



A REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN A HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT THROUGH THE LENS OF SOCIAL REALIST THEORY

A PORTFOLIO REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS OR ACRONYMS

CA - Constructive Alignment

NCHE- National Council of Higher Education

NQA- Namibia Qualification Authority

PDHE- Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education

PMS – Performance Management System

UNAM - University of Namibia

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DEDICATION

Above all, I dedicate this portfolio to the almighty God for his blessings, strength, and knowledge, and to my beloved sons, Mr. Matheus Tangi-Omwene Nambinga and Mike Twayambekwa Unomwenyo Nambinga for their patience and support and to my entire family for their support and trust in me.

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INTRODUCTION

1. ABOUT ME

A young Namibian, born, raised, and attended basic school in one of the four O-northern regions. I hold a Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Physics and Mathematics and Master of Science in Nuclear Science, both from UNAM. I am a lecturer by profession under the Department of Physics, Chemistry and Material Science previously known as Department of Physics.

During my undergraduate studies, I have been acting as a student assistant and it gave me a pension to become an academic one day. After I completed my undergraduate degree, I got employed as a tutor, the position I held for a duration of eight (8) years until November 2023 when I got promoted to lecturer position. During my stay at UNAM, I have been interacting with the students as the main function of every educator. Some of the main responsibilities among others are facilitating learning, provide mentorship, assessment and feedback, and community engagement. Throughout my career, students have been asking me if I could not become their lecturer. I have approached my Head of Department, who told me that to be a lecturer you need a minimum requirement of master's degree. I accepted a chance, and I pursued a master's degree which I completed 2021. With my master's degree, I thought I know how to teach, and my expectation were very high. As an educator in higher education, I know my responsibility is not only shaping the academic experiences of students but also their personal growth and future contributions to society.

Furthermore, from a social realist perspective, educators in higher education are not just transmitters of knowledge; they are facilitators of critical engagement, advocates for equity, and agents of social change, working to create a more just and inclusive society through their teaching and interactions with students. For my own continuous learning and professional development, staying updated on pedagogical strategies and advancements in my disciplines, