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools and the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools.

- The policy is responsive and promotes access to education for all learners as well as promotes creation of positive environments in schools.

- The IE policy is based on the Namibian constitution and it mandates schools to respect all learners' rights.

- Lack of training for teachers in inclusion, lack of information about sexual diversity, unavailability of the policy to teachers, cultural and religious influences on community are hindering the Namibian IE policy in terms of its responses to gender nonconforming learners.

- Gender nonconformity issues are not clearly referred to in the policy but are appended to gender reference in the IE policy.

- The policy formulation failed to talk to reality in some areas and poses challenges in addressing issues such as gender nonconformity.

- The silence stance of the Namibian laws towards gender nonconformity was found to be a hindrance to the policy in responding openly to gender nonconformity issues.

- The Life skills subject content does include issues of sexual orientation.

- The schools are responsive to all learners including gender nonconforming learners.

- The institutions of higher learning in Namibia do not provide training in handling sexual diversity among learners, but they train teachers on inclusion for all.

- Several educational responses are in place to address inclusion issues in schools such as the Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and training of Life Skill teachers.

- The schools promote tolerance and acceptance for different sexual orientations and established anti-bullying rules in schools.

- Gender nonconforming learners are treated differently in different schools.

- Culture and religion have an influence on how gender nonconforming learners are treated in schools.

- The schools are treating learners according to the constitution's call for equal treatment of all Namibians.

- Some participants are tolerant towards gender nonconforming learners.

- Some participants do accept gender nonconformity as an identity.

- The participants' perceptions of gender nonconformity are based on their personal, religious and cultural beliefs.

The strategies for the supplementary framework for the implementation of the IE policy in regard to gender nonconforming learners are analysed and presented below.

5.2.6 Strategies for a supplementary framework to support the IE policy implementation

Research (i.e., Mostert et al., 2015; Sathiparsad, 2003) highlights the importance of adopting a pro-active approach to support gender nonconforming learners in schools in order to curb major psychological problems for these learners. Adapting the curriculum content and addressing sexuality through sex education in Life Orientation textbooks in the South African education system are cited by Brikkels (2014) as some of the positive strategies that respond to gender nonconforming learners.

In order to determine the strategies for a supplementary framework to support the IE policy implementation and respond to gender nonconforming learners, this sub-section presents the qualitative data from the questionnaire (Appendix K) and interviews. The participants were asked to give suggestion on the strategies for the IE policy to respond positively to gender nonconforming learners. Thus, this sub-section answers the research sub-question:

> What elements would form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

This question was responded to by the participants during the interview and in the questionnaire through the following question:

> In your own opinion, what strategies could be employed for the IE policy to respond explicitly to gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

There are eight themes that emerged from the data in response to this question namely: the IE policy reference to gender nonconformity issues, establishment of legal frameworks that refers to gender nonconformity in schools, assistance for schools on handling gender nonconformity issues, monitoring of the implementation of the IE policy and inclusive practices in schools, extensive teaching of inclusive sex education in Namibian schools, creation of positive environment for gender nonconforming learners, offering of psychological support in schools and collaborative efforts among education stakeholders. The participants' responses are presented under the abovementioned themes as follows:

5.2.6.1 *The IE policy reference to gender nonconformity issues*

The majority of the participants (75%) felt that the IE policy was vague in regard to guidelines on responding to the gender nonconforming learners. They indicated that the policy should have clear guidelines on how to handle gender nonconformity issues. These participants also suggested that the policy should be reviewed to clearly pronounce itself on gender nonconformity issues in the same manner that the policy articulates itself on issues of different vulnerabilities. These views are demonstrated in the responses quoted below.

> Participant 103 for example wrote: The policy must clearly pronounce itself on gender nonconformity issues. Currently it mainly focuses on slow learners, poor kids, abused kids, it has to explicitly specify how matters regarding gender nonconformity matters are to be handled at schools.

> Participant 122: The policy should be revised, ensuring that responsiveness towards gender nonconforming learners is addressed. They should indicate all actions to be taken into

consideration without leaving out anything that may lead to any loopholes. Also a clause that stipulates the procedures on how to handle gender nonconforming learners should be added in the policy.

Participant 177: Draw up policies and guidelines ensuring that the schools provide an environment where all young people are supported and given the chance to flourish, free of discrimination. Educate teachers about this topic and there should be clear measures to those who are teasing learners.

The minority of the participants (35%) felt that there is no need for the IE policy to address gender nonconformity issues as these learners are not physically or mentally challenged. They indicated that the MoAEC should rather establish policies against different sexual identities in schools as this is against their religion and cultural beliefs. They responded as follows:

Participant Ten: I suggest nothing to be done as there is no life threatening towards them. Homosexuality is against my religion and culture. The government must introduce policies against homosexuality. They should not allow learners to be gay or lesbian while they are in schools.

Participant 21: To me homosexuality is an abomination; I do not think the IE policy should do something. I do not support homosexuality. I therefore do not suggest anything to be done because even if there is a policy for these learners, they will still face problems from those who do not support homosexuality and as a Christian, I feel it is a sin.

Participant 144: I personally do not support homosexuality, so the life skills syllabus or RME (Religious and Moral Education) should include a topic on this so that learners get discouraged at an earlier age not to become gays or lesbians. God created only a man and woman. Strengthen the

policy in a way that it discourages homosexuality and be open about what the Bible says about homosexuality, we cannot run away from the truth and encourage such an act in society.

Participant 169: I personally do not agree that gay and lesbianism should be regarded as an inclusive issue because physically and mentally they are not challenged. Therefore, the IE policy is not responsive towards gender nonconforming learners. Gender nonconformity should really not be mentioned in our policies.

The next sub-section presents the participants' suggestions under the theme establishment of legal frameworks on gender nonconformity.

5.2.6.2   *Establishment of legal frameworks on gender nonconformity*

The participants all suggested for the MoEAC to draw up legal frameworks that support the IE policy in response to gender nonconforming learners in schools.

Participant A indicated: There is a need to insert a clause into the current school safe policy framework which should clearly address the safety of gender nonconforming learners.

Participant One said: The Namibian stand on homosexuality has an effect on education therefore we need a legal policy framework to protect these children and address lack of understanding.

Participant 24 wrote: Draw up internal policies on gender nonconforming learners, because most of these learners do not feel accommodated or free to air their concerns even when they are being mistreated.

Participant 30 suggested: The national gender policy and the National Plan of Action on Gender Based Violence should be fully down streamed into schools so that learners can be taught about sexuality and human rights to help them understand.

Participant 49: Include legal frameworks on gender nonconformity into the policy, there should be clear frameworks on gender nonconformity identity because without them culture and religion is preventing teachers from embracing the concept.

The participants' suggestions on assistance for the teachers on implementation of IE policy are discussed below.

5.2.6.3   *Assistance for schools on handling gender nonconformity issues*

The majority of the participants (55%) were of the opinion that there is a need for the teachers to be trained on how to respond to gender nonconforming learners.

Participant One wrote: Give all teachers training on this type of issue, not Life Skills teachers only. Educators need to know how to sensitively handle talks or cases where children are bullied due to having same sex characteristics. Educators need to be aware of the fact that learners may not be treated any differently if they identify themselves as gender nonconforming.

Participant 50: Call meetings and workshops for teachers to be trained and to be aware that gender nonconformity is part of inclusive education in Namibian schools. If all teachers could be trained for this issue, it will be easy to handle it. The schools should also get more publications with gender nonconformity content.

The minority of the participants (20%) felt that learners should be educated about gender nonconformity. They suggested for introduction of child friendly programmes on gender nonconformity and empower them with information. This was indicated to address discrimination and ensure equal treatment.

Participant Four for instance wrote: The MoEAC should raise awareness by introducing child friendly programmes on gender nonconformity. We need to empower children and aim for a mind shift. We also need to create awareness amongst learners themselves. The IE policy should be made aware to all learners so that they know that they are protected and made inclusive.

Participant 155 wrote: Provide adequate training for teachers, civil societies, traditional leaders and other educators for support, after that then we should also start with planning for leaner training at later stages. Start with putting laws and policies in place which protects all learners and no discrimination, we are equal. All learners must be taught about the rights of gender nonconforming learners. Theses learners are being bullied and therefore not comfortable at all.

There were some participants (25%) that have suggested that the schools should be assisted with planning lessons for intensive sex education. They further suggested for strategies to be employed to help teachers to handle these learners accordingly. The following response made by Participant 178 demonstrates the above views:

Teachers should be assisted with lesson plans on gender nonconformity. There should also be strategies to help with handling gender nonconforming learners. For example the schools need to specify the types of bullying that is taking place at schools in order to address issue accordingly. They need help with that.

The following sub-section presents suggestions for monitoring of the IE policy implementation process and the practices of inclusion in schools.

5.2.6.4   Monitoring of the policy implementation and inclusive practices in schools

The participants all felt that there is a need for monitoring of the policy implementation as well as inclusive practices in schools. This was indicated to ensure effective implementation of the policy in order to achieve equity for gender nonconforming learners. The following suggestions demonstrate the participants' views regarding the need for monitoring.

Participant 70 indicated: The ministry should be more involved at school level, engage in visiting schools to investigate on the implementation of this policy. The teachers need support from the MoEAC to ensure its responsiveness.

Participant 111 stated: Equity is the key. There should be fairness in the sense that every teacher must be trained to implement the IE policy with sensitivity so that gender nonconforming learners are treated fairly in every class but not in some classes. Teachers should be given relevant information concerning homosexuality and knowledge on how to handle issues involving these learners. Education officers should visit schools to make sure the policy is practiced but not just to be in files.

Similarly, Participant 133 wrote: Teachers should introduce the policy in all activities dealing with learners. It must be enforced and be applied to in all dealings with learners to be effective. The regional office should also ensure consistency and equality in implementation of the policy.

The suggestions for awareness raising programmes in regard to inclusive sex education in the Namibian schools are discussed in the next sub-section.

5.2.6.5 *Awareness raising for inclusive sex education in Namibian schools*

The majority of the participants (80%) indicated that the basic education curriculum and the Life Skills as a subject syllabus content on sex education should be extensively taught in order to educate learners about sexuality issues.

> Participant 11 wrote: Schools can only fully teach topics on sex education when gender nonconformity is part of the curriculum otherwise it will be difficult to address it as parents and the community may oppose it. The learning and teaching materials should also be inclusive enough.

> Participant 41 indicated: The information should be included in the syllabus of some subjects in order for the schools to be compelled to respond positively. Educate them about the disadvantages of mistreating gender nonconforming learners and provide them with reading materials on gender nonconformity.

> Similarly, Participant 81 stated: The curriculum content on sex education should include comprehensive same sex education and programmes to be offered at schools to promote diversity. This should also be included in subjects such as Languages and Life Science instead of Life Skills alone.

The following sub-section presents suggestions for schools to create a positive learning environment for all learners including gender nonconformity.

5.2.6.6   Positive environment for gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

The participants suggested for the schools to create positive environments for learners. The following responses demonstrate the participants' suggestions.

Participant Five stated: Yes we need supportive environments for every child to feel secure because school is a place where everyone should feel secure. The schools should embrace the culture of acceptance regardless of our differences. Being tolerant towards these learners is important. Teachers should try to understand and accept them without making them feel ashamed to be themselves.

Participant 44 also wrote: Schools should rather embrace and accept learners who are different from the norm. We need to try and change individuals' perspective towards OTHERS. They must treat all learners equal regardless of their sexual status.

Participant 105 echoed the above statement by saying: Schools should not discriminate towards learners that identify as gay or lesbian nor should they allow learners to bully or tease other learners. The teachers need to adapt a more open minded attitude and the schools should be more inclusive, every child needs education without discrimination.

Participant 177's response reads: The teachers should create awareness campaigns that explain sexual orientation to learners and sensitise them on fundamental human rights and human diversity.

Participant 179 indicated: Everyone has a right to be who they are, it is not a choice but it is who they are. Treat them equal as the opposite sex learners. Give them respect, care for them and accommodate their needs as such.

The next sub-section presents the participants' suggestions concerning the need for strengthening psychological support for learners as another important aspect for the IE policy to respond to gender nonconforming learners.

5.2.6.7   *Psychological support for learners in schools*

The majority of the participants (63%) felt that there is a need to offer psychological support to all learners in schools. The following suggestions were made.

> Participant 102 suggested: This issue can be handled better if the teachers are well equipped with the knowhow at any level in the school set up. So the teacher counsellors should receive training in dealing with gender nonconforming learners, they need support to learn.

> Participant 105 for example wrote: Schools should offer counselling to these learners. Teachers should provide them with counselling sessions so that they can express what they think of themselves.

> Participant 122's response reads: Life Skills and teacher counsellors should offer information on benefit of counselling to the whole school. This will help learners to seek help when they need it.

A relatively smaller number of the participants (37%) suggested for counselling to be offered to gender nonconforming learners for them to change their sexual orientation. The following suggestions read:

Participant 16: Send them for counselling for them to make up their sexual orientation for them not to confuse others. As long as they are confused about their sexual identity they will influence others through their behaviour, conduct and attitude.

Participant 19 suggested: These learners should be counselled in order for them to stop their activities of changing themselves. It should not be allowed at all because God only made a man and a woman. Once it is allowed it means the whole country will be affected.

The next sub-section presents the data on the need for collaborative efforts.

5.2.6.8 *Collaborative efforts among stakeholders*

The participants indicated a need for collaboration between the MoEAC and several education stakeholders. Some participants (80%) felt that the schools should work together with the community for creation of a positive and non-discriminating climate in schools.

For instance Participant 55 wrote: Not only teachers should be provided with information but parents too. Schools must be equipped with knowledge and skills on how to handle gender nonconformity issues and parents also should have technical know-how on how to deal with gender nonconformity matters.

Participant 134 had echoed the above suggestion by saying: Identification should be well aimed from home/parents. That means parents must be part of the process. Parents must be educated about same sex relationships. Create awareness through capacity building and involve parents in such initiatives as education on moral values starts at home.

Participant 155 was in agreement as this response demonstrates: When drawing up the policy teachers should be involved. Also consult those people who are in same sex relationships to give real experiences.

Participant 169 wrote: Educate the school community about gender nonconformity matters. The schools should also view learners' opinions and they should get professionals to address such issues.

The suggestions presented above are summarised and discussed in the next sub-section and later discussed in chapter six together with quantitative data collected in this study.

5.2.7   Summary and discussion of strategies suggested in this study

The following qualitative discussions and summary are made on the basis of the data presented above regarding strategies to be employed for the IE policy to respond to gender nonconforming learners in a positive way. The participants suggested for:

- Clear guidelines on how to handle gender nonconformity issues.
- Legal frameworks that support the IE policy in response to gender nonconforming learners in schools.
- Provision of assistance to teachers to respond to gender nonconforming learners.
- Monitoring of the policy implementation as well as inclusive practices in schools.
- Extensive teaching of sex education in order to educate learners about sexuality issues.
- Creation of positive environments in schools for learners
- Offering of psychological support to all learners in schools for them to be able to learn.
- Collaboration between the MoEAC and several education stakeholders.

The quantitative data are presented, analysed and discussed in the next section.

5.3   Presentation, analysis and discussion of the quantitative data

The researcher has used a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach encased within a social identity perspective as the theoretical lens to explore the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. The use of this paradigm in this study is justified in sub-section 4.2.2. This study was aimed at exploring the policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners through the main research question:

> *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?*

Creswell (2014) writes that quantitative data analysis starts with organising and preparing data by scoring, choosing the appropriate statistical programme and inputting the data into a programme. The quantitative data in this study are analysed using the SPSS programme. The researcher used the chi-square test in order to obtain frequencies and percentages of the responses to each item.

The quantitative data were collected under the following themes: demographic information of the participants, IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners, the educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian, the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools as well as the participants' perception of the gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The quantitative data are presented in details in next sub-sections.

5.3.1 Demographic information of the participants

This sub-section presents the demographic information of the participants. It was deemed necessary to obtain participants' demographic data in order to understand the characteristics of the participants in terms of their age, gender and the location of their schools in terms of urban and rural area settings. Thus, figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 present the characteristics of the participants.

Figure 5.1

Age distribution of the total sample

Note: This figure presents the age distribution of the total sample. Source: Researcher's own drawing

The data in figure 5.1 indicate that most of the participants were between the ages of 20-30 and 31-40 with 34.3% for each age group respectively. A number of participants (16.3%) were between the ages of 41-50 while the rest (15.1) of the participants fell in the age range of 51-60. The data on figure 5.2 below presents the distribution of participants according to gender.

Figure 5.2

Distribution of participants according to gender
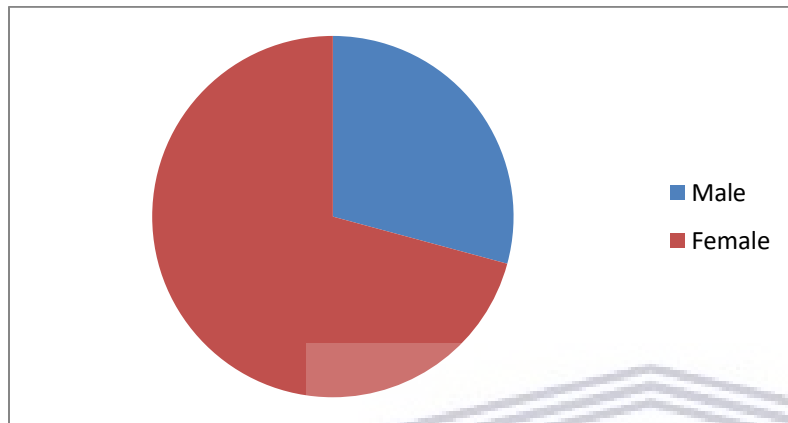
Note: This graph presents distribution of participants according to gender. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

The data on figure 5.2 indicate that most of the participants were females (70.8%) while males were few (29.2%). The noticeable difference in the representation of participants by gender, just like any other population characteristic, was not intentionally done but it is due to the population of the male teachers in the schools sampled at the time. The data concerning the location of the participants' schools in terms of urban and rural area settings are presented below.

Figure 5. 3:

The location of the participants' schools in terms of urban and rural area setting
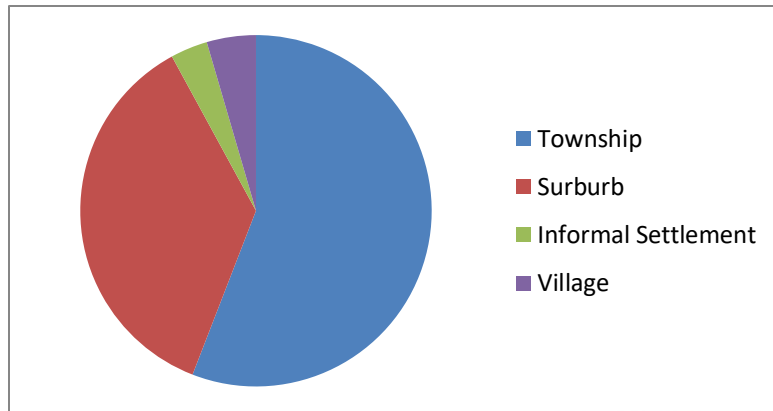
Note: This graph presents the information regarding the location of the participants' schools in terms of urban and rural area settings. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

The data on figure 5.3 indicate that the majority of the participants (55.6%) were teaching in schools located in towns and another relatively lager number (36.0%) was teaching in schools located in suburbs. The data on figure 5.3 further present that a small number of teachers (3.4%) were teaching in schools located in informal settlement and (5.0%) taught in schools located in villages. The data regarding the responses of the IE policy toward gender nonconforming learners are presented in the next sub-section.

5.3.2 The Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

The Namibian constitution recognises all persons' rights to education and freedom from discrimination (GRN, 1990). With the previously fragmented education system (Amukugo, 1993; Jansen, 1995) before the independence of Namibia, 1990, the Namibian education system is reformed through establishment of different educational policies with an aim to respond to all learners in Namibian schools (MoEC, 1993). Consequently, the Namibian IE policy is established with the aim to provide support to all learners with special needs and any learners who needs support (MoE, 2014). Therefore, this section presents the data on IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners. This section sought to answer the first research sub-question:

> In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The research sub-question mentioned above was answered through 13 statements that were presented to the participants. The participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed, were not sure or disagreed with the given statements on the IE policy responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The data in response to the above research sub-question are presented below.

Table 5.1:

IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Item	Agree		Not sure		Disagree		No response	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. There is an Inclusive Education policy at school	75	42.1	68	38.2	30	16.9	5	2.8
2. The IE policy responds toward all learners	81	45.5	62	34.8	18	10.1	17	9.6
3. The IE policy promotes access to education for all learners	98	55.1	48	27.0	17	9.6	15	8.4
4. The IE policy promotes respect for the rights of all learners	94	52.8	52	29.2	17	9.6	15	8.4
5. The IE policy clearly outlines possible challenges/barriers to learning including social issues such as sexual orientation	61	34.3	83	46.6	18	10.1	16	9.0
6. The IE policy is clear on which learners need support	72	40.4	71	39.9	20	11.2	15	8.4
7. The policy clearly indicates gender nonconforming learners as vulnerable	41	23.0	98	55.1	23	12.9	16	9.0
8. The aim of the IE policy is clear and pronounces itself on the care and support of the gender nonconforming learners	33	18.5	100	56.2	27	15.2	18	10.1
9. The IE policy mandates schools to openly support and tolerate gender nonconforming learners	36	20.2	101	56.7	24	13.5	17	9.6
10. The IE policy mandates me to tolerate gender nonconforming learners regardless of my personal views toward gender nonconforming learners	45	25.3	92	51.7	24	13.5	17	9.6
11. The policy guidelines calls for diversification of the curriculum	52	29.2	90	50.6	20	11.2	16	9.0
12. The IE policy guidelines support creation of a positive climate in schools for diversity	66	37.1	76	42.7	17	9.6	19	10.6
13. The IE mandates for all educational programmes and policies to adopt an inclusive approach	68	38.2	76	42.7	16	9.0	18	10.1

Note: This table presents the data on the IE policy's response to gender nonconforming

learners in Namibian schools.

Figure 5.4

IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools
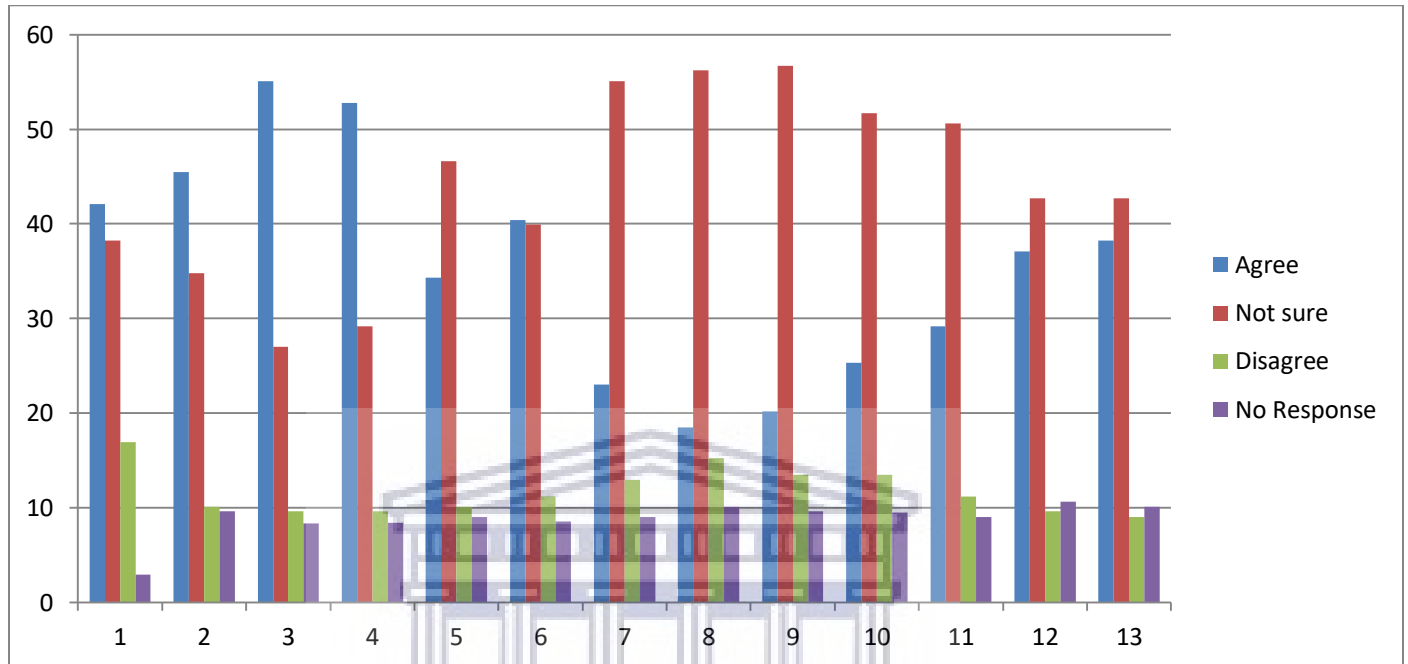
Note: This graph presents the data on IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

The information in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 indicates that 75 (42.1%) of the participants agreed that there is an IE policy at their schools. Another relatively large number of the participants 68 (38.2%) indicated that they are not sure if there is an IE policy at school, while 30 (16.9%) of the participants indicated that there is no IE policy at their schools. A few number of participants 5 (2.8%) did not respond to this statement. Furthermore, Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 indicate that 81 (45.5%) of the participants agreed that the IE policy does respond to the needs of all learners in a positive way. However, 62 (34.8%) of the participants indicated that they were not sure if the IE

policy responds to all learners' needs and 18 (10.1%) of the participants disagreed whereas 17 (9.6%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 also show that 98 (55.1%) of the participants agreed that the IE policy does promote access to education for all learners, 48 (27.0%) of the participants were not sure whereas 17 (9.6%) of the participants disagreed. There were 15 (8.4%) of the participants who did not respond to this statement. The data also revealed that 94 (52.8%) of the participants found the IE policy to promote respect for the rights of all learners, however, 52 (29.2%) of the participants were not sure, 17 (9.6%) of the participants disagreed while 15 (8.4%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 further indicate that a bigger number of participants 83 (46.6%) was not sure if the IE policy clearly outlines possible barriers to learning including social issues such as sexual orientation. However, there were some participants 61 (34.3%) who felt that the IE policy clearly outlines possible barriers to learning including social issues such as sexual orientation. There were 18 (10.1%) of the participants who disagreed while 16 (9.0%) of the participants did not respond.

The data in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 also indicate that the IE policy was found to be clear on which learners need support by 72 (40.4%) of the participants while an almost equal number 71 (39.9%) of the participants was not sure and 20 (11.2%) participants disagreed. There were some participants 15 (8.4%) who did not respond to this statement. Further, Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 show that the majority of the participants 98 (55.1%) were not sure if the IE policy clearly indicates gender nonconforming learners as vulnerable. However, 41 (23.0%) of the participants felt that the IE policy clearly indicates gender nonconforming learners as vulnerable, 23 (12.9%)

of the participants disagreed with the statement whereas 16 (9.0%) of the participants did not respond. It is observed from Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 that most of the participants 100 (56.2%) were not sure if the IE policy's aim pronounces itself clearly on the care and support of gender nonconforming learners. Nevertheless, 33 (18.5%) of the participants agreed that the IE policy's aim pronounces itself clearly on the care and support of the gender nonconforming learners while 27 (15.2%) of the participants disagreed. A few number of the participants 18 (10.1%) did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 also give an impression that most of the participants 101 (56.7%) were not sure if the IE policy mandates schools to openly support and tolerate gender nonconforming learners while 36 (20.2%) of the participants agreed with the statement. Some of the participants 24 (13.5%) disagreed with the statement while 17 (9.6%) of the participants did not respond. It is also noticeable that the majority of the participants, 92 (51.7%) were not sure if the IE policy mandates teachers to tolerate gender nonconforming learners regardless of their personal views toward gender nonconformity. However, 45 (25.3%) of the participants agreed, 24 (13.5) of the participants did not agree while there were 17 (9.6%) of the participants who did not respond.

The data in Table 5.1 and Figure 5.4 further indicate that most of the participants, 90 (50.6%), were not sure if the IE policy guidelines calls for diversification of the curriculum while 52 (29.2%) of the participants agreed and 20 (11.2%) of the participants disagreed. Sixteen (9.0%) of the participants did not respond.

It is further clear that most of the participants 76 (42.7%) were not sure if the IE policy guidelines support creation of a positive climate in schools for diversity. This is followed by a relatively bigger number of participants, 66 (37.1%) who agreed and a few number 17 (9.6%) disagreed. Nineteen (10.7%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. In addition, the majority of the participants, 76 (42.7%) were not sure if the IE policy mandates all educational programmes and policies to adopt an inclusive approach. However, the IE policy was found to mandate all educational programmes and policies to adopt an inclusive approach by 68 (38.2%) of the participants and 16 (9.0%) of the participants disagreed. Some participants 18 (10.1%) did not respond to this statement. The data on the educational responses to gender nonconforming learners are presented below.

5.3.3   The educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

The Namibia educational system's goals are equity, justice, democratic participation and respect for human dignity (MoEC, 1993). Hence, inclusive education in Namibia is based on rights discourse for all learners in schools. Potgieter and Reygan (2012) maintain that schools today are places where learners understand their membership to communities and their relationship with others. However, research (e.g., Butler et al., 2003, Evans & Chapman, 2014; Msibi, 2012) bear evidence that some gender nonconforming learners are experiencing exclusion in schools. Further, Blaauw, (2012) and Cianciotto and Cahill (2003) point out that schools contribute to the homophobic harassment by ignoring the issue of gender nonconformity. Hence, this sub-section presents data on educational responses to gender nonconforming learners. This section sought to answer the second research sub-question:

What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?

The participants have responded to this research sub-question by indicating whether they agreed, not sure or disagreed with the 15 statements that were presented to them on ways in which the education system responds to gender nonconforming learners. The data in that regard are presented below.

Table 5.2

The educational responses to gender nonconforming learners

Item	Agree		Not sure		Disagree		No response	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
14. Institutions of higher learning in Namibia provide training in handling sexual diversity among learners	37	20.8	115	64.6	21	11.8	5	2.8
15. The national school curriculum content includes issues of sexual orientation for most subjects (English, Life Skills, Life Science, Biology and other subjects)	90	50.6	65	36.5	19	10.7	4	2.2
16. The curriculum change provides intensive/in-depth gender nonconformity content	15	8.4	131	73.6	26	14.6	6	3.4
17. Life skills supplementary programmes (My future is my choice) do include sexual orientation issues	94	52.8	73	41.0	8	4.5	3	1.7
18. The advisory teachers and regional counsellors do include issues of sexual orientation in their training sessions	48	27.0	100	56.2	26	14.6	4	2.2
19. The school is provided with additional information resources on how to handle issues of gender nonconformity	17	9.6	111	62.3	47	26.4	3	1.7
20. Our school rules protect and affirm the rights of all learners including gender nonconforming learners from bullying	125	70.2	38	21.4	11	6.2	4	2.2
21. Our school promotes tolerance and acceptance for different sexual orientations	87	48.9	71	39.9	15	8.4	5	2.8
22. Our school carries out awareness programmes towards sexual diversity	33	18.5	81	45.5	59	33.1	5	2.9
23. There are materials and books with gender nonconformity content at the school/library	16	9.0	109	61.2	50	28.1	3	1.7
24. The school offers an intensive sex education through Life skills as a subject	73	41.0	83	46.7	18	10.1	4	2.2
25. Life skills as a subject provides chances to talk about sexual diversity	95	53.4	77	43.3	2	1.1	4	2.2
26. Life skills a subject is taught fulltime at school	152	85.4	16	9.0	4	2.2	6	3.4

27. Gender nonconforming learners are encouraged to be free and open about their sexual orientation at school.	36	20.2	98	55.1	40	22.5	4	2.2
28. Gender nonconforming learners are accepted by other learners at school.	72	40.4	83	46.6	18	10.1	5	2.9

Note: The table above presents the data on the educational responses to gender nonconforming

learners in Namibian schools. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

Figure 5.5

The educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools
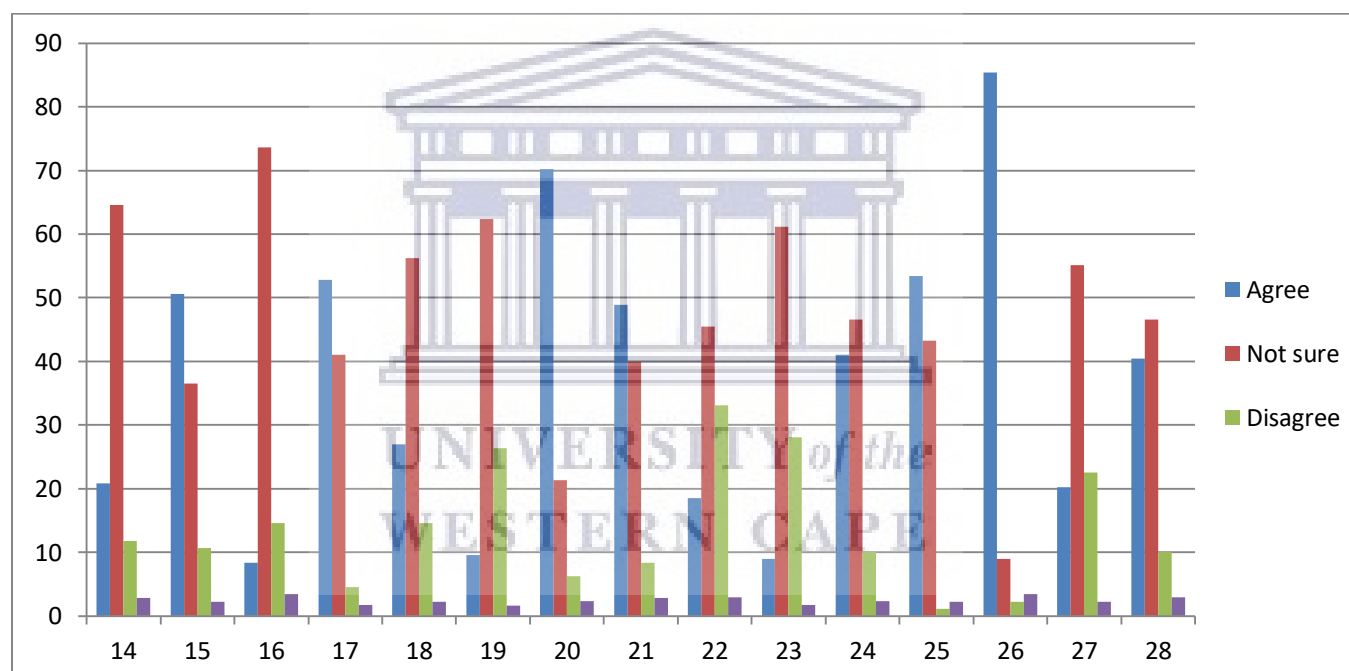
Note: This graph presents data on the educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in

Namibian schools. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

The data in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 show that a large number of participants, 115 (64.6%) were

not sure if institutions of higher learning in Namibia provides training in handling sexual

diversity among learners. The data also show that 37 (20.8%) of the participants agreed that institutions of higher learning in Namibia provide training in handling sexual diversity among learners. However, 21 (11.8%) of participants disagreed with this statement while 5 (2.8%) of the participants did not respond. The national school curriculum content was found to include issues of sexual orientation for most subjects (English, Life Skills, Life Science, Biology and others) by 90 (50.6%) of the participants. However, some participants, 65 (36.5%) were not sure and 19 (10.7%) participants disagreed. This statement was not responded to by 4 (2.2%) of the participants. Contrary, most of the participants, 131 (73.6%) were not sure if the curriculum change provides intensive/in-depth gender nonconformity content. However, there were some participants, 26 (14.6%) that disagreed and some, 15 (8.4%) agreed. Some participants 6 (3.4%) did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 further indicate that the Life skills supplementary programmes (My future is my choice) were found to include sexual orientation issues by most of the participants, 94 (52.8%). Other participants, 73 (41.0%) were not sure and few number of the participants 8 (4.5%) disagreed. However there are 3 (1.7%) of the participants who did not respond to this statement. Further, a big number of participants, 100 (56.2%) indicated that they were not sure if the advisory teachers and regional school counsellors do include issues of sexual orientation in their training sessions for teachers. The data also show that 48 (27.0%) of the participants agreed while 26 (14.6%) disagreed. However, this statement was not responded to by 4 (2.2%) of the participants.

The data in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 show that a large number of participants, 111 (62.3%) were not sure if the schools are provided with additional information resources on how to handle

issues of gender nonconformity. However, a proportion of the participants, 47 (26.4%) disagreed and few participants, 17 (9.6%) agreed. Some of the participants 3 (1.7%) did not respond to this statement. It is clearly shown in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 that the majority of the participants, 125 (70.2%) are of the opinion that their school rules affirm the rights of all learners including gender nonconforming learners and protect them from bullying. There were also some participants, 38 (21.4%) who were not sure and 11 (6.2%) of the participants disagreed with this statement. Some participants, 4 (2.2%) did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 shows that most of the participants, 87 (48.9%) believed that their schools promote tolerance and acceptance for different sexual orientations. It is also noticeable that those who were not sure made up another bigger proportion, 71 (39.9%) while those who disagreed were few, 15 (8.4%). A smaller number, 5 (2.8%), of the participants did not respond to this statement. Many participants, 81 (45.5%) were not sure whether their schools carry out awareness programmes towards sexual diversity or not. Some participants 59 (33.1%) disagreed while 33 (18.5%) participants agreed that their schools carry out awareness programmes towards sexual diversity. Five (2.9%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. It is further evident from Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 that quite a number of participants, 109 (61.2%) were not sure if there are learning materials and books with gender nonconformity content at their school while 50 (28.1%) of the participants disagreed. However, a few number of participants 16 (9.0%) agreed while 3 (1.7%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 show that 83 (46.7%) of the participants were not sure if the schools offer an intensive sex education through Life skills as a subject. However, another

relatively high number of participants, 73 (41.0%) had agreed while a small number, 18 (10.1%) indicated that the schools do not offer an intensive sex education through Life skills as a subject. This statement was not responded to by 4 (2.2%) of the participants. Regardless, the majority of participants, 95 (53.4%) felt that Life Skills as a subject provides chances to talk about sexual diversity. However, another moderately large number of participants, 77 (43.3%) was not sure if the Life skills as a subject provides chances to talk about sexual diversity. A small number of participants, 2 (1.1%) indicated that Life skills as a subject does not provide chances to talk about sexual diversity. However, 4 (2.2%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The majority of the participants, 152 (85.4%) were of the opinion that the Life skills as a subject is taught fulltime at school. The data in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 also indicate that few participants, 16 (9.0%) were not sure and a small number, 4 (2.2%) indicated that Life Skills as a subject is not taught fulltime at school. Six (3.4%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. A large number of participants, 98 (55.1%) indicated that they were not sure if gender nonconforming learners are encouraged to be free and open about their sexual orientation at school. Some participants, 40 (22.5%) disagreed while others, 36 (20.2%) agreed that gender nonconforming learners are encouraged to be free and open about their sexual orientation at school. However, 4 (2.2%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.2 and Figure 5.5 further show that a high number of participants, 83 (46.6%) were not sure if gender nonconforming learners are accepted by other learners at school. Furthermore, a relatively high number of participants, 72 (40.4%) agreed that gender nonconforming learners are accepted by other learners at school whereas 18 (10.1%) disagreed. There were 5 (2.9%) of the participants who did not respond to this statement. The data on the

participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools are presented in the next sub-section.

5.3.4 The participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Cultural and religious beliefs toward gender nonconformity is said to lead to discrimination and mistreatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003). Similarly, these learners are reported to be rejected from group discussions by heterosexual peers and verbally abused (Brikkels, 2014; Hillard et al., 2014; Msibi, 2012). In view of the above discussions, this sub-section presents data on the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools. This section sought to answer the third research sub-question:

> From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

This research sub-question was answered through 10 statements that were presented to the participants. The participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed, were not sure or disagreed with the given statements on the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The data in response to the given statements are presented in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6 below.

Table 5.3

The participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners

Item	Agree		Not sure		Disagree		No response	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. Teachers are supportive toward gender nonconforming learners	47	26.4	103	57.9	22	12.4	6	3.3
2. Gender nonconforming learners are never excluded from activities by teachers	134	75.3	27	15.2	12	6.7	5	2.8
3. Gender nonconforming learners are never excluded from activities by other learners	95	53.4	62	34.8	17	9.6	4	2.2
4. Gender nonconforming learners are well considered for friendship circles by other learners	90	50.6	70	39.3	14	7.9	4	2.2
5. Some male learners are teased by others as they are considered to exhibit gay characteristics	21	11.8	48	27.0	105	59.0	4	2.2
6. I hear of phrases such as "gay, moffie, dyke, cherrie" being used to refer to some learners in school	31	17.4	24	13.5	119	66.9	4	2.2
7. I am aware of learners who are physical harmed (kicked, punched or hit) because they are gender nonconforming	113	63.5	39	21.9	23	12.9	3	1.7
8. I feel equipped and knowledgeable to respond to such incidents in no 31& 32	89	50.0	53	29.8	30	16.9	6	3.3
9. I am comfortable to teach issues related to gender nonconformity in my subject	91	51.1	40	22.5	43	24.2	4	2.2
10. I feel comfortable to engage with gender nonconforming learners on social occasions	105	59.0	35	19.7	34	19.1	4	2.2

Note: This table presents the data on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools.

Figure 5.6

Treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools
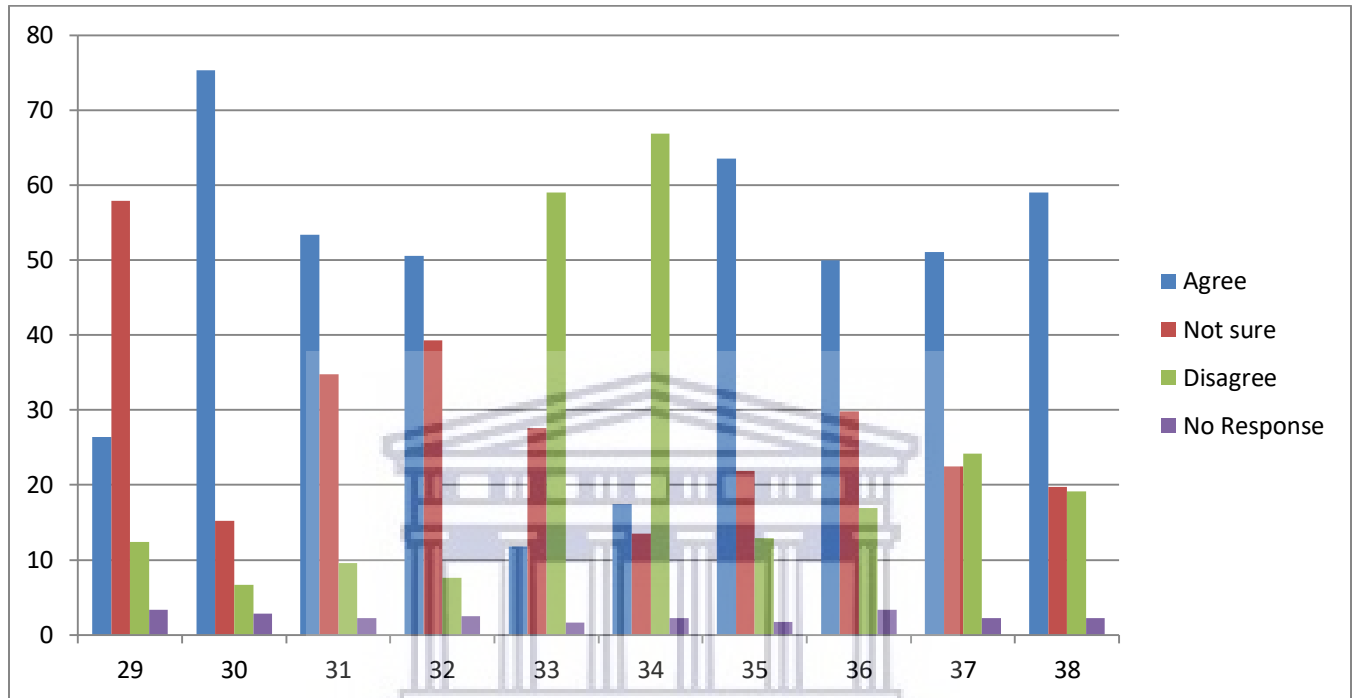
Note: This graph presents the data on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

The data in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6 show that most of the participants, 103 (57.9%) were not sure if teachers are supportive toward gender nonconforming learners. The data also show that 47 (26.4%) of the participants agreed that teachers are supportive towards gender nonconforming learners whereas 22 (12.4%) disagreed. Some participants 6 (3.3%) did not respond to this statement. The majority of the participants, 134 (75.3%) indicated that gender nonconforming learners are never excluded from activities by teachers, 27 (15.2%) of the participants were not sure. There were 12 (6.7%) of the participants who disagreed while 5 (2.8%) of the participants did not respond. Further, over half of the participants, 95 (53.4%) were of the opinion that gender

nonconforming learners are never excluded from activities by other learners. However, a proportion of participants, 62 (34.8%) were not sure if gender nonconforming learners are excluded or not from activities by other learners and 17 (9.6%) disagreed. Four (2.2%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6 clearly indicate that the majority of participants, 90 (50.6%) indicated that gender nonconforming learners are well considered for friendship circles by other learners. However, there is a large number of participants, 70 (39.3%) who indicated that they were not sure if gender nonconforming learners are well considered for friendship circles by other learners and 14 (7.9%) disagreed. This statement was not responded to by 4 (2.2%) of the participants. Most of the participants, 105 (59.0%) were of the opinion that there are no male learners that are teased by others because they are considered to exhibit gay characteristics. However some participants, 48 (27.0%) were not sure while others, 21 (11.8%) agreed. Four (2.2%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6 indicate that the majority of participants, 119 (66.9%) disagreed that they do not hear learners called names due to their sexual orientation. Nevertheless, some of the participants, 31 (17.4%) indicated that they hear of learners being called names due to their sexual orientation while others, 24 (13.5%) said there were not sure. Some participants 4 (2.2%) did not respond to this statement. It is evident from the data in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6 that there are learners who are physically harmed (kicked, punched or hit) because they are homosexuals as 113 (63.5%) of the participants agreed to be aware of these incidents. A proportion of participants, 39 (21.9%) were not sure and 23 (12.9%) indicated that

they are not aware if there are learners who are physically harmed due to their sexual orientation. There were some 3 (1.7%) of the participants who did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6 further show that 89 (50.0%) of the participants felt equipped and knowledgeable to respond to incidents such as of learners being physically harmed due to their sexual orientation in a positive manner. However, 53 (29.8%) participants felt that they were not sure if they were equipped and knowledgeable to respond to such incidents whereas 30 (16.9%) participants indicated they were neither equipped nor knowledgeable to handle those incidents. However, some of the participants 6 (3.3%) did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6 also reveal that most of the participants, 91 (51.1%) indicated that they are comfortable to teach issues related to gender nonconformity in their subjects, while 43 (24.2%) participants disagreed. However, 40 (22.5%) of the participants were not sure if they are comfortable to teach issues related to gender nonconformity in their subjects while 4 (2.2%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.6 further indicate that a large number of the participants, 105 (59.0%) felt comfortable to engage with gender nonconforming learners on social occasions. Nevertheless, a number of participants 35 (19.7%) disagreed and 34 (19.1%) were not sure if they felt comfortable to engage with gender nonconforming learners on social occasions. Some of the participants, 4 (2.2%) did not respond to this statement. The data on the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools are presented in the next sub-section.

5.3.5 The participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Even though gender nonconformity is looked upon as taboo in African culture (Du Pisan, 2012; Kennedy, 2006; Pereira, 2009), there is evidence (see Herek, 2004; Lee, 2018; Sutherland et al., 2016) of a change in the societies' attitude towards gender nonconformity. According to research (i.e., Beukes, 2016; Haskins, 2014; LaFont & Hubbard, 2007; Shipo, 2010), gender nonconformity is dealt with differing feelings in the Namibian society. In view of the above sentiments, this sub-section presents data on the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Hence, this section sought to answer the fourth research sub-question:

How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The research sub-question mentioned above was answered through 12 statements that were presented to the participants. The participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed, were not sure or disagreed with the given statements that demonstrate their perception toward gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners. The data in response to these statements are presented in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7 below.

Table 5.4

The participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in

Namibian schools

Item	Agree		Not sure		Disagree		No response	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
11. I can openly talk about gender nonconformity with school learners	92	51.7	35	19.7	45	25.3	6	3.3
12. Culturally, I am comfortable to embrace the construct of gender nonconformity	68	38.2	37	20.8	65	36.5	8	4.5
13. Due to my religious beliefs I cannot tolerate gender nonconformity	82	46.1	23	12.9	68	38.2	5	2.8
14. The attitude of the society is putting pressure on me not to embrace gender nonconformity	92	51.7	29	16.3	48	27.0	9	5.0
15. There is a need for awareness programmes for gender nonconformity in school	99	55.6	27	15.2	46	25.8	6	3.3
16. Gender nonconforming learners have rights like all other learners in our society	144	80.9	14	7.9	12	6.7	8	4.5
17. Gender nonconforming learners should be encouraged to be open about their sexuality	87	48.9	42	23.6	42	23.6	7	3.9
18. Gender nonconformity is unethical and taboo	65	36.5	47	26.4	55	30.9	11	6.2
19. Gender nonconforming learners require a supportive environment	115	64.6	26	14.6	28	15.7	9	5.1
20. Gender nonconformity should not be accepted in an African culture	92	51.7	33	18.5	46	25.8	7	4.0
21. I believe that there is only a man and woman	46	25.8	20	11.2	104	58.4	8	4.6
22. I do feel comfortable to be a friend with a gender nonconforming person	100	56.2	35	19.7	36	20.2	7	3.9

Note: This table presents data on the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and

gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

Figure 5.7

The participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools
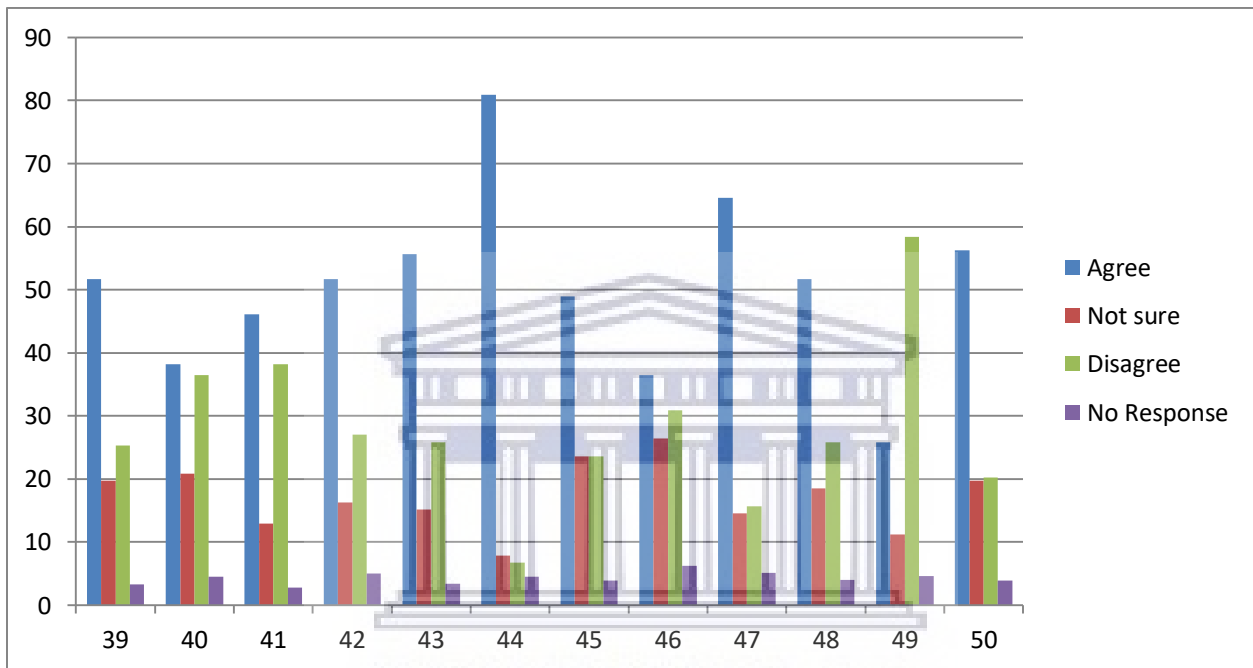
Note: This graph presents data regarding the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Source: Researcher's own drawing.

The data in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7 clearly show that most of the participants, 92 (51.7%) can openly talk about gender nonconformity with school learners, but 45 (25.3%) indicated that they cannot while 35 (19.7%) were not sure. Six (3.3%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. Some of the participants 68 (38.2%) were culturally comfortable to embrace the construct of gender nonconformity while 65 (36.5%) were not. There were some participants, 37 (20.8%), who were not sure if they were culturally comfortable to embrace the construct of

gender nonconformity. There were some of the participants 8 (4.5%) who did not respond to this statement.

The data in table 5.4 and figure 5.7 further reveal that the majority of the participants, 82 (46.1%) agreed that due to their religious beliefs they cannot tolerate gender nonconformity. Nevertheless, 68 (38.2%) participants indicated that their religious beliefs do not prevent them from tolerating gender nonconformity and 23 (12.9%) were not sure. Five (2.8%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. The data further reveal that the majority of the participants, 92 (51.7%), felt that the attitude of the society is putting pressure on them not to embrace gender nonconformity, while 48 (27.0%) disagreed. Some of the participants 29 (16.3%) were not sure if the attitude of the society is putting pressure on them not to embrace gender nonconformity whereas 9 (5.0%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7 show that the majority of the participants, 99 (55.6%), felt that there is a need for awareness programmes for gender nonconformity in school. On the contrary, some participants, 46 (25.8%) disagreed and 27 (15.2%) were not sure. Six (3.3%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. Moreover, the majority of the participants, 144 (80.9%) felt that gender nonconforming learners have rights like all other learners in the society. Some participants, 14 (7.9%) indicated that they were not sure while 12 (6.7%) participants felt that gender nonconforming learners have no rights like other learners in the society. There were some participants, 8 (4.5%) who did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7 clearly indicate that most of the participants, 87 (48.9%) felt that gender nonconforming learners should be encouraged to be open about their sexuality, while some participants, 42 (23.6%) were not sure. However, there were some participants 42 (23.6%)

who felt that gender nonconforming learners should not be encouraged to be open about their sexuality while 7 (3.9%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. The data clearly indicate that most of the participants, 65 (36.5%) believed that gender nonconformity is unethical and taboo while 55 (30.9%) disagreed. Some of the participants 47 (26.4%) were not sure if they considered gender nonconformity is unethical and taboo whereas 11 (6.2%) of the participants did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7 evidently show that most of the participants, 115 (64.6%), agreed that gender nonconforming learners require a supportive environment whereas 28 (15.7%) of the participants disagreed. Some of the participants, 26 (14.6%) were not sure if gender nonconforming learners require a supportive environment, while 9 (5.1%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. The data in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7 also show that the majority of participants, 92 (51.7%) felt that gender nonconformity should not be accepted in an African culture. Regardless, some participants, 46 (25.8%) disagreed and 33 (18.5%) participants indicated that they were not sure if gender nonconformity should be accepted in an African culture. Some of the participants, 7 (4.0%), did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7 further demonstrate that most of the participants, 104 (58.4%) did not believe that there is only a man and woman. The data further clearly revealed that 46 (25.8%) of the participants believed so and 20 (11.2%) participants were not sure if they believed that there is only a man and woman. Some of the participants 8 (4.6%) did not respond to this statement.

The data in Table 5.4 and Figure 5.7 further give evidence that most of the participants, 100 (56.2%) felt that they were comfortable to be a friend with a gender nonconforming person. However, 36 (20.2%) participants indicated that they were not comfortable to be a friend with a gender nonconforming person. There were some of the participants 35 (19.7%) who were not sure if they were comfortable to be a friend with a gender nonconforming person whereas 7 (3.9%) of the participants did not respond to this statement. These data are summarised and interpreted in the next sub-section.

5.3.6 Summary and discussions of quantitative data

The following quantitative discussions and summary are made in regard to the data obtained about the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners, the educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools as well as the participants' perception of the gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The following interpretations are made in regard to the above themes.

- The IE policy was not distributed to all schools
- The policy was found to be responsive and promotes access to education for all learners as well as promotes creation of positive environments in schools.
- The policy was found not to be clear on guidelines to care for gender nonconforming learners.
- The policy was found to mandate all educational programmes and policies to adapt an inclusive approach.

- It was not clear to many participants if the institutions of higher learning in Namibia provide training in handling sexual diversity among learners.

- The in-service training programmes do not address gender nonconformity issues.

- There were no materials with sexual diversity content at schools.

- The Life skills subject content was found to include issues of sexual orientation but it ws not clear if the teachers do teach this content.

- The schools were found to promote tolerance and acceptance for different sexual orientations but it was not clear if they do carry out awareness programmes towards sexual diversity.

- Most of the teachers were open to talk about gender nonconformity issues.

- Gender nonconforming learners were treated equal even though there were incidents of these learners being teased and physically harmed.

- Gender nonconformity was found to be unethical, a taboo and unAfrican by some participants.

- Religion and culture were factors that are preventing some teachers from accepting gender nonconformity.

A detailed discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative findings is done in chapter six, but first the researcher presents a summary of chapter five in the next section.

5.4   Chapter Summary

The researcher has presented, analysed and discussed the research data in this chapter. The researcher in this study had explored the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender

nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Hence, in this chapter the researcher presented the data in response to the main research question:

How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The main research question was answered through the following five research sub-questions.

1. In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

2. What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?

3. From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

4. How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

5. What elements would form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of the Namibian IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The data are presented in two sections, qualitative data and quantitative data. The first research sub-question was aimed at exploring the IE policy responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. In this regard, the data presented that the IE policy does respond to all learners positively but not clear on its response to gender nonconforming learners. Issues such as lack of training for teachers in inclusion, lack of information about sexual diversity,

unavailability of the policy to teachers, cultural and religious influences on community are a hindrance to better responses to gender nonconforming learners. The IE policy was not clear on guidelines to care for gender nonconforming learners.

The second research sub- question sought to determine educational responses that are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy. The data show that there are educational responses to all learners at both levels in education; the basic education level and at tertiary education level. However, the institutions of high learning were found not to train teachers on issues of gender nonconformity. The third research sub-question was concerned with establishing the participants' perspectives on the teachers and other learners' treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools. Gender nonconforming learners were treated differently in different schools.

The fourth research sub-question was aimed at establishing the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The participants' responses demonstrated that they had different views on gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The researcher also aimed to discover the elements of a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Hence the fifth research sub-question solicited strategies such as establishment of legal frameworks, clear policy statements, teacher training, inclusive sex education, psychological support for learners, collaboration among stakeholders and monitoring of the implementation of the IE policy. The data presented in this chapter is integrated and discussed together in the next chapter in relation to literature, the

theoretical framework of the study, the methodological stance of the study and research questions as well as the study objectives and purpose.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1   Introduction

The researcher in the current study has used a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach. Hence, the researcher integrated the quantitative and qualitative data of the study by discussing the main findings of the study together (see section 4.2.2 and 4.8). Research (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Gunasekare, 2015; Johnson et al., 2007; Mertens, 2007) indicates that a researcher can use a mixed method for certain purposes. In this study, the mixed methods approach was used for the purpose of complementarity. Hence, these findings are discussed together and conclusions are drawn from the main findings in regard to the topic under study.

The researcher had discussed the findings in relation to literature reviewed, the theoretical framework of the study (Social Identity Perspective), the methodological stance of the study (transformative paradigm), the research objectives, purpose and questions of the study. Further the findings are discussed within the supplementary framework for implementation of the inclusive education policy (SFIIEP) which is developed by the researcher in this study. The researcher has used relevant literature to support the discussions of the findings and also to determine if there is consistency or departure between the existing knowledge and this research's findings.

In that regard, this chapter is structured according to the main themes addressed in this study: the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools, the

participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools and the strategies that formed the elements of the supplementary framework for the IE policy implementation. These themes are in response to the main research question of the study: *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?*

This main research question is responded to through the following research sub-questions:

1. In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

2. What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?

3. From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

4. How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

5. What elements would form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of the Namibian IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

In that regard, the following section presents the discussions of the findings in this study.

6.2 Discussions of the findings

Inclusive education is said to be a form of education that advocates for respect and acceptance of diversity among learners (MoE, 2013; UNESCO, 2009). The reviewed literature (e.g., Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014; Nel, 2014; Russell, 2011) for this study highlighted the positive impacts of inclusive curriculum content and policies on the learners' wellbeing. The ideology of inclusion within education is in line with this study's objectives, the transformative approach stance on social changes and the SIP theoretical framework's assumptions of social liberation. Thus the researcher hoped to increase and contribute to the existing knowledge of differences among learners and advocate for embracement of these diversities within the schools' communities. The researcher discusses the findings under five sub-sections as per the themes identified in the study and in response to the research sub-questions of the study as follows.

6.2.1 The Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

The findings discussed in this sub-section are in response to the first research sub-question. The findings of the current study present diverse responses with regard to the Namibian IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners. These findings revealed that the IE policy is yet to be distributed to all schools in Namibia. The reviewed literature indicates that implementation of the IE policy is aimed at addressing the inequalities in education and to honour and promote human rights and the dignity of all Namibians (GRN, 2004; MoE, 2008). Hence, the researcher argues that the unavailability of the IE policy at some schools discovered in this study has implications on the inclusion practices in schools as teachers are expected to follow the policy guidelines in assisting learners.

The findings of this study further revealed that even though not all schools were in possession of the IE policy, the policy was found to respond in a positive way and promote access to education for all learners. The policy was further found to promote creation of positive environments and respond positively to diversity in schools and respond to the Namibian constitution call for respect for human rights. These findings confirm the reviewed literature (MoE, 2014, MoEC, 1993) that the Namibian IE policy's aims are in accordance with the education system's aim of promoting equal access to education for all Namibian children. These findings differ from the view of the literature (e.g., Bii & Taylor, 2013; Adoyo & Odeny, 2015; Chhabra, et.al, 2010; Mukhopadhyay, at.el, 2012) on the state of inclusion education in some African countries such as Kenya and Botswana which is said to be focused on psychical disabilities. This study's findings imply that the Namibian IE policy is not disability based like the above mentioned countries' IE policies discussed in the literature but aims to address all issues that act as barriers to learning for the learners.
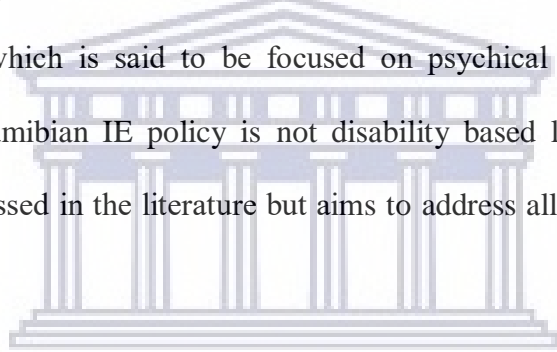
The findings discussed above indicate a positive response of the Namibian IE policy to all learners in Namibian schools. However, regardless of this positive response, it was not clear if the IE policy clearly outlines social issues such as sexual orientation as possible barriers to learning. The researcher raised a concern (section 1.4) of minimal evidence on the responses of the IE policy to gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian schools. In that regard, these findings concur with this study's literature (Brown, 2016; Francis et al., 2017) that there is invisibility and silence in regard to marginalised identities within the Namibian education system. The researcher deduces from the above discussions that this policy silence and invisibility had created a gap between the IE policy's aims for provision of support to all learners and the practical reality of inclusion in the Namibian schools as the IE policy calls for

identification and additional support for vulnerable children (MoE, 2014). In that regard, the conclusion from these findings is that the Namibian education system is promoting the silence surrounding issues of gender nonconformity within education.

The Namibian IE policy's silence on sexual orientation discussed above could be the result of the unclear stand of the policy on its response to the gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools which is discovered in this study. As the social identity perspective (SIP) indicates, institutional othering could occur due to unclear policy statements that could exclude some learners and prevent them from getting appropriate educational services (Dervin, 2012; Spivak, 1985b). Hence, it is envisaged that unclear policy statements found by the current study will lead to some learners to be labelled as the "other" and not to receive appropriate support they need. Moreover, as the SIP framework of the current study indicates, negative othering can have more psychological effects on the "othered". Hence the silence of the policy on gender nonconformity could lead to more problems in future for these children.

The SIP further presents significances for these findings by assuming that othering leads to the other's identity to be perceived as spoiled by the attributed behaviour which could prevent fully social acceptance from taking place in schools (Brons, 2015; Canales, 2000). It could be inferred that once these learners are perceived socially unfit by the teachers and other learners, not only their performance in school will be affected negatively but their psychological wellbeing might be affected as well which could lead to future psychological problems. Since inclusive education is said to eradicate stereotyping at all levels, the Namibian IE policy is expected to be clear in all issues to promote acceptance of all learners. It could therefore be deduced from this study's findings that the unclear IE policy statement is impeding the Namibian education system's

efforts to achieve social change. This is also preventing the creation of a society in which gender nonconforming learners can fully participate as respected members.

The findings of the current study, in agreement with the reviewed literature (Charema, 2010; Haitembu, 2014; Zimba et al., 1999; UNESCO, 2016) revealed that issues such as lack of training for teachers in inclusion practices, lack of information about sexual diversity, cultural and religious beliefs were preventing the policy from responding positively to gender nonconforming learners. The transformative paradigm on which the current study is based highlights that culture and religion determine the individual's perceived legitimacy of versions of realities (Mertens, 2010, 2012; Taylor et al., 2012). These assumptions bear implications on the above findings as culture and religion are quoted (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003) as determinants of society's reaction towards gender nonconformity. The researcher deduces that coupled with lack of training in inclusion and lack of information about gender nonconformity, cultural and religion beliefs could lead educators to interpret the IE policy according to culture and religion. This will lead to gender nonconforming learners to be responded to within the IE policy according to such beliefs that are against gender nonconformity as literature (e.g., Downie, 2014; Du Pisan, 2012; Oloka-Onyango, 2015; Quansah, 2004; Shipo, 2010) indicates.

The importance of training and provision of information are crucial factors for the success of the educational policies and programmes. As literature indicates, implementation of the IE policy was said to be affected by issues such as lack of training for teachers in inclusion practices in countries such as South Africa, Botswana, Kenya as well as Namibia (Joubert et al., 2011; Zimba et al., 1999). The current findings confirm with the literature that teachers lack training in implementation of the IE policy. It is therefore clear that even though some schools do have the

IE policy, it is not being implemented accordingly as teachers are not trained nor did they receive information on how to implement the policy. Coupled with unclear policy statements, cultural and religious influences, the lack of proper training and information might lead to poor addressing of gender nonconformity issues in schools. The researcher in this study infers that the Namibian IE policy formulation failed to talk to reality in some areas such as addressing issues of sexual diversity.

In accordance with the literature, this study found that the national laws' silence stance towards gender nonconformity in Namibia is hindering the policy to respond openly to gender nonconformity issues. This study's findings revealed that, as a result of this silence, gender nonconformity issues are not clearly defined but are appended to gender reference in the IE policy. In that regard, it is deduced from these findings that the IE policy does not reflect a clear responsive stance on gender nonconformity. On the basis of the SIP, it could be concluded that this silence towards gender nonconformity will contribute to negative categorisation in schools. The researcher argues that this categorisation will hinder the educational efforts for full inclusion and might promote othering as well as contribute to the atmosphere of discrimination in schools.

The current findings indicate that due to unclear policy statement on gender nonconformity, teachers are expected to make their own, but uninformed, interpretations of the policy in relation to gender nonconformity. These findings raise a concern given the fact that literature (e.g., Charema, 2010; Haitembu, 2014; Zimba et al., 1999) indicates that the shift towards inclusion for all brought challenges on how to practice inclusion. In agreement with literature, these findings further reveal that inclusion and its practices were found to mean different things in different contexts and by different people. On the basis of the above discussions, it is clear that if

there is uncertainty on what is inclusion, it will be difficult for the teachers to interpret the policy statements to include gender nonconformity issues. Hence, gender nonconformity remains an issue which is not clearly referred to within the Namibia IE policy. The researcher argues that this unclear policy reference could affect how gender nonconforming learners are responded to within the Namibian education system. In that regard, educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools are discussed in the next sub-section.

6.2.2   The educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

The findings on the second research sub-question are in relation to the educational response to the gender nonconforming learners in Namibia. The current findings show that the institutions of higher learning in Namibia do not provide training in handling sexual diversity among learners. A study by Healey (2004) substantiates these findings by stating that lack of sexual orientation education in the curriculum of universities does not prepare future teachers for understanding sexual diversity in schools. In regard to the above statement, the current study emphasises that education in general is believed to be a tool to achieve self-emancipation from social, economic and cultural restraints (Cumming & Mawdesley, 2013; Mitra, 2011; UNESCO, 2014).

The researcher in this study stresses that education should bring about self-empowerment through achievement of freedom of mind as an individual comes to understand oneself and others. It is therefore important for the teachers to be prepared to handle diversity of any kind among learners. This is hoped to help learners to learn and come to appreciate differences amongst themselves. Hence, the researcher infers from these findings that the Namibian educational system should be improved at all levels in regard to provision of an education that is responsive to all Namibian children in order to reap the abovementioned benefits of education.

The findings of this study show that educational responses at basic education level are much better compared to tertiary institutions. The MoEAC is found to have established several efforts such as the Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework (NNSSF), Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and training of Life Skill teachers in order to respond to all learners in Namibian schools. Moreover, the national school curriculum as well as the Life skills supplementary programmes' content was found to include issues of sexual orientation. However, in accordance with literature (e.g., Andrews, 1990; Butler & Astbury, 2004; Mwangi & Orodho, 2014), this study discovered that it was not clear if the basic education curriculum provides in-depth gender nonconformity content. It was also not clear if the schools offer intensive sex education through Life Skills as a subject.

The findings discussed above raise a concern in regard to the educational responses towards gender nonconforming learners. Life Skills as a subject is one of the most important subject for the young people as it teaches them to understand their identity, be able to function effectively in the society, to develop and enhance respect as well as develop acceptance towards other people in all spheres of life (MoE, 2016). Hence, the uncertainty of the level to which the topics of sex education are taught in schools could be interpreted in agreement with Beyers (2010) that not all the Life Skills topics are taught. He is of the opinion that teachers shy away from teaching crucial sexually information due to their cultural and moral beliefs. In accordance with literature (Mthatyana & Vincent, 2015; Healey, 2004; Beyers, 2010), the researcher reasons that the absence of explicit sexual orientation content in the school and universities curricula as well as superficial teaching of the topics on sex education could lead to marginalising of gender nonconforming learners due to lack of proper information on gender nonconformity.

The current study also discovered that it was not clear if teachers are provided with resources and information on gender nonconformity. The SIP maintains that one's self-esteem is based on social identity rather than on personal identity and people tend to put down the out-group even if it is not a threat to them so that they can feel good about themselves (Castells, 2004; Burke et al., 2007; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The implication of the above discussions on these findings is that the school community needs proper information to understand the concept of gender nonconformity. The researcher in the current study, in agreement with the SIP, concludes that understanding the differences among the people helps individuals to accept those who are perceived different.

The researcher further agrees with literature (GRN, 2004; MoE, 2014) by emphasising that schools are expected to function as units of social acceptance and places where children discover their potentials. Hence these findings demonstrate that the Namibian schools need to be equipped with necessary information on gender nonconformity to respond to gender nonconforming learners accordingly. This is envisaged to prevent negative social categorisation and "othering" of gender nonconforming learners and promote the atmosphere of acceptance for a better learning environment.

The current findings demonstrate that personal attitude towards issues concerning sexuality and the background of individuals is hindering the realisation of the educational efforts for intensive sex education. In support of these findings, literature shows that teachers shy away from teaching crucial sexually information due to their cultural and moral beliefs (Beyers, 2010; Butler & Astbury, 2004; UNESCO, 2014). The literature presents several efforts by the MoEAC in response to the call for education for all. The findings of this study also confirm the literature

that the MoEAC is making tremendous efforts to respond to learners in schools. However, based on these findings, it is clear that the envisioned state of inclusion is far from the reality in schools. Hence, in this study, the researcher concludes that due to lack of teacher-training in handling sexual diversity among learners, personal and cultural beliefs, lack of information about sexual diversity and resources on gender nonconformity as well as lack of in-depth sexual diversity content in the curriculum, the Namibian schools are unresponsive towards the issues of gender nonconformity regardless of the inclusion of sexual diversity content in the Life Skills as a subject's textbooks and syllabuses.

The nature of educational responses in schools to gender nonconforming learners will determine how these learners are treated in schools. Hence, the researcher discusses the findings concerning the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools.

6.2.3   The participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools

The researcher, in this sub-section, discusses the findings on the third research sub-question that sought information regarding the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools. In regard to the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools, the participants in this study were of the opinion that the Namibian schools do affirm the rights of all learners and protect them from bullying through school rules. As it is argued in the current study's literature (GRN, 1990; MoEAC, 2018; MoEC, 1992), the Namibian education system is expected to instil values and a culture of acceptance as well as respect for human rights enshrined in the Namibian constitution. Therefore, it could be

concluded from the above findings that the schools are embracing the atmosphere of respect and promoting the valuing of all learners' rights.

The literature for this study (e.g., MacNeil, et al., 2009; MoE, 2005; Reynolds, Lee, et al., 2017; Zander, 2011) has established a link between a school environment and learners' academic performance. Further Bronfenbrenner (1979) establishes the importance of the relationships in social setting as they form part of learners' social identities. The researcher deduces from the current findings that the Namibian schools do ensure a safe environment which is hoped to encourage positive social identity for learners to remain in school and complete their education. The Namibian constitution calls for respect of diversity and provision of access to education for all (GRN, 1990). On the basis of the above statements, it could be concluded that the Namibian schools are honouring the Namibian constitution's mandate that all persons shall have the right to education and be respected.

The Namibian schools were found to promote tolerance and acceptance for sexual diversity. These findings are in line with a study by Brikkels (2014) which discovered that there is a growing trend towards gender nonconformity acceptance in some societies and gender nonconforming learners are being supported in schools. Within the SIP framework, inclusion should promote recognition and respect of differences as well as encourage positive categorisation through which individuals identify and form identities. This is believed to have an effect on the emotions of an individual as well as determine how others will react to the individual (Collins, 2000; Hall, 1997; Hogg et al., 1995; Spivak, 1985a, 1985b). In that regard, the SIP maintains that self-verification is crucial as it provides an emotional anchor that helps the individual to be less vulnerable in unfavourable life events (Burke et al., 2007). Based on these

arguments, the current findings demonstrate that gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools are provided with chances to self-identify accordingly which could lead to positive self-esteem and better academic performance.

The findings of this study are consistent with literature (Applebaum, 2003; Downie, 2014; Taylor et al., 2011) that gender nonconforming learners were not treated the same in most schools. These findings revealed that even though there is tolerance in schools towards gender nonconforming learners, these learners are not treated equal at all times. Literature states that mistreatment of gender nonconforming learners has devastating effects on them (Bowers & Minichiello, 2005; Butler, 2003; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013). Moreover, the SIP maintains that the way an individual is perceived by others will influence feelings of self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Hence, the researcher maintains that the Namibian schools should function as social entities that promote equal treatment and acceptance of differences to curb these long term effects. On the basis of the above findings, the researcher in this study infers that even though gender nonconforming learners are being tolerated in schools, they are being mistreated in some cases. With this said, these findings raise a concern in regard to the learners emotional wellbeing due to mistreatment.

The treatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools was found to be influenced by the school settings. The schools located in the suburb and towns were found to be more tolerant and accepting of sexual diversity as compared to village located schools. Authors such as Castells (2004) and Burke (2004) write that culture defines our positions within the social structures on which identities are tied hence identity meanings construction is based on the cultural and social perspectives. The SIP acknowledges that culture and society influence the individual's beliefs of

what is normal and not (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003). Therefore, the researcher deduces from these findings that the schools in the villages might be influenced by cultural beliefs more than the schools in towns. This could be the result of exposure to different sources of information in towns and the fact that the township population is diverse in culture.

A study by Mostert et al. (2015) which revealed that most of the educators were not aware of the homophobic attacks among learners even though this was happening in some cases supports the current findings. The current findings revealed that some participants were not aware of the homophobic bullying incidents among learners as these incidents are not reported by the learners to the school authorities. The researcher reasons that these findings imply that the schools are not addressing homophobic bullying incidents as they are not aware of this treatment. The literature for this study indicates that these learners were found to suffer homophobic attacks in silence as they could not talk to their parents and teachers for the fear of rejection (Taylor et al., 2011, Butler, 2003, Applebaum, 2003). The literature also states that gender nonconforming learners have experienced depression, suicidal thoughts and traumatic stress due to the passiveness of education systems to respond to homophobic bullying (Collier et al., 2013; Van Ingen & Phala, 2014). On the basis of the above findings, it is evident that not all gender nonconforming learners are protected from mistreatment. It could be inferred that homophobic bullying is not identified in schools and learners are left on their own to deal with mistreatment without assistance from teachers or the school community.

The findings of the current study further concur with literature (DePaul & Dam, 2009; Joubert et al., 2011) by discovering that there were no specific measures to address cases of bullying on basis of sexual orientation. As Taylor, at el. (2011) caution, school rules without measures to

address homophobia are not effective to create a safer school climate for all. The current findings imply that there is a need for schools to respond to the Namibian education system's call for provision of psychosocial support to learners such as establishment of school rules to curb bullying (MoE, 2005). Authors such as Hatzenbuehler et al. (2014) have demonstrated how the positive changes in schools have contributed to supportive school climates in some USA schools. Hence, the researcher reasons that given the religious inclinations and cultural barriers towards gender nonconformity identified in this study, without direct measures to address homophobic bullying these incidents could be ignored within the schools. In light of the long term effects of bullying on learners discussed in this study (Butler et al., 2003; Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Mostert et al., 2015; Sathiparsad, 2003), the researcher concludes that there is a need for schools to establish clear measures to minimise consequences of homophobic bullying.

The researcher stresses that the societies' beliefs, values and acceptance of certain issues could be reflected in the national service systems such as education systems. Hence, the researcher discusses the findings regarding the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools in the next sub-section.

6.2.4 The participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

The findings discussed in this sub-section are in response to the fourth research sub-question that sought information on the participants' perceptions of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The current findings confirm the literature of this study (e.g., Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler, at el, 2003) that the society's religious, political and cultural beliefs as well as individual perception of issues can have an influence on the acceptance

of particular issues. The current study discovered that the participants who took part in this study had different perceptions of gender nonconformity. The current findings further revealed that the participants have reacted to the notion of gender nonconformity based on their cultural and religious beliefs. As it is discussed in the literature, an individual perception of a certain issue is a crucial factor in determining the level of acceptance or rejection of that particular issue. In regard to gender nonconformity, the society's perception could have an influence on how gender nonconformity will be addressed within the education system. Given the differing participants' perceptions of gender nonconformity, it could be concluded that gender nonconformity is addressed according to individual, religious and societal beliefs.

The current findings further show that gender nonconformity is found by some of the participants to be unethical, taboo and to be unacceptable in an African culture. Based on the ontological assumptions of the transformative paradigm in which this study is encased methodologically, the dimensions of diversity such as political, cultural and religious beliefs determine the perceived legitimacy of versions of realities. In this case the perceived reality of some participants is that gender nonconformity is unAfrican, unethical and a taboo hence it should not be accepted in the Namibian schools. In that regard, the researcher concludes that it is crucial to build knowledge of gender nonconformity among the Namibian society to promote tolerance and acceptance towards this issue. Hence, in the section of developing SFIIEP this study builds on the epistemological assumption of the transformative paradigm to build understanding of gender nonconformity and raise awareness.

As the transformative paradigm assumes, knowledge is influenced by our interests and reflects the power and relations in the societies we construct. Consequently, the development of the

SFIIEP was hoped to bring about a mind shift and lead to the improvement of the educators' perceptions of gender nonconformity.

The current study discovered that some participants felt pressured by culture and religion not to embrace gender nonconformity. The SIP and the transformative paradigm are based on assumptions that individuals deal with issues from their own social constructed views of realities (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Mertens, 2007). These views are then shaped by culture and society and do influence the individual's beliefs of what is normal and not (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005; Butler et al., 2003). Therefore, the researcher infers from this study's findings that the participants do react to gender nonconformity in a manner that fits their religious and societal expectations. The methodology positioning of the transformative paradigm for research is to destroy myths and misconceptions in order to empower societies and lead to social transformation (Merriam, 2009). Hence, these findings demonstrate a need to employ strategies to address the issue of gender nonconformity. This is hoped to lead to the school society to re-evaluate societal expectation of the gender norms.

The findings of this study show that regardless of the above sentiments against gender nonconformity, the same participants indicated that they were comfortable to engage with gender nonconforming learners. Further, even though some participants indicated that there is only a man and a woman in the creation of God, the current findings indicate that the participants felt that gender nonconforming learners have rights like all other learners in the society. These findings support the arguments brought forward in literature. The literature maintains that the Namibian people have mixed feelings toward gender nonconformity (Beukes, 2016; Haskins, 2014; LaFont & Hubbard, 2007; Shipo, 2010). Hence, in exception of the Namibian politicians'

public gay bashing by threatening and insulting gender nonconforming people, there seems to be a tolerance and acceptance surrounding this issue among the general community.

The current findings further concur with literature (e.g., Brown, 2016, 2017; Francis et al., 2017; Haskins, 2014) by discerning that the ambiguity of the Namibian laws on gender nonconformity leads to the policies' silence on the issue and invisibility of gender nonconforming learners. Thus the current findings are interpreted to mean that even though policies are silent on this issue, individuals are responding to these learners positively. The willingness of the participants to engage with gender nonconforming learners is a confirmation of the general community's response to gender nonconformity. This response is more tolerant than the views of founding fathers on gender nonconformity. However, it could be deduced from this study's findings that even though the general attitude is tolerant towards gender nonconforming learners, heteronormativity was still considered as the norm by the majority of the participants.

The discussed literature in this study state that most of the African constitutional statements gave no provision for freedom of sexual expression (see for instance the Republic of Kenya penal code, 2009; Republic of Namibia constitution, 1990; Republic of Uganda constitution, 1995) (Van Klinken, 2014). In support of this literature, this study has discovered that the issue of gender nonconformity is not addressed in legal documents such as the Namibian constitution, hence the silence of educational policies on the issue.

The researcher in the current study therefore concludes that the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners is based on political, cultural and personal beliefs. It could also be concluded that the participants' responses in this study

demonstrated a nonviolent general reaction towards gender nonconforming learners. The researcher further infers from the current findings that most of the schools had adopted a silent stance towards gender nonconformity. The researcher concludes that this silence might contribute to lack of support to these learners in Namibian schools. In that regard, the researcher discusses the findings on the strategies that could be utilised for the schools to respond to all learners including gender nonconforming learners below.

6.2.5 Strategies for a supplementary framework to support the IE policy implementation

The fifth research sub-question of this study was aimed at discovering strategies that could form the elements of a supplementary framework that can support the implementation of the IE policy in terms of responding positively to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Hence, in this sub-section the researcher discusses the strategies to be followed for implementation of a framework that can complement the implementation of the IE policy.

The literature reviewed for the current study showed little noticeable provision for support for gender nonconforming learners in schools. This is specifically in terms of policy statements and strategies on support for gender nonconforming learners within the education systems. In that regard, there are several strategies that have emanated from the qualitative findings. These are the establishment of legal frameworks that support the IE with clear guidelines on how to handle gender nonconformity issues in schools, provision of assistance to teachers and monitoring of the policy implementation and inclusive practices in schools. The participants also suggested for extensive teaching of sex education, creation of positive environments in schools and offering of psychological support to all learners for them to be able to learn. These strategies were suggested

by the participants to support the implementation of the IE policy in relation to gender nonconforming learners.

The participants in this study corroborate with the reviewed literature's (e.g., Blaauw, 2012; Potgieter & Reygan, 2012) stand by suggesting that the IE policy should have a clear policy statement in regard to gender nonconforming learners. The reviewed literature show that the policies that existed in most African countries upon their independence presented challenges to educators as these policies had no clear policy statements and guidelines on inclusive practices (Mangope & Mukhopadhyay, 2015; McKinney & Swartz 2016). On the basis of the above statement, the researcher interprets the lack of clear policy statement on handling gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian IE policy discovered in this study as a challenge for educators to respond to these learners accordingly. The researcher borrows from the SIP on which this study is based to conclude that the IE policy should function to bring about social changes (Reynolds, Subasic, et al., 2017) for gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian education system.

The participants in this study have also suggested for the establishment of legal frameworks that support the IE policy in addressing gender nonconformity issues within the Namibian education system. Ntlama (2014) corroborates these findings by advising that Africans should bring forth their ability to use good for common cause and use this to establish laws that promote humanity. Hence, it is inferred from the above that clear policy statements and legal frameworks must be in place to support the IE policy since they are important factors in addressing issues of inclusion in schools.

The current findings suggested for in-service-teacher training for the IE policy implementation in relation to handling issues of gender nonconformity in schools. The above findings are supported by several authors (i.e., Butler & Astbury, 2004; Healey, 2004; Zagona et al., 2017) who discovered that teacher training was one of the challenges in implementation of educational policies. It could be concluded that due to the limited sexual orientation content in the curriculum for the teacher training programmes, teachers do lack knowledge on issues of gender nonconformity. The literature pointed out that countries such as Namibia, Botswana, Kenya and South Africa faced and are still facing challenges on how to practice inclusion. These include lack of knowledge among educators in handling different issues, uncertainty of what inclusion entails in the classroom, unclear statements of policies and negative attitudes towards inclusion to name a few (Charema, 2010, Haitembu, 2014; Zimba et al., 1999). Therefore, the researcher concludes that these challenges necessitate for in-service-teacher training to be one of the specific strategies to address this issue within the Namibian education system.

The in-service-teacher training was not only suggested for the policy implementation but also for teaching issues of gender nonconformity. The participants suggested for teachers to be trained in the content for intensive sex education. These findings imply that the participants felt that they did not have enough information regarding the content of sex education. These findings are supported by literature (e.g., Andrews, 1990; Kasonde, 2013; LaFont & Hubbard, 2007; Mthatyana & Vincent, 2015; UNESCO, 2014) that in some of African countries (e.g., Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Botswana), gender awareness is focused on the teaching of female and male societal expected behaviours with emphasis on morality regarding sexual acts. The inference from the above discussions is that teachers should be sensitised on teaching sexual diversity content. Healey (2004) states the need to prepare teachers to be open-minded so that

they can inform other educators, parents and communities about diversity and promote acceptance of differences. Hence, the researcher reasons that in-service-teacher training could lead to understanding of gender nonconformity issues among teachers in order for them to translate such knowledge into the large community.

The participants in this study further suggested for the MoEAC to visit schools and monitor the implementation of the IE policy. They further suggested for the MoEAC to monitor how schools are practicing inclusion in regard to gender nonconforming learners. The implication of these findings is that the education system should adapt a specific approach to provide support for gender nonconforming learners. Mostert et al. (2015) supports the current study's findings by indicating that failure for schools to adopt a pro-active approach to support gender nonconforming learners will lead to major psychological problems.

The findings of this study also indicate a need for the MoEAC to raise awareness in schools on the issue of gender nonconformity. The methodological assumptions of the transformative mixed methods paradigm employed in this study support these findings. This paradigm's assumptions are that knowledge is not neutral but influenced by our interests and it reflects the relations in the societies we construct (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Mertens, 2007). Therefore, the researcher concludes that provision of relevant information regarding gender nonconformity to the school communities could help them to adopt a tolerant and accepting attitude toward sexual differences among learners.

The participants suggested for the basic education curriculum and the Life Skills subject syllabus content on sex education to be extensively taught in order to educate learners about sexual diversity issues. Literature (Beyers, 2010; Butler & Astbury, 2004; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014;

Russell, 2011) substantiates the current findings by asserting that the education systems should address gender nonconformity within the sex education context. The above suggestion could be interpreted within the literature that indicated that sex education in some African countries such as South Africa, Namibia and Kenya is limited to morality and societal expected gender norms (LaFont & Hubbard, 2007; Nel, 2014). A news report by Mogotsi (2019) indicated that the churches and some parents in Namibia have shown their disapproval of the comprehensive sex education programme in schools. Hence, the suggestion for the education system to introduce inclusive sex education fully in Namibian schools could be a result of this topic not being taught fully at schools due religious and individual beliefs.

The researcher, on the basis of the above findings, draws a conclusion that the religious and individual beliefs might be influencing the reaction of teachers' to sex education. Thus the above findings are interpreted that schools are not offering inclusive sex education regardless of the fact that it is part of the curriculum. Hence the findings present a need for sex education to be strengthened in schools. The need for inclusive sex education was further demonstrated through literature by revealing that countries such as South Africa that have accepted gender nonconformity have made efforts to include inclusive sex education into their policies and curriculums (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014; Russell, 2011). These countries are said to make positive progress in response to gender nonconformity (Nel, 2014). The SIP as the framework of this study demonstrates the effects of positive othering on the othered. Therefore, the researcher argues that the proper teaching of sex education in Namibian schools could help learners to understand differences and tolerate those who are different from them.

The current findings are in line with literature (MacNeil et al., 2009; MoEC, 1992; Zander, 2011) by calling for the schools to create a positive environment that promotes tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconforming learners. The researcher borrows from Bronfenbrenner (1994) with reference to the role of society in an individual's life, to note that experiences of different reactions toward gender nonconformity within the school environments can have critical psychological effects on the learners.

The role of psychological support is demonstrated by literature as crucial for the psychological wellbeing of gender nonconforming learners (Butler & Astbury, 2004; Collier et al., 2013; Hornby et al., 2003; Van Ingen & Phala, 2014). Based on the current findings, it is clear that the current study demonstrates the need for the education system to strengthened psychological support in order to promote a sense of belonging among learners. Literature affirms the above sentiments by stating that the MoEAC has called upon schools to accord chances to all learners for them to perform to their full potential through provision of psychosocial support (MoE, 2005). It is therefore inferred from this study's findings that there is a need to strengthen the psychological support for learners at all levels to help learners cope with social challenges such as gender nonconformity.

This study's findings also revealed a need for the MoEAC to engage in collaborative efforts with the community members in order to provide information on gender nonconformity. Literature concurs with these findings as it states that some school were successful in the implementation of inclusive sex education with the help of community and parents (*Answer* Ed, 2015; Kintz, 2011; Corter & Pelletier, 2005). Kitchen (2014) supports these findings by writing that when gender nonconforming learners formed alliances with straight peers and educators, they became more

educational, social and activists for their sexual orientation. It is therefore deduced from the above discussions that the involvement of the community members will help the Namibian school to embrace gender nonconformity identity.

The researcher draws conclusions from this study's findings by recognising cautions by Banks (2017) and Winans (2006) that simply adding materials on the "other" to the curriculum will not automatically change the status quo. Hence, the researcher suggests that the education system should establish specific instructions for gender nonconformity issues to help with transforming the curriculum. Therefore, on the basis of the above discussions, the researcher concludes that the Namibian IE policy should be supplemented by specific strategies that focus on gender nonconforming learners at all levels of the national educational programmes. Hence, the researcher presents the development of the supplementary framework for the implementation of the IE policy (SFIIEP) in chapter seven after the summary of the current chapter in the next sub-section.

6.3 Chapter summary

The intent of the researcher in this chapter was to discuss the findings of the current study as well as position these findings in light of what is already known within the inclusive education area in regard to gender nonconforming learners. Additionally, the chapter highlighted new understandings and insights about the Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian education system.

The researcher integrated the quantitative and qualitative data of the study by employing a mixed method approach as it is indicated in sub-section 4.2 and section 4.8. The findings are discussed

under the main themes addressed in the study: the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools, participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools, the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools and the strategies that formed the elements of the supplementary framework for the IE policy implementation.

The researcher discussed the findings of this study within the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) framework and the transformative paradigm on which the study is based. Further the findings were discussed within to the SFIIEP for policy implementation. The IE policy was found to respond to all learners positively but is not clear on how gender nonconforming learners should be treated. Even though the education system is found to be responsive at basic education level it was found to be unresponsive at tertiary level in terms of teacher training in issues of gender nonconformity. The introduction of explicit sexual orientation content in the school curricula was suggested in the findings of this study. The discussions of the findings also revealed that inclusion for all can be promoted by establishing a policy that pronounce itself clearly on the issues of gender nonconforming learners.

The findings of this study presented a mixed attitude towards gender nonconformity among the participants. The issue of gender nonconformity is addressed according to religious and individual beliefs. The findings discussed in this chapter indicate that even though there is tolerance in schools towards gender nonconforming learners and they are provided with chances to self-identify accordingly, they are not treated equal at all times. Lastly, the researcher has discussed the strategies to be employed in order to complement the IE policy implementation.

These include the IE policy reference to gender nonconformity issues, establishment of legal frameworks that refers to gender nonconformity in schools, assistance for schools on handling gender nonconformity issues, monitoring of the implementation of the policy and inclusive practices in schools, extensive teaching of inclusive sex education in Namibian schools, creation of positive environment for gender nonconforming learners, offering of psychological support in schools and collaborative efforts among education stakeholders. These strategies had formed the elements of the supplementary framework for the implementation of the IE policy (SFIIEP) developed by the researcher in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

DEVELOPING A SUPPLEMENTARY FRAMEWORK FOR THE

IMPLEMENTATION OF IE POLICY (SFIIEP)

7.1   Introduction

The researcher highlights the role of this study in bridging the gap that exist between the IE policy aims and the practical reality of inclusion within the Namibian education system in regard to gender nonconforming learners. Hence, in this chapter, the researcher demonstrates the importance of the SFIIEP framework in the implementation of the IE policy for better responses to gender nonconforming learners.

The researcher highlights the SFIIEP aims which are aligned to this study's SIP theoretical framework, the study's assumptions and literature reviewed in the study. This chapter also gives the graphical presentation of the framework as well as the summary of the SFIIP in relation to IE policy. The proposed alignment of the supplementary framework with the IE policy implementation is also given in this chapter. Further the researcher presents the envisioned outcomes of the implementation of the IE policy with the SFIIEP, limitations and suggested strategies for this framework's implementation. The researcher concludes with a summary of the main points discussed in this chapter. The SFIIEP is described in details in the next sections.

7.2   The SFIIEP

The researcher re-emphasises this study's purpose which is to discover knowledge on gender nonconforming learners for successful inclusion practices in Namibian schools. The researcher also re-emphasises the need for Inclusive Education (IE) policy's clear policy statements and

explicit guidelines in regard to gender nonconforming leaners discovered in this study. The researcher's assumptions are that knowledge of the phenomenon under study could help the community to accept and tolerate gender nonconforming learners. The researcher believes that this knowledge could lead to clear policy statements and guidelines, as well as better informed practices towards gender nonconforming learners. This is also envisioned to help the teachers to respond to gender nonconforming leaners positively. These assumptions are echoed by literature and do correspond with this study's theoretical frame work's assumptions. On that basis, the researcher aimed to contribute to the existing knowledge regarding the topic under study. Hence, this study responded to the main research question: *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?*

Researchers such as Mertens (2007) and Creswell (2014) maintain that a transformative paradigm helps to further social justice and human rights. In that line, the researcher in this study has employed a transformative approach with an aim to collect data that will advance for system changes in response to gender nonconforming learners. The literature reviewed and the results of the data collected in this study demonstrate the need for the Namibian IE education policy to explicitly outline the support and care to be offered to gender nonconforming learners. The study further pointed out lack of research on gender nonconforming learners in Namibia which could contribute to lack of knowledge on the treatment of these learners in schools. The same findings also presented suggestions from participants that they feel can help the educators to address gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Based on these findings, the researcher developed the supplementary framework for the implementation of the IE policy (see Figure 7.1 below).

Figure 7.1

Graphical presentation of the SFIIEP

Supplementary Framework for Implementation of IE policy

Aims

Supplementary strategies

Inclusive Education Policy

promotion of social justice

- legal frame work on gender nonconformity
- clear policy statement reference to gnder nonconfminty

promotion of social inclusion

- teacher training
- monitoring
- collaboration
- inclusive sex education
- psychological support
- postive environments

outcomes

social

individual

acceptance
tolerance

improved self-esteem
self acceptance
learner empowerment
improved well being

improved academic perfomance

Note: This figure presents the SFIIEP. It encompasses the SIP assumptions together with this study's results to present a complete framework for supplementing the implementation of IE policy (see Table 7.1). The current study assumes that once the educators are provided with supplementary strategies they will be able to respond to gender nonconforming learners appropriately. Source: Researcher's own drawing. The aims of the SFIIEP are explained in the next section.

7.3   SFIIEP aims

The SFIIEP is aimed at providing guiding strategies in regard to gender nonconforming learners. These strategies are assumed to contribute towards better outcomes of inclusion in terms of gender nonconformity. This framework is aimed to educators, learners and the education system at large. In that regard, the supplementary framework outlines strategies for implementation of the IE policy with the main aims to:

- promote social inclusion through gender nonconformity friendly life skills subject materials and inclusive sex education, teacher training, strengthening of collaboration among stakeholders, provision of psychological support and creation of positive school environments, and

- promote social justice through clear policy statement and supportive legal frameworks.

The reviewed literature for this study has outlined the need for IE policies to outline strategies for the support of gender nonconforming learners (DePaul & Dam, 2009; Mohanty & Mohanty, 2011). Literature further claims that to address the needs of the gender nonconforming learners, there is a need to relook at the curriculum, resources and school environments (Dowler-Coltman 1995; Page, 2017; Trudelle, 1999). Moreover, literature maintains that the education system's

efforts for inclusion should be reinforced with transformative actions (Armstrong et al., 2011a; Merriam, 2009).

On the basis of the above views, the researcher developed a supplementary framework to aid the implementation of IE policy (see Table 7.1 and Figure 7.1). This supplementary framework is encased within the assumptions delivered from the SIP and the transformative paradigm employed within the current study. The abovementioned assumptions are in alignment with this study's assumptions and the conclusions drawn from the current findings. Hence, the researcher suggests for the incorporation of this framework's strategies into the existing strategies of the IE policy for implementation as well as for the policy review.

The researcher heeds Banks's (2017) and Winans's (2006) advice that simply adding materials on the "other" to the curriculum will not automatically change the status quo. They recommend for specific instructions for gender nonconformity issues to help with transforming the curriculum. Additionally, Page (2017) argues that in order for educators to address the issues of gender nonconformity, there should be specific instructions for these issues. Therefore, the SFIIEP is envisioned to bridge the IE policy aims to inclusion practices by presenting relevant strategies towards transformation within education. Hence, the SFIIEP is aimed at promoting social justice and inclusion not only within the Namibian education system but in other education systems that can benefit from this framework. The researcher recognises the importance of aligning the SFIIEP to legal frameworks on which inclusion within the Namibian education system is based. Hence, this framework's position within the legal frameworks in the Namibian education system is explained below.

7.4 The SFIIEP position within the legal frameworks in Namibian education system

The SFIIEP draws extensively upon the current study's findings and the related literature reviewed. Mostly importantly, it draws upon the international and national legal frameworks that guide the Namibian education system in realisation of Education for All and Inclusive Education as well as recognition of human rights for all people regardless of their individual differences. Hence this framework is aligned to international and national legislations and legal frameworks such as:

1. The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights article one, which states that "all persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights, they have their own thoughts and ideas and should all be treated in the same way. Hence, human beings are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Further, article two calls for no discrimination and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set out in the UN declaration regardless of their race, colour, sex, social origin or other status (UN, 1948).

2. The UN Convention on the rights of children mandates in article 28 that children have the right to an education and States Parties should ensure that children achieve this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity. Further, the convention in article 29 (b) states that the education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN, 1989).

3. The African charter on the rights and welfare of the child has called for a non-discrimination approach where every child shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights

and freedoms recognised and guaranteed in the charter regardless of their religion, social origin or other status. Article one, sub-section one maintains that every child shall have the right to education while sub-section two calls for the education of the child to be directed to fostering respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Organization of African Unity, 1990).

4. The Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All declares in article one (one) that education is a fundamental right for all people and it is an indispensable key for personal and social empowerment. Hence, every person shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. The satisfaction of these needs is envisioned to empower individuals to respect their and others' cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage. This satisfaction is also envisioned to further the cause of social justice and encourage individuals to be tolerant towards social, political and religious systems which are different from their own (UNESCO, 1990).

5. The Salamanca statement declares that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs. Thus education systems and educational programmes should be designed and be implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs. The Salamanca statement further calls upon all governments to adopt the principle of inclusive education and give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems for inclusion of all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties (UNESCO, 1994).

6. The Constitution of the Government of Republic of Namibia in response to all the international legal frameworks that Namibia has ratified aims at protecting all Namibian

people's dignity. Hence, all persons are declared to be equal before the law and there is no person that may be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status (GRN, 1990, pp. 10-11).

7. The Namibian Education Act 16 of 2001 aims to guide and regulate the educators in provision of accessible, equitable and democratic national educational services to all Namibians (MoBESC, 2001).

8. The Namibian IE policy is aiming to end exclusion on basis of gender, race, culture, lifestyle or disability (see section 3.5 for further details on this policy) (MoE, 2014).

9. The Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework (NNSSF) is aimed at providing guiding principles to build safe and supportive school communities. This is with a hope to promote holistic wellbeing of learners and educators. The NNSSF identified safe schools as schools that adopt a rights-based approach amongst others. It is further said that safe schools value diversity, promote inclusivity, gender-sensitivity, tolerance, dignity and personal empowerment (MoEAC & United Nations Children's Fund, 2018). The NNSSF aims among others is said to:

- provide a common national approach that helps schools and their communities to ensure that the conditions in which Namibian learners study are safe, healthy and conducive to learning.

- consolidate existing laws, policies and good practices, providing school communities with a practical guide for achieving safety in their specific context. This is to be achieved by minimising the risk of harm; celebrating diversity and ensuring that all

members of the school community feel respected, valued and included (MoEAC & United Nations Children's Fund, 2018). Hence, the NSSF is at a position to contribute to the successful implementation of the SFIIEP.

The summary of the IE policy and the SFIIP is presented in Table 7.1. This summary is discussed together with the implementation and alignment of the SFIIEP to the IE policy in the next section.

7.5   Summary, implementation and alignment of the SFIIEP to the IE policy

The summary of the SFIIP in relation to the IE policy is presented in Table 7.1 below. The researcher presents the existing IE policy strategies and aims together with the aims and strategies for the SFIIEP. The researcher also outlines how this framework could be incorporated into the IE policy implementation strategies.
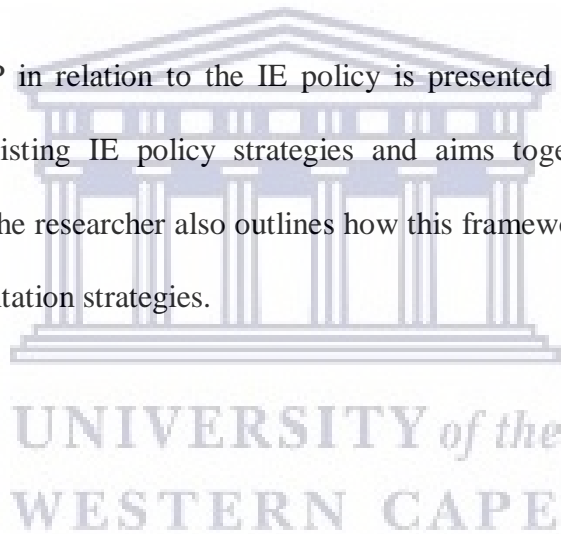
Table 7.1

The summary of the SFIIEP in relation to IE policy

The IE Policy	The Supplementary frame work
Aims: To ensure that all learners are educated in the least-restrictive education setting and in schools in their neighbourhood to the fullest extent possible.	Aims: To promote social inclusion and social justice for gender nonconforming learners.
Policy statement: 1. Recognises that barriers to learning arise when learning needs are not met, and that learning needs stem from a range of factors, including, inter alia: impairments; psychosocial disturbances; differences in abilities; life experiences; deprivation; negative attitudes; inflexible curriculum; language of instruction/learning; inaccessible or unsafe environments; policies and legislation; and education managers' and teachers' lack of skills or inappropriate skills	Supplementary statement: 1. Recognises that barriers to learning arise when learning needs are not met, and that learning needs stem from a range of factors, including, inter alia: impairments; psychosocial disturbances; *differences in sexual orientation;* differences in abilities; life experiences; deprivation; negative attitudes; inflexible curriculum; language of instruction/learning; inaccessible or unsafe environments; policies and legislation; and education managers' and teachers' lack of skills or inappropriate skills
Guidelines: Strategy 1: Integrate the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education into all other legal frameworks and policies of the education sector Strategy 2: Raise awareness of the constitutional right to education and foster attitudinal change Strategy 3: Support institutional development by developing human and instructional resources Strategy 4: Review the National Curriculum for Basic Education to reflect the diversity of learning needs of all learners Strategy 5: Widen and develop educational support services Strategy 6: Develop teacher education and training for paramedical and support staff Strategy 7:Strengthen and widen in-service training for stakeholders Strategy 8: Develop a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education	Supplementary Guidelines: Strategy 1: Widen teacher education and training to include sexual orientation issues Strategy 2: Raise awareness on the need for protection of gender nonconforming learners. Strategy 3: Widen collaboration with stakeholders on gender nonconformity issues (see details for the supplementary strategies in section 8.5).

Note: This table presents the summary of the SFIIEP in relation to IE policy. Source:

Researcher' own drawing

The IE policy implementation plan has all relevant strategies for all learners. One can argue that

the policy refers to all learners including gender nonconforming learners. However, given the

stance of the national attitude towards gender nonconformity, the researcher argues that this issue cannot be appended to vague clauses on gender. Thus, the indirect reference to gender nonconformity in the policy contributes to the silence and ignorance of these children's needs. On the basis of the above argument, the researcher saw the need to develop a framework to supplement the IE policy implementation. As it is demonstrated above (see Table 7.1), the current Namibian IE policy strategies are taken into consideration thus they formed the basis of the supplementary framework.

The supplementary strategies are developed in terms of the IE policy implementation to specifically respond to gender nonconforming learners in a positive way. Therefore, the SFIIEP content is carefully linked to the existing legal frameworks in the Namibian education system. Additionally, this framework responds to the MoEAC aims of inclusion (see Figure 7.1 and Table 7.1). The relationship between the SFIIEP and the exiting legal frameworks highlighted in section 7.4 plays a major role in the implementation of this framework. Thus the SFIIEP is aimed at supplementing the existing IE policy in regard to gender nonconforming learners (see Table 7.1). The strategies to be employed for the implementation of the SFIIP are fully explained as recommendations of the study (see section 8.5). The implementation of this framework along the IE policy is anticipated to produce the following outcomes.

7.6 Outcomes

The Namibian education system has gone through several reforms since the country's independence, 1990. These reforms provide empirical evidence of the MoEAC's efforts to provide inclusive education for all. The current study's literature avers that education should prepare the young people to be ready for the world of work as well as to function in a diverse

society. Hence, an inclusive education system with established care and support strategies for all learners is needed. It is therefore expected for the SFIIEP to lead to several outcomes at social and individual levels.

The social identity perspective (SIP) on which this study is based outlines the importance of identifying with a certain group and the effects of such identification on one's emotions, self-esteem and self-worthy (Burke, 1991, 2004; Stets & Cater, 2012; Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As it is discussed in the reviewed literature, the SIP assumptions are vital to this study as they emphasise recognition of differences (Collins, 2000; Hall, 1997; Spivak, 1985a; Stryker, 1977). The SIP emphasises the importance of social identity for personal wellbeing. These assumptions are crucial in terms of the current study as gender nonconformity is still regarded as the "other" identity. As the findings of this study show, some Namibian people still believe that gender nonconformity is unethical and a sin. Thus it is clear from these findings that othering and social categorisation is taking place negatively in terms of gender nonconformity. Hence the SFIIEP is expected to promote the school society's tolerance and acceptance for gender nonconforming learners for social inclusion. This is aimed through strengthening of psychological support services, promotion of inclusive sex education and engagement of all educational stakeholders as well as provision of in-service training and creation of positive and safe environments in schools.

Similarly, in response to SIP, formulating clear policy statements in regard to gender nonconformity and development of supportive legal frameworks is also expected to promote social justice and inclusion. The SIP outlines the importance of social inclusion for individual wellbeing. Hence these efforts are hoped to lead to self-acceptance, improved self-esteem and

wellbeing for better performance in schools. Therefore, the overall outcome expected from the SFIIEP is promotion of social justice and inclusion for gender nonconforming learners. The researcher in the current study argues that if this framework is aligned to the implementation process of IE policy, this will accord gender nonconforming learners a chance to experience social inclusion and acceptance for them to identify accordingly and flourish as individuals. The researcher recognises that implementation of any policy document is subjected to certain limitations. In that regard, the anticipated limitations for this framework are discussed in the next section.

7.7   Limitations of the SFIIEP

The planning and implementation process of the educational policies comes with several challenges. In support of this study's findings the reviewed literature (e.g., Dunton & Palmberg, 1996; Kennedy, 2006; Pereira, 2009) indicates that gender nonconformity is still considered a taboo in some communities. Moreover, the success of educational policies is said to be aided by the community involvement (Corter & Pelletier, 2005; Kintz, 2011). This study has discovered that cultural and religious beliefs are preventing some people from embracing gender nonconformity notion. Hence, the researcher anticipates that the negative attitudes of the community coupled with religious and cultural beliefs might hinder the implementation of this framework.

The implementation process of this framework will need support of the MoEAC since it is supplementing an existing policy and the MoEAC is the custodian of all documents addressing issues within the education system. Thus without the support from the MoEAC in a form of material development and teacher training, the implementation process of this framework might

face challenges. Additionally, there will be a need for financial input to fully develop this framework and distribute it to schools. Nevertheless, the planning of the SIIEP ensures the success of the framework. Hence, the next section presents the researcher's efforts to mitigate some of the challenges mentioned above.

7.8   Strategies for the success of the SFIIEP

The researcher has tried to minimise some of the challenges mentioned above in order for the SFIIEP to be successful in supplementing the IE policy implementation. This framework is to be implemented along the IE policy hence this will overcome some financial constraints associated with training and rolling out of the framework. The framework is outlined in such a way that it will not require immediate review of the IE policy as this framework will fill the information gap that exist within the IE policy. Since both the IE policy and this framework are based on inclusion, this framework is phrased within the same policy statement as the IE policy hence the strategies outlined in this framework can be addressed together with IE policy implementation strategies. Moreover, the supplementary framework does not require a different policy statement but adds onto the existing IE policy statement.

The IE policy is yet to be rolled out to the larger community even though it is distributed to some schools. This gives the current framework an advantage of being addressed at the same time when the MoEAC starts with training and dissemination of information regarding the IE policy. Another advantage is that this framework could be evaluated at the same time the MoEAC will evaluate the IE policy as the policy is still to be fully evaluated as the current evaluation done in 2018 has focused on the children with disabilities (MoEAC, 2018). Therefore, this framework is envisioned to be successful in advocating for acceptance of diversity in schools as long as it is

being implemented alongside the IE policy and the MoEAC recognises the value it adds on the inclusion process in the Namibian education system. The researcher has summarised this chapter as follows.

7.9   Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher highlighted the role of the current study in bridging the gap between the IE policy's aims towards fully inclusion and the practical reality of inclusion regarding gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian education system. Hence, the researcher has contributed to the existing knowledge in the area of inclusion within the education systems through the development of the SFIIEP. The researcher explained the aims of the SFIIEP. The framework is aimed at promoting social justice and inclusion not only within the Namibian education system but in other education systems that can benefit from this framework.

The strategies suggested in the current study for policy implementation are summarised and presented in the supplementary frame work. These are identified as widening of the teacher education and training to include sexual orientation issues, raising awareness on the need for protection of gender nonconforming learners and widening of collaboration efforts with stakeholders on gender nonconformity issues. Moreover, challenges that might face the implementation of the framework are identified such as financial constraints, religious and cultural beliefs as well as negative attitudes toward gender nonconformity. There is also a need for support from the MoEAC in order for this framework to be implemented successfully.   In that regard, the researcher provided solutions to these challenges for the framework to be implemented successful. This study and its main findings are summarised and concluded in the next chapter. Recommendations for this study are also made in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

8.1   Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to explore how the Inclusive Education (IE) policy responds to the gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Hence this study aimed to address the main research question: *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?* The current study has reviewed relevant literature on the topic under study and also on the theoretical framework that was deemed appropriate for guiding the present study. As research (e.g., Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Driscoll et al., 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) indicates, the researcher should summarise the study and present recommendations accordingly. Literature (e.g., Creswell, 2014; Gay & Mills, 2016; Newby, 2010) further indicates that the study should be concluded in line with the study's objectives as well as the larger meaning of the study.

The researcher followed the above suggestions, thus, in this chapter the researcher presents the summary and the conclusions made from this study's literature and findings. The conclusions from both quantitative and qualitative data sections present new knowledge and insights contributed by this study. Hence, the researcher justifies the relevance of the current study's findings to the area of inclusion and in identified the existing gap in research. This is done through the discussion of the study's contributions to the existing body of knowledge. The researcher also draws recommendations of the present study from the conclusions of the study. Lastly, in accordance with Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), Newby (2010) and Creswell

(2014), the researcher concludes the study. The researcher starts with the summary of this study in the next section.

8.2   Summary of the study

This section summarises the study:

Introduction: The researcher in this study critically explored how the Namibian IE policy is responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Much attention is given to acknowledging and recognising diversity in the Namibian education system. Moreover, efforts are being made to address the special needs in schools across the country and numerous studies on inclusion and challenges of inclusion had been carried out. However there seems to be a silence in the Namibian IE policy regarding educational responses to gender nonconforming learners. Moreover, there is lack of literature in relation to gender nonconformity within the Namibian education context. On the basis of the above arguments, the current study attempted to break the silence which seems to be present within the Namibian IE policy through utilisation of the SIP within a transformative mixed methods paradigm.

The researcher in this study holds the assumptions of the Social Identity Perspective (SIP) that a portion of an individual's self-concept dependents on the relevance and importance placed on the group membership to which the individual belongs. The researcher further assumes that positive regard of gender nonconforming learners will lead to building their positive self-concept. Moreover, building a positive self-concept of gender nonconforming learners will contribute towards their overall wellbeing. The researcher also assumes that a supplementary framework for

IE policy implementation will offer educators with appropriate strategies to promote tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconforming learners.

Theoretical frame work: This study is informed by the Social Identity Perspective conceptualised from Social Identity theory, Identity theory and othering. This perspective assumes that the self-identity is developed in relation to the society. Through the cognitive processes individuals are classified into groups according to their characteristics and are grouped as such. The individual is then expected to behave in the way that the society sees fit or risk a chance of being classified as the "other" and labelled unfit to the societal and cultural expectations.

The relevance of the SIP is noted in work of authors such as Papish (2015) and Burke (1991) that identifying with a certain group helps the individuals to surpass victimisation imposed on them by the in-group. Additionally, the perspective assumes that the way an individual is perceived by others will influence feelings of self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Hence, the researcher notes the relevance of this frame for the current study in demonstrating that group acceptance is very crucial for an individual's self-esteem.

Literature review: The reviewed literature demonstrated the importance of education and the benefits of inclusive education for all learners. The literature in this study presented a mixed attitude but with a developing positive trend towards gender nonconformity in some African countries such as Namibia, South Africa and Botswana. In the case of the Namibia community, there is a silence towards gender nonconformity in terms of laws and educational policies. Lack of research and studies on gender nonconformity in the Namibian context presented another existing knowledge gap in literature.

The Namibian education system had made tremendous efforts to attain inclusion of all learners. Several reforms and policy documents are established in that regard. These efforts include the establishment of an Inclusive Education policy. This policy is aimed at promoting access to education for all Namibians as well as improving the education provided to the Namibian child. Literature revealed that there are deeper psychological effects of homophobic treatment on learners. It is highlighted that educational systems that include sexual orientation content in their curricula are succeeding in addressing gender nonconformity issues.

Design and methodology: Encased within the social identity perspective, the current study adopted a case study with a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods paradigm to explore the IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. The quantitative and qualitative data are equally weighted and were collected concurrently. The using of a mixed method approach has capitalised on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research since each approach had compensated for the weakness of the other (Conrad & Serlin, 2011; Fraenkel et al., 2012).

The mixed method approach considers objects in both quantitative and qualitative as socially shared as well as general to a large social group (Gay and Mills, 2016). In the same line, the SIP posits that realities are socially, historically and culturally influenced and are general to the large society (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Stryker, 1977 & Spivak, 1985a). Thus the SIP supports the use of a mixed method research approach in search for knowledge that can lead social change.

The researcher has used two sampling procedures, purposive criterion and simple random sampling to obtain two different samples. This study purposively sampled for the regional school

counsellor, deputy directors for SPS and DATs and the IE officer at NIED. Moreover, the study randomly selected 182 teachers to participate in the study. The data were collected concurrently through the use of the questionnaires (Appendix K) and interview schedule (Appendix L).

Data presentation: The data are presented in two sections, qualitative data and quantitative data. Five research sub-questions were answered qualitatively and quantitatively. The first research sub-question was aimed at determining the ways in which the Namibian IE policy responds to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. In this regard, the data presented that the IE policy was found to respond to all learners but not clear on its response to gender nonconforming learners.

The second research sub-question sought to determine the educational responses that are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy. The findings regarding this question present that the educational system was found to be partially responsive towards gender nonconforming learners. Lack of teacher training in inclusion practices, lack of information about sexual diversity, unavailability of the policy to teachers, cultural and religious influences on community were indicated as hindrance to better responses to gender nonconforming learners.

The third research sub-question was concerned with establishing how the teachers and other learners treat gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools according to the participants. The findings of this study presented that some participants were of the view that the schools promote acceptance for different sexual orientations and established anti-bullying rules in schools. Gender nonconforming learners are said to be treated differently in different schools

due to culture and religion. The schools are also treating learners according to the constitution's call for equal treatment of all Namibians.

The fourth research sub-question aimed at discovering how the participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The findings presented that some participants are tolerant towards gender nonconforming learners. Some participants' perceptions of gender nonconformity were also based on their religious and cultural beliefs.

The fifth research sub-question sought to establish the elements of a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The suggested strategies to be employed to supplement the implementation of the IE policy are such as establishment of legal frameworks that support the IE with clear guidelines on how to handle gender nonconformity issues in schools, provision of assistance to teachers, monitoring of the policy implementation and inclusive practices in schools. The participants also suggested for extensive teaching of sex education, creation of positive environments in schools and offering of psychological support to all learners in schools for them to be able to learn.

Discussions: The IE policy was found to respond positively to all learners, however it was found to be not clear on its responses to gender nonconforming learners. Some schools had access to the policy while others are still to receive the policy. The findings of this study concur with literature that teachers are not trained in the IE policy implementation and do experience difficulties in addressing issues of gender nonconformity. The educational system was found to be partial responsive towards gender nonconforming learners. The basic education curriculum

content includes sex education but the content of gender nonconformity is still an issue as teachers are found to have different attitudes towards the topic. However, the teacher education curriculum at tertiary level does not reflect gender nonconformity content.

The findings of this study show that even though gender nonconforming learners are being tolerated in schools, they are being mistreated in some cases. The Namibian schools were found to ensure a safe environment for all learners as well as promote tolerance and acceptance for sexual diversity. The treatment of gender nonconforming learners in schools was found to be influenced by the school settings, individual, cultural and religious beliefs. The participants were found to have different views concerning gender nonconformity. The current study had suggested several strategies to be employed to supplement the implementation of the IE policy. These are the establishment of legal frameworks that support the IE with clear guidelines on how to handle gender nonconformity issues in schools, provision of assistance to teachers and monitoring of the policy implementation and inclusive practices in schools, extensive teaching of sex education, creation of positive environments in schools and offering of psychological support to all learners for them to be able to learn.

Supplementary framework for the implementation of IE policy (SFIIEP): In this chapter, the researcher highlighted the role of this study in bridging the gap between the IE policy's aims towards full inclusion and the practical reality of inclusion regarding gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian education system. Hence, the researcher developed a framework to supplement the implementation of the IE policy. The strategies suggested in this study for policy implementation are summarised and presented in the supplementary frame work. The SFIIEP

aims at promoting social justice not only within the Namibian education system but in other education systems that can benefit from this framework especially in the African context.

The researcher highlighted the alignment of the SFIIEP to the IE policy for response to gender nonconforming learners. This framework is expected to lead to promotion of social justice and inclusion in Namibian schools. Moreover, challenges that might face the implementation of this framework are identified. Negative attitudes, cultural and religious beliefs were identified as some of the possible challenges. The solutions to overcome these challenges for the framework to be implemented successful are explained. The above discussions have highlighted the significance of this study for the inclusive education field. On that note the researcher presents conclusions from this study in the next section.

8.3 Conclusions

The main aim of the current study was to critically explore how the IE policy is responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. In that regard, the researcher utilised a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods study encased within SIP to improve inclusive practices in schools in regard to gender nonconforming learners. Hence the study sought to answer the following main question: *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?*

The main research question was investigated via five research sub-questions, namely:

1. In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

2. What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?

3. From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

4. How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

5. What elements would form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of the Namibian IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The researcher presents a summary of the main findings under the same themes that qualitative and quantitative data were presented, interpreted and discussed in the following sub-sections.

8.3.1 The IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

The summary of findings in this section respond to the first research sub-question: In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The Namibian IE policy is responsive and promotes access to education for all learners even though it is not available in all schools. The policy does encourage schools to create positive environments for better learning of all learners. The MoE (2014) indicates that the Namibian IE policy is aimed to respond to diversity through creation of a positive climate in schools. Hence the findings of this study indicate that the Namibian schools are following the policy principles on provision of inclusion.

The silence of legal documents such as the constitution on gender nonconformity is reflected in the IE policy on that issue. The IE policy is formulated in such a way that gender nonconformity issues are appended to gender reference within the policy, which is not adequate. The silence of the laws on gender nonconformity is said to lead to invisibility of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian education policies (Brown, 2016, 2017; Francis et al., 2017). Hence, the findings of this study indicate a need for clear references to gender nonconformity in the Namibian IE policy.

The Namibian IE policy is unresponsive to gender nonconforming learners due to issues such as lack of teacher training in inclusion, lack of information about sexual diversity, unavailability of the policy to teachers, individual beliefs, cultural and religious influences. The current study points out that it is relevant to raise awareness on gender nonconformity for all educational stakeholders. The educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools are summarised in the next sub-section.

8.3.2   The educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

The second research sub-question sought to determine educational responses that are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy. The education system is responsive on issues of gender nonconformity at the basic education level but not at tertiary level. The institutions of higher learning in Namibia do not provide training on handling sexual diversity among learners. Therefore, the researcher supports other authors that have established the need for teacher training on issues of gender

nonconformity since open-minded teachers could have an influence on the community outlook on issues of gender nonconformity (Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014; Healey, 2004; Joubert et al., 2011).

The national school curriculum as well as the Life skills supplementary programmes' content does include issues of sexual orientation. In spite of this, it was not clear if the curriculum provides in-depth sexual diversity content and if the schools offered intensive sex education through Life skills as a subject. These findings agree with literature that emphasised the importance of sex education to help with acceptance of sexuality issues within the school communities (Answer Ed, 2015; Brikkels, 2014; Hatzenbuehler et al., 2014; MoE, 2001; Nel, 2014; Russell, 2011). The schools do promote tolerance and acceptance for differences but it was not clear if they carried out awareness programmes towards sexual diversity. The following sub-section presents the summary of the participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools.

8.3.3 The participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools

The findings in this sub-section sought respond to the third research sub-question: From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

Gender nonconforming learners are treated equal in some cases. The suburb and town schools were found to be more tolerant and accepting of gender nonconforming learners than the rural schools. There were no specific measures to curb homophobic bullying in schools. However,

bullying in general is addressed through school rules. Learners do not always report bullying hence gender nonconforming learners suffer homophobic bullying in silence. This study's findings are in accordance with the findings of a study by Mostert et al. (2015) that discovered that educators were not aware of the homophobic attacks happening in schools. The findings of this study further show that individual attitudes have an influence on how these learners are treated by certain individuals. Thus the atmosphere in schools depends on the attitudes of individuals towards gender nonconformity. Nevertheless, the Namibian schools are found to be supportive towards all learners. The researcher gives the summary of the participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools in the next sub-section.

8.3.4 The participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

This sub-section sought to answer the fourth research sub-question: How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools? The study discovered that participants had different perceptions of gender nonconformity and reacted differently to the notion according to their individual, cultural and religious beliefs. Other authors have also quoted culture and religion as some of the factors that prevent acceptance of gender nonconformity by some people in Africa (Ntlama, 2014; Oloka-Onyango, 2015).

The national silence stance towards gender nonconformity in Namibia is a hindering factor for individuals to respond openly to gender nonconformity issues. Hence, there is a silent attitude towards gender nonconformity with individual negative and positive reactions. Moreover, personal attitude towards sexuality issues and the background of individuals is hindering the

implementation of the educational efforts for sex education. Other authors (Kasonde, 2013; LaFont & Hubbard, 2007) discovered that in most schools sex education does not include sexual diversity. The Supplementary Framework for Implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy is summarised below.

8.3.5 The Supplementary Framework for Implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy (SFIIEP)

The fifth research sub-question was aimed at discovering the elements that could form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of the Namibian IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The SFIIEP is aimed at promoting social justice and inclusion for gender nonconforming learners. The identified supplementary strategies are positioned within the national and international legal frameworks for inclusion in education. This framework is developed in such a way that it can be implemented along the IE policy. The SFIIEP forms part of the knowledge extension on gender nonconformity issues within the Namibian education system which is discussed below.

8.4 The study's contribution to the body of knowledge

The aim of research is to discover new knowledge and contribute to the existing body of knowledge and improve practice (Mertens, 2010; Gay & Mills, 2016). In relation to literature, the significance of this study within the inclusive education is said to contribute to the fostering of tolerance and acceptance of learners in Namibian schools. This is relevant for realisation of equity within the education system for all learners. This study is further aimed at raising

awareness among educators and other stakeholders to encourage respect of all learners in order to promote social justice for all citizens.

In response to the transformative paradigm, the current study advocates for creation of a safe climate in schools for attaining mental freedom. The study has therefore contributed towards extension of knowledge, increasing social justice and human rights, improvement in practice, on-going research and increased personal experience of the researcher. Hence, the researcher highlights the new knowledge and insights brought forward in this study in the next sub-sections.

8.4.1   Extension of knowledge

The reviewed literature has revealed a scarcity of literature on gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian education context. Hence, this gap in literature demonstrates the contributions made by this study towards the existing knowledge. This study uncovered the state of IE policy which is that the policy is not fully responsive to gender nonconforming learners. The study also made contributions in terms of the education system's responses towards gender nonconforming learners. The study indicates that just like the IE policy, the education system is not fully responsive to gender nonconforming learners. The study has also contributed to the existing knowledge in terms of the treatment of the gender nonconforming learners in schools and the participants' perceptions on gender nonconformity in schools. In so doing, the study has bridged the existing gap in literature on the gender nonconformity within the Namibian inclusive education system.

This study did not only contribute to the literature on the topic of gender nonconformity within the Namibian education system. The conceptualisation of the SIP as a perspective to frame an

inclusive education study is also considered as one of the important contributions by this study to the theoretical frameworks within the field of inclusive education. Moreover, the transformative mixed methods paradigm was used in this study to address the social issues of gender nonconformity within education. Hence, the positioning of this study within the transformative mixed methods paradigm is considered as an important contribution to the methodological stance not only for an inclusive education study but for any social justice study.

The researcher in this study had developed a framework to supplement the implementation of the IE policy. Hence, through the development of the SFIIEP, this study addresses an evident gap between the IE policy's aims and the practical reality of inclusion in the Namibian schools. This framework makes this study unique as it addresses the identified gap in knowledge by adding to the materials on inclusion in the education system. Moreover, this framework brought forward relevant strategies to be employed in response to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. These strategies are envisioned to promote tolerance and acceptance of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. On that note, the researcher discusses the contribution of the study toward social justice and human rights below.

8.4.2   Increasing social justice and realisation of human rights

This study's literature has emphasised the importance of education for mental liberation and individual emancipation. The study has focused on the education system's responses on a minority group. As literature (McLeod, 2019; Hogg, Terry & White, 1995) indicates, social categorisation on the minority groups can lead to the internalisation of discrimination related stress. This study created awareness on the effects of "othering" on the othered and demonstrated the need for understanding of the "other".

This study might then have enhanced the participants' view of gender nonconformity and helped them to re-evaluate the current practices in schools concerning gender nonconformity issues. This study made a contribution to the field of inclusion by emphasising the importance of positive social categorisation on individuals' self-esteem, self-concept and self-worth. Thus, this study empowers teachers to take a stand and act in the best interest of all leaners including gender nonconforming learners.

This study is also believed to stimulate the education officers' critical thinking in order to reconsider the current state of gender nonconformity in the Namibian education system. Thus, this study might guide the education officers to use this knowledge to address and explicitly incorporate gender nonconformity in educational policies. In so doing the current study contributes towards increasing social justice and realisation of human rights for all within the Namibian education system. The researcher further believes that this study has led to improved inclusion practices in schools. Hence, in the next sub-section, the researcher presents the discussion on the study's contribution to knowledge in terms of improvement of inclusion practices in schools.

8.4.3   Improvement of inclusion practices in schools

The reviewed literature revealed that gender nonconformity is still an issue that some members of the Namibian community are not comfortable accepting even though there is tolerance among the larger community. In that regard, the current study provided educators with information that is useful for the education system to advocate for acceptance and inclusion of gender nonconforming people not only in schools but also in the whole community.

This study discovered that the IE policy does not articulate itself on gender nonconforming learners. Moreover the policy does not provide guidance to teachers on handling issues of homosexuality nature. These findings in relation to the research problem cannot be perceived merely as a discovery by this study. This is an important fact with adverse effects on the success of inclusion in the Namibian education system. Hence, the above sentiments justify the importance of incorporating the Supplementary Framework for Implementation of the Inclusive Education policy's strategies into the implementation of the IE policy. This framework has made contributions toward better inclusion practices in Namibian schools.

The alignment of the SFIIEP to the existing legal frameworks in education made this framework applicable in all the Namibian education system contexts. Hence, this framework becomes a tool to guide the educators in handling not only gender nonconforming learners but all learners with other various needs hence leading to better inclusion practices. Since the current study aimed at raising awareness on the IE policy's response to gender nonconforming learners, this information could be used to encourage respect and promote acceptance of all learners in schools.

The use of the social identity perspective in this study had contributed to a better understanding of the effects of othering on the othered. Hence, the study has contributed towards awareness on the effects of negative categorisation on psychological wellbeing of the learners. The researcher therefore concludes that on the basis of the foregoing arguments, the researcher asserts that this study has made important contributions towards the realisation of inclusive practices within the Namibian education system. Apart from the above discussed contributions, this study also made contributions to on-going research as discussed below.

8.4.4 Contribution to on-going-research

There are few studies on gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian context. However, most of these studies done in Namibia had focused on gender based violence and gender nonconformity in general but neglected inclusive education issues. The researcher in this study has relied on the past studies in other countries such as South Africa to address the issue of gender nonconformity within the Namibian education system. Hence, addressing issues of gender nonconformity from an inclusive education stance made this study one of the first to approach this issue in educational inclusive terms in the Namibian context.

Mertens (2007, 2010) is of the view that the researchers who use the transformative approach to research use their voices through research to increase social justice and human rights. Hence, this study brings forth new insights into the gender nonconformity issues in education. Thus the researcher is confident that this study has potential to inspire researchers to further explore the concept of inclusion in Namibian education system in terms of gender nonconformity. Therefore, the researcher believes that this study serves as an opening for future research avenues. These could be the experiences of being a gender nonconforming learner within the Namibian education system or any other area of interest on this topic.

The researcher in this study did not make use of a single theory to address the issue under study. The researcher has coined a Social Identity Perspective from the social identity theory, identity theory and othering which is employed as a framework on which this study is based. The creation of this framework for research stood as another contribution of this study to research in terms of theory. Thus, the study has expanded on social identity perspective as a lens through which research on issues of gender nonconformity could be explored. Hence, this study is

believed to serves as a base for further studies on gender nonconformity issues in schools and any other social justice issue.

8.4.5 Personal experiences

This study has immensely contributed towards the personal experience and growth of the researcher. The findings of this study such as lack of understanding of what inclusion entails by teachers helped the researcher to have a better understanding of the current status of inclusion practises in the Namibian schools. The IE policy was launched in 2014 and the education system is based on the inclusion ideology since the independence of Namibia in 1990. Hence the researcher expected the teachers to fully understand the concept of inclusion in schools.

The unclear stance of the Namibian IE policy on gender nonconformity found in this study has further clarified the researcher's understanding of the inclusion practices in Namibian schools in regard to gender nonconforming learners. Nevertheless, the discovery made in this study that the Namibian IE policy's aims are in accordance with the education system's aim of promoting equal access to education for all Namibian children is a positive highlight in this study.

The process of reviewing the literature for this study has revealed the psychological effects on the gender nonconforming learners. This is an important contribution to the personal experience of the researcher in terms of understanding the need to offer psychological support to school learners. As an educator with interests in psychological wellbeing of learners, the findings on the need for strengthening the psychological support for learners contributed towards the researcher's practice in terms of offering psychological support to school learners. Moreover,

this study has given the researcher more insight in the need for improved teacher-training in terms of inclusive education.

The topic of gender nonconformity is a sensitive issue in the Namibian community. The process of the data collection in this study has brought new insights to the researcher in regard to the participants' attitude towards the topic under study. Some participants were uncomfortable to talk about gender nonconformity due to their religious and cultural beliefs. This reaction has directed the researcher's interest into exploring this topic further looking at different areas in relation to gender nonconformity. Hence, the researcher would like to explore the experiences of gender nonconforming learners within the Namibian schools in the near future.

The overall process of conducting this study had expanded the researcher knowledge on research processes such as developing methodological procedures to research. Through the development of the SFIIEP which is a unique feature of the current study, this process has contributed to the practical experience of the researcher in developing materials to add on the curriculum for inclusion. Moreover, the conceptualising of the SIP has further shaped the researcher's practical knowledge of new ways to look at inclusive issues as well as new ways of doing research. The researcher presents the recommendations of this study in the next section.

8.5   Recommendations of the study

The findings of the current study yielded information that is relevant for education stakeholders to respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. Hence, based on the findings of this study, the researcher made recommendations for the education officers and educators responsible for policy making and curriculum development at both tertiary and basic education

levels. These recommendations are also aimed to education officers that are responsible for in-service teacher training. Moreover, the study presents recommendations for the teachers as they are involved in every day school activities of teaching and assisting learners. Lastly, recommendations for future research are also presented.

The recommendations made for the education officers, institution of higher learning and schools stand as the strategies recommended in the supplementary framework for IE policy implementation which is developed in this study. The researcher hopes that these findings and recommendations will be considered during the teacher training programmes as well as during the policy and curriculum review and implementation processes. The researcher also hopes that the schools will employ these recommendations when dealing with gender nonconforming learners in schools. These recommendations are presented in the next sub-sections.

8.5.1 Recommendations for education officers

This study recommended several strategies to be employed by education officers through the utilisation of the SFIIP. The findings of this study present unclear IE policy responses to gender nonconforming learners. Based on the main findings, there is a need for the IE policy review for the policy to clearly refer to gender nonconforming learners' care and support in schools. Additionally, the IE policy statement should explicitly pronounce itself on the stance of sexual diversity in the Namibian inclusive education setting. In that regard the study recommends for the MoEAC to consider the SFIIEP's supplementary statement to bridge the gap identified in the IE policy's statement in regard to gender nonconforming learners.

The MoEAC should consider including issues of gender nonconformity within the in-service teacher training programmes. The in-service teacher training outlined in the IE policy should include training on the policy implementation strategies to respond to gender nonconforming learners positively. The teachers responsible for the Life skills as a subject should be trained on planning and presenting sensitive topics concerning sexuality in details. Teachers of different subjects should be sensitised during workshops on the issue of gender nonconformity through gender nonconformity friendly materials. These materials could include the content on introduction to sexual diversity, individual human rights to respect and dignity as well as guidelines on supporting and caring for all learners regardless of their sexual orientation and socio-economic backgrounds. The MoEAC should also provide relevant and quality information to teachers and extend this awareness to the large community through schools by addressing the issue during teacher-parents' meetings.

The researcher further recommends for the MoEAC to clearly articulate itself on gender nonconformity issues in legal educational frameworks such as the Namibia's National Safe Schools Framework (NNSSF) as a mandate of the IE policy for all educational policies and frameworks to reflect inclusion. Additionally, the NNSSF should be fully introduced into schools to help with sensitisation of learners on gender identity, sexual orientation and human rights.

The findings of this study further show a need for inclusive sex education to be introduced fully in Namibian schools. The topics of sex education in Life Skills as subject syllabus were found not be taught in all schools. In that regard, the MoEAC should provide standardised lesson plans. These lesson plans should give a clear guide on each topic to enable teachers to teach about facts at appropriate age and developmental level. Culture is an important aspect that has influence on

the education system thus it is needed for the MoEAC to provide cultural suitable materials but focusing on scientifically and factual teaching.

The individual attitudes and beliefs that are discovered in this study as hindering factors for the IE policy in response to gender nonconforming learners should be put into consideration. Hence, given the fact that the Namibian education system has made provision of training and employing life skills teachers, the Life Skills as subject should be considered to be offered as an examinable subject in order to receive equal attention like the other examinable subjects in the curriculum. Moreover, the MoEAC should provide the gender nonconformity friendly materials to schools to supplement the Life Skills subject content.

The study also recommended for psychological support to be strengthened in terms of promoting a sense of belonging among learners. The teacher counsellors and Regional School Counsellors should be sensitised on the issue of gender nonconformity including the strategies to help learners deal with disclosure. Monitoring of the policy implementation as well as support from MoEAC could play a big role in ensuring inclusion of all learners in schools. Moreover, the implementation of the IE policy should be done fairly and consistently hence the MoEAC should evaluate the process of implementation and the impact of the IE policy at school level. Last but not least, the MoEAC should consider the benefits of the SFIIP aims, statement and strategies and align them to the policy during the implementation of IE policy process. These aims, statement and strategies should also be reflected on during the policy review in future to including gender nonconforming learners favourably. The recommendations for institutions of higher learning are made in the next sub-section.

8.5.2   Recommendations for institutions of higher learning

The teacher training programmes play a role in the preparation of teachers for diversity in the classroom. In that regard, the Namibian curriculum for teacher training is found to lack content on sexual orientation. Moreover, the participants suggested for them to be trained on how to handle gender nonconforming learners in schools. Hence, the institutions of higher learning curriculum for teacher education should be reviewed to introduce the content of gender nonconformity. This should be addressed through the core modules such as Inclusive Education One, Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling as well as Child Development.

The sexual diversity content in teacher education curriculum should be introduced in terms of developing student teachers' understanding of sexual diversity and all aspects entailed in handling gender nonconforming learners. The institutions of high learning should also consider offering the Life Skills and Inclusive Education Two modules as core modules for all student teachers instead of these being electives at final year level. The recommendations for teachers and entire school community are made below.

8.5.3   Recommendations for teachers and entire school community

The findings of this study indicate a need for the schools to teach issues of gender nonconformity in depth. Hence, the schools should ensure that Life Skills as a subject is taught in-depth and learners are provided with appropriate information. Thus, the school principals and heads of department should monitor the teaching of Life Skills to ensure that it is being given the attention that the subject deserves. The schools should identify opportunities such as the use of dramas, case studies and other relevant teaching strategies to integrate the sexual diversity content in all

teaching. The schools should also engage in awareness programmes and campaigns for learners. The SFIIEP calls for collaboration with community members hence schools should invite individuals to address learners on gender nonconformity.

The findings of this study have pointed at a hidden layer of bullying in schools whereby learners do not report bullying incidents hence they suffer in silence. It is recommended for the schools to create a caring, safe and supportive learning environment for gender nonconforming learners. In that regard, there is a need for schools to establish anti-bullying policies that include appropriate measures to eliminate bullying on basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. The teachers should introduce open discussions on sexual diversity in the classrooms for learners to have a better understanding of sexual diversity. Moreover, the teachers should make sure that learners have access to additional resources and materials on sexual diversity.

The findings of this study further discovered a need for psychological support. In order to strengthen the psychological support offered to the learners, the school counsellors should receive training on handling gender nonconforming learners. This includes skills on helping learners to deal with conflicting feelings as well as referral procedures to relevant service providers for proper information on disclosure procedures and facilitating disclosure to loved ones. It is further clear that the schools should keep records of psychological services rendered to gender nonconforming learners and evaluate the effectiveness of such services. The researcher has seen a need for further research thus the next sub-section presents recommendations in that regard.

8.5.4   Recommendations for further research

This study critically explored how the IE policy is responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. In order to achieve that, the study has adopted a convergent parallel transformative mixed methods approach encased within a Social Identity Perspective. Hence, this study could be used to inform other studies that focus on gender nonconformity issues in schools. The study focused solely on the IE policy responses to gender nonconforming learners. Therefore, the current study acknowledges that due to lack of literature on gender nonconforming learners in Namibia there is a need for further research to explore the experiences of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools. Another area for further research might be to determine the assistance needed by schools in order to respond to gender nonconforming learners in a favourable way.

The social identity perspective used in this study highlighted the effects of otheirng on the othered. Hence, the researcher recommends for further research from a psychological perspective to look into issues of psychological well-being of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. The researcher hopes for these recommendations to advance social justice and human rights within the Namibian education system. The researcher had concluded this study in the next section.

8.6   Conclusion

This study critically explored the Namibian Inclusive Education policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. The researcher has established that gender nonconformity in this study refers to nonconforming to societal gender expectations through behaviour, presentation, sexual

identity or any other means construed as normal by societies (see section 1.11). Hence, gender nonconforming learners in this study referred to all learners who do not conform to societally expected gender norms.

This study aimed to answer the main research question: *How does the Namibian IE Policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?*

The main research question was investigated via five research sub-questions, namely;

1. In what ways does the Namibian IE policy respond to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

2. What educational responses are in place within the Namibian education for the teachers to address the needs of gender nonconforming learners for the realisation of education for all in Namibia as per the mandate of the Namibian IE policy?

3. From the participants' perspectives, how do teachers and other learners treat gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

4. How do participants perceive gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

5. What elements would form a supplementary framework for supporting the implementation of the Namibian IE policy in terms of responding to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

The researcher is confident that the research questions are answered adequately. The findings had addressed the purpose of this research which is to contribute to the existing knowledge on the IE policy response to gender nonconforming learners. This knowledge is hoped to help

educators to respond to gender nonconforming learners positively for attainment of tolerance, social acceptance and respect for diversity. In relation to the literature, the researcher's voice through research has advanced social justice and human rights, by interrogating the extent to which the Namibian IE policy responds to the gender nonconforming learners. The positioning of this study within the Social Identity Perspective, in relation to the Social Identity Theory, Identity Theory and Othering has given a voice to the "other" and contributed to the transformation of the education systems for acknowledging, respecting and protecting gender nonconforming learners.

This study emphasises the importance of inclusion and social acceptance of all learners as well as respect of diversity. In agreement with the MoEAC, the SIP assumptions and the transformative paradigm, the current study recognises that individuals thrive when they are accorded chances to participate as liberated citizens. Therefore, it is important that schools and the Namibian education system at larger should recognise and respond to the needs of the gender nonconforming learners. This is envisioned to contribute to social acceptance and inclusion of all in the Namibian education system. On that note, the researcher concludes that this study has achieved its main purpose and has made valuable contributions to the field of inclusive education.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Ethical clearance

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR: RESEARCH
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION DIVISION

UNIVERSITY of the
WESTERN CAPE

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535
South Africa
T: +27 21 959 2988/2948
F: +27 21 959 3170
E: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za
www.uwc.ac.za

27 February 2018

Mrs R Haitembu
Faculty of Education

Ethics Reference Number: HS18/1/2

Project Title: A case study exploring the nature of the inclusive education policy of Namibia and how it responds to same sex identification learners in selected schools in the Khomas region, Namibia.

Approval Period: 16 February 2018 – 16 February 2019

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049

Appendix B: Letter to the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa
Tel. 021-9592450
Fax: 021-9593943
rmaarman@uwc.ac.za

Faculty of Education

Enq: Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu
Tel: 0812846715/0812199320
Email: raunahaitembu@yahoo.com

To: The Permanent Secretary
        Mrs S. Steenkamp
        Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture
        Private Bag 13186
        Government Office Park
        Windhoek

Subject: Request for permission to conduct a study with school teachers and Deputy Director of Special Programmes and Schools (SPS), Deputy Director of Diagnostic, Assessment and Training Services (DATs), Regional School Counsellor and Inclusive Education officer at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED).

I am Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu, a lecturer at University of Namibia, Rundu campus. I am currently registered with the University of Western Cape, South Africa for a PhD programme. As part of the course requirements, a student has to engage in research in the area of their interest.

Research has established the impact of inclusive practices on learners' performance and their chances of completing formal education. The Namibian government made numerous efforts to address the needs of all the Namibian children, thus the implementation of the Inclusive Education policy. It is however deemed necessary to establish how this policy is responding to all children in schools. Therefore I am interested in exploring the provision of the Inclusive
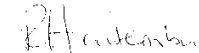
Education policy in the country in terms of educational responses towards gender nonconforming learners.

It is against this background that I am hereby requesting for permission to conduct a study in schools of *Erongo* region. The study will be conducted with the school teachers in 27 schools to be randomly selected in the *Erongo* region. In addition the Deputy Director of Special Programmes and Schools (SPS), Deputy Director of Diagnostic, Assessment and Training Services (DATs), Regional School Counsellor and Inclusive Education officer at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) will also be part of the sample for this study.

There will be no interruption of normal teaching sessions as the study will be carried out in the afternoon. Permission to access schools is also being sought at regional level with the Regional Director: Directorate of Education. Attached is the ethical clearance certificate from the University of Western Cape and consent letters for all participants.
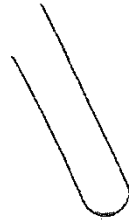
Thank you very much

Yours Sincerely,

Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu
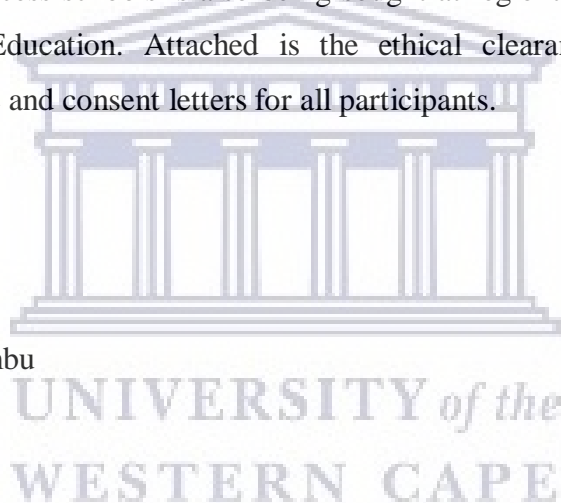
Appendix C: Permission from the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel. +264 61 -2933200-86
Fax: +264 61- 2933922
Enquiries: C. Muchila/G Munene
Email: Cavin.Muchila@moe.gov.na-gm12munene@yaho.co.uk

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

File no: 11/1/1

Ms. Rauana Keshemunhu Haitembu
Belville
South Africa
Email: ruanahaitembu@yahoo.com
Cell: +264 81 2199320

Dear Ms Haitembu
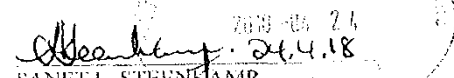
SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH TEACHERS AND REGIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELLOR IN ERONGO REGION

Kindly be informed that permission to conduct research for your Doctorate Degree in Erongo region is herewith granted. You are further requested to present the letter of approval to the Regional Director to ensure that research ethics are adhered to and disruption of curriculum delivery is avoided.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the Ministry. You may contact Mr C. Muchila/ Mr. G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for provision of summary of your research findings.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours

24.4.18

SANET L. STEENKAMP
PERMANENT SECRETARY

_____
Date

All official correspondences must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary

Appendix D: Letter to Ministry of Health and Social Services

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa

Faculty of Education

Enq: Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu
Tel: 0812846715/0812199320
Email: raunahaitembu@yahoo.com

To: The Acting Chief Medical Social Worker
          Ministry of Health and Social Services
          Windhoek

Subject: Request for psychosocial support during the process of conducting a study with school teachers and education officers in Erongo Region

I am Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu, currently registered as a PhD student with the University of Western Cape, South Africa. I am to conduct a study with teachers of Erongo region as well as few education officers at regional office. The study will look at the provision of the Inclusive Education policy in Namibia and how it is responding to the gender non-conforming (gay, lesbian, transgender) learners in schools. The above mentioned university's research ethics entails researchers to make necessary arrangements with psychosocial support service providers in events of unforeseen circumstances whereby research participants might become upset due to the nature of questions. Even though it is unlikely to happen, in order for the research report to be accepted for marking, it is required for the researcher to present proof that arrangements were done with the relevant service providers.

It is against this background that I am requesting your kind office to provide me with a written agreement that in events some participants will need someone to talk to, your office is willingly to provide this service to them for free, thus they are welcome to approach your office.

Thank you very much in advance for your help. Attached is permission letters from PS, Ministry of Education, Regional Director, data collection schedule and Ethical clearance from the university.

Yours Sincerely,

Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu

Appendix E: Permission from the Ministry of Health and Social Services

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Private Bag 13215	Windhoek Central Hospital	Tel: +264 61 2033238
Windhoek	Harvey Street	Fax: +264 61 222886
Namibia	Windhoek	

Enquiries: Djaupyu. Siteketa   Ref: Permission   Date: 30/04/2018

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Attention: Ms Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu

RE: PERMISSION GRANTED FOR REFERRING RESPONDENTS FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT

As a Public Institution specialized in psychosocial therapeutic counselling and related health services, we are duty-bound to render the required services based on "Health for All" Policy.

We are looking forward at any given time and place within the Khomas/Erongo Region for rendering the required psychosocial therapeutic services as stipulated in your requested letter.

Wishing you and all stakeholders all the best, and hoping for your research findings to benefit all stakeholders and the primary beneficiaries, the intended school learners in particular.

Thanking you in advance for your valuable understanding into this regard.

Yours faithfully

Djaupyu Siteketa (Acting Chief Medical Social Worker)
cc
Dr, Nakangombe (Head of the Department)

Appendix F: Letter to Regional Director: Directorate of Education, Erongo region,

Inceptors of Education and School Principals

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa

Tel. 021-9592450

Fax: 021-9593943

rmaarman@uwc.ac.za

Faculty of Education

Enq: Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu
Tel: 0812846715/0812199320
Email: raunahaitembu@yahoo.com/rhaitembu@unam.na

To: The Regional Director
Directorate of Education
Erongo Region

Cc: Inspectors of Education
Regional School Counsellors
The School Principals
School Teachers

Subject: Request for permission to conduct a study with school teachers and regional school counsellors in Erongo Region

I am Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu, currently registered as a PhD student with the University of Western Cape, South Africa. Research has established the impact of inclusive practices on learners' performance and their chances of completing formal education. The Namibian government made numerous efforts to address the needs of all the Namibian children, thus the
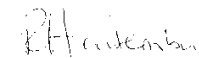
implementation of Inclusive Education policy. It is however deemed necessary to establish how this policy is responding to all children in schools. Therefore I am interested in exploring the Inclusive Education policy provision in the country in terms of educational responses to gender nonconforming learners.

It is against this background that I am hereby requesting for permission to conduct a study in schools of Erongo region. It is believed that this study will yield data that will inform the education stakeholders on the impact of inclusive education policy towards all learners in Namibian schools.

The study will be conducted with the **school teachers** for the schools to be randomly selected. In addition **Regional School Counsellors** will also take part in this study. There will be no interruption of normal teaching sessions as the study will be carried out in the afternoon. Permission to access schools was also sought at the national level with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Attached is a letter of approval from the PS and consent letter for the teachers and Regional School Counsellors.

Thank you very much

Yours Sincerely,

Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu

Appendix G: Permission from Regional Director: Directorate of Education

ERONGO REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION

Telephone	064-4105101	Private Bag 5024
Fax	064-4105136	SWAKOPMUND
E-mail:	dirsec@moe.org.na	

Enquiries   Mr. J. /Awaseb
Date   :   16 May 2018

Ms. Rauana Keshemunhu Haitembu
Belville
South Africa
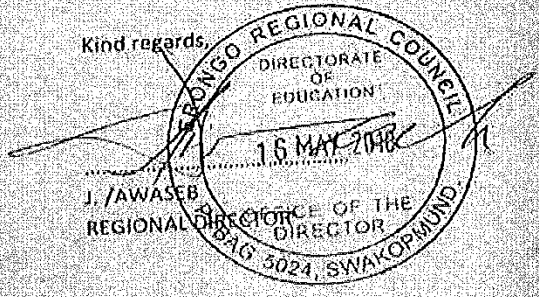
RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A STUDY WITH SCHOOL TEACHERS AND REGIONAL *scho*
COUNSELORS IN ERONGO REGION

Your request for permission to conduct educational research has reference.

Your request has been approved on the following conditions:

1.   The principals should be approached for further arrangements with regard to dates and times.

2.   Minimum disruption of normal school programme is advice.

3.   Participation of teachers should be on voluntary basis.

Kind regards,

J. /AWASEB
REGIONAL DIRECTOR

Appendix H: Information sheet for Education Officer and Directors

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17 Bellville 7535 South Africa

Faculty of Education

INFORMATION SHEET FOR EDUCATION OFFICERS AND DEPUTY DIRECTORS

Project Title: Exploring the Namibian Inclusive Education policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners: A case of Erongo region.

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. I am inviting you to take part in the study because you meet the set criterion for the population of interest which is of being a Deputy Director of Special Programmes and Schools (SPS), Deputy Director of Diagnostic, Assessment and Training Services (DATs), Regional School Counsellor and Inclusive Education officer at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) and your participation will help the Namibian learners. The purpose of this research project is to critically explore how the Inclusive Education policy is addressing the needs of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. In other words, the research is looking at how the gender nonconforming learners are treated, cared for and supported in schools. Read the information on this form very careful and ask any questions you may have before you agree to take part in the study.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to take part in the study. You will also have an interview with researcher where you will be expected to discuss and view your opinion on how the gender nonconforming learners are being treated, cared for and supported as well as on how you would like to see these learners being treated in schools. The study will be done at your place of choice if not in your office. The interview will last approximatelyfor 60 minutes. With your permission, I will audio record the interview.

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

Your personal information will be kept confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, your real names will not be included in the data collection sheets.All the data will be kept in password protected computer files known only to the researcher. Data collection sheets and audio tapes will be kept safely in a lockable filling cabinet accessed only by the researcher. All raw data including notes and tapes will be destroyed after three months of the final dissertation being marked and graded. When I write a report or article about this research project that is to be public, your identity will be protected by not linking the results to you nor to your place of work or your job title.

What are the risks of this research?

Due to the nature of this study, you might find some questions uncomfortable or upsetting. In addition you will lose approximately 60 minutes of your time from attending to your personal tasks.

What are the benefits of this research?

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results will contribute to the improvement of inclusion practices in schools by informing the policy makers and educators on the strategies to respond toward the needs of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. This is hoped to benefit all learners in Namibian schools as it is assumed that learners will be accorded chances to be educated in conducive and accepting environment to maximise their performance and success in schools.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be prevented from leaving or be subjected to any unfavourable judgement.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

If at any time of the study, you feel uncomfortable and need assistance, the researcher has made arrangements with the social workers at the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare for you to be offered counselling support in case you might need to talk to someone.

What if I have questions?

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

Head of Department:

Prof RFA Maarman

Educational Studies, Faculty of Education

University of the Western Cape

Phone number: (021) 959 2450

email: rmaarman@uwc.ac.za

Supervisor

Prof RFA Maarman

Educational Studies, Faculty of Education

University of the Western Cape

Phone number: (021) 959 2450

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Researcher

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's (HSSREC).

Appendix I: Information sheet for teachers

University of the Western Cape

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Faculty of Education

INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS

Project Title: Exploring the Namibian Inclusive Education policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners: A case of Erongo region.

What is this study about?

This is a research project being conducted by Rauna Keshemunhu Haitembu at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. I am inviting you to take part in the study because you meet the set criterion for the population of interest which is of being a teacher in a Namibian school and your participation will help the school learners. The purpose of this research project is to critically explore how the Inclusive Education policy is addressing the needs of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. In other words, the research is looking at how the gender nonconforming learners are treated, cared for and supported in schools. Read the information on this form very careful and ask any questions you may have before you agree to take part in the study.

What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form agreeing to take part in the study. You will also have to answer a questionnaire that the researcher will give to you where you will be expected to complete the answers according to your opinion on how the gender nonconforming learners are being treated, supported, cared for and how you would like to see these learners being treated in schools. You can take the questionnaire with you to complete at your own time and return it the next day **to the researcher. The answering of the questionnaire will last approximately for 30 minutes.**

Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?

Your personal information will be kept confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, your real names will not be included in the questionnaire. All the data will be kept in password protected computer files known only to the researcher. The questionnaires will be kept safely in a lockable filling cabinet accessed only by the researcher. All raw data including questionnaires will be destroyed after three months of the final dissertation being marked and graded. When I write a report or article about this research project that is to be public, your identity will be protected by not linking the results to you nor to your school.

What are the risks of this research?

Due to the nature of this study, you might find some questions uncomfortable or upsetting. In addition you will lose approximately 30 minutes of your time from attending to your personal tasks.

What are the benefits of this research?

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results will contribute to the improvement of inclusion practices in schools by informing the policy makers and educators on the strategies to respond toward the needs of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools. This is hoped to benefit all learners in Namibian schools as it is assumed that learners will be accorded chances to be educated in conducive and accepting environment to maximise their performance and success in schools.

Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be prevented from leaving or be subjected to any unfavourable treatment.

Is any assistance available if I am negatively affected by participating in this study?

If at any time of the study, you feel uncomfortable and need assistance, the researcher made arrangements with the social workers at the Ministry of Health and Social Services for you to be offered counselling support in case you might need to talk to someone.

What if I have questions?

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's(HSSREC).

Appendix J: Consent form

University of the Western Cape

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Faculty of Education

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project: Exploring the Namibian Inclusive Education policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners: A case of Erongo region.

The study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntarily agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and that I may withdraw from the study without giving a reason at any time and this will not negatively affect me in any way.

Participant's name………………………..

Participant's signature………………

Date………………………

Appendix K: Questionnaire

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Faculty of Education

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

As it was communicated before this questionnaire is part of a thesis for the study I am conducting on *Inclusive Education (IE)* policy's responses to *gender nonconforming learners (gay, lesbian, transgender etc)* learners. The data collected shall be solely used for the purpose of this study and will not in any way be used to identify, incriminate, prejudice or obstruct your individual activities. Thus, no names or the position of participant will be mentioned in the report. Do not write your name or of your school on the questionnaire. You are encouraged to be open and view your opinion; all answers are relevant.

Section A

This section seeks to gather demographic information about the participants.

Instructions: Tick √ in the appropriate box.

Age:

20-30 years	
31-40 years	
41-50 years	
51-60 years	

Sex:

Male	
Female	

Location of the school

Township	
Suburb	
Informal settlement	
Village	

Section B: The Namibian IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Instructions: Please tick √ in the box below the preferred choice

Item	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1. There is an Inclusive Education policy at school			
2. The IE policy responds toward all learners			
3. The IE policy promotes access to education for all learners			
4. The IE policy promotes respect for the rights of all learners			
5. The IE policy clearly outlines possible challenges/barriers to learning including social issues such as sexual orientation			
6. The IE policy is clear on which learners need support			
7. The policy clearly indicates gender nonconforming learners as vulnerable			
8. The aim of the IE policy is clear and pronounces itself on the care and support of the gender nonconforming learners			
9. The IE policy mandates schools to openly support and tolerate gender nonconforming learners			
10. The IE policy mandates me to tolerate gender nonconforming regardless of my personal views toward gender nonconforming			
11. The policy guidelines calls for diversification of the curriculum			
12. The IE policy guidelines support creation of a positive climate in schools for diversity			
13. The IE mandates for all educational programmes and policies to adopt an inclusive approach			

Section C: The educational responses to gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Instructions: Please tick √ in the box below the preferred choice

Item	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
14. Institutions of higher learning in Namibia provide training in handling sexual diversity among learners			
15. The national school curriculum content includes issues of sexual orientation for most subjects (English, Life Skills, Life Science, Biology and other subjects)			
16. The curriculum change provides intensive/in-depth same sex identity content			
17. Life skills supplementary programmes (My future is my choice) do include sexual orientation issues			
18. The advisory teachers and regional counsellors do include issues of sexual orientation in their training sessions			
19. The school is provided with additional information resources on how to handle issues of same sex identity			
20. Our school rules protect and affirm the rights of all learners including gender nonconforming learners from bullying			
21. Our school promotes tolerance and acceptance for different sexual orientations			
22. Our school carries out awareness programmes towards sexual diversity			
23. There are materials and books with same sex identity content at the school/library			
24. The school offers an intensive sex education through Life skills as a subject			
25. Life skills as a subject provides chances to talk about sexual diversity			
26. Life skills a subject is taught fulltime at school			
27. Gender nonconforming learners are encouraged to be free and open about their sexual orientation at school.			
28. Gender nonconforming learners are accepted by other learners at school.			

1. What measures are in place at schools against homophobic bullying?

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Section D: The participants' perspectives on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools

Instructions: Please tick √ in the box below the preferred choice

Item	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
29. Teachers are supportive toward gender nonconforming learners			
30. Gender nonconforming learners are never excluded from activities by teachers			
31. Gender nonconforming learners are never excluded from activities by other learners			
32. Gender nonconforming learners are well considered for friendship circles by other learners			
33. Some male learners are teased by others as they are considered to exhibit gay characteristics			
34. I hear of phrases such as "gay, moffie, dyke, cherrie" being used to refer to some learners in school			
35. I am aware of learners who are physical harmed (kicked, punched or hit) because they do not conform to gender norms			
36. I feel equipped and knowledgeable to respond to such incidents in no 34& 35			
37. I am comfortable to teach issues related to gender nonconformity in my subject			
38. I feel comfortable to engage with gender nonconforming learners on social occasions			

2. How are the gender nonconforming learners treated within the school community?

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Section E: The participants' perception of gender nonconformity and gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools

Instructions: Please tick √ in the box below the preferred choice

Item	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
39. I can openly talk about gender nonconformity issues with school learners			
40. Culturally, I am comfortable to embrace the construct of gender nonconformity			

41. Due to my religious beliefs I cannot tolerate gender nonconformity			
42. The attitude of the society is putting pressure on me not to embrace same sex identity			
43. There is a need for awareness programmes for same sex identity in school			
44. Gender nonconforming learners have rights like all other learners in our society			
45. Gender nonconforming learners should be encouraged to be open about their sexuality			
46. Gender nonconformity is unethical and taboo			
47. Gender nonconforming learners require a supportive environment			
48. Gender nonconformity should not be accepted in an African culture			
49. I believe that there is only a man and woman			
50. I do feel comfortable to be a friend with a gender nonconforming person			

3. In your own opinion, how should gender nonconforming learners be treated in the Namibian schools?

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4. In your own opinion, what strategies could be employed for the IE policy to respond explicitly to gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

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5. Could you please make any other suggestion by viewing your opinion on gender nonconformity?

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…………………………………………………………………………………….

This is the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix L: Interview schedule

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Faculty of Education

APPENDIX B: Interview questions with Deputy Director of Special Programmes and Schools (SPS), Deputy Director of Diagnostic, Assessment and Training Services (DATs), Regional School Counsellor and Inclusive Education officer at the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED).

INTRODUCTION

As it was communicated before this interview is part of a thesis for the study I am conducting on IE policy's responses to gender nonconforming learners. All the discussions and views that will be raised here will be solely used for the purpose of the study. No names or the position of interviewee will be mentioned in the report. You are encouraged to be open and view your opinion; all discussions are relevant and you are not going to be judged based on how you contributed to the discussion.

1. There has been a wide global view on how Inclusive Education should be practiced and Namibia has established and launched an IE policy. How does this policy pronounce itself in terms of care and support for gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

2. The IE policy in Namibia clearly expresses itself that every learner regardless of their background or condition should be unconditionally accepted and supported in education settings. How is inclusion of gender nonconforming learners ensured for within this policy?

3. What challenges does your department experience in regard to ensuring that the IE policy is aimed at protecting the learning and development of learners who are gender nonconforming in schools?

4. Your department is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the IE policy in Namibian schools. How are teachers empowered to provide an enabling learning environment for young people who are gender nonconforming through the implementation of the IE policy?

5. The IE policy is the guiding document for all educational services, activities and actions happening in schools. What educational responses does the policy establish for the teachers to support gender nonconforming learners in schools?

6. Globally, there are documented incidents of homophobic bullying and violence against gender nonconforming learners in schools. How do Namibian schools respond to incidents of homophobic violence and bullying?

7. Your department receives all reports regarding counselling and how learners are being responded to in schools. Even though these are confidential reports, in general what do they reveal on the treatment of gender nonconforming learners in Namibian schools?

8. The last two decades in Namibia is marked with political dissonance on homosexuality. However gender diversity is progressively and positively framed in the school curriculum to an extent. How do you position yourself within this contested space?

9. Lastly, in your own opinion, what strategies could be employed for the IE policy to respond explicitly to gender nonconforming learners in the Namibian schools?

Thank you for participating, we have come to the end of the interview.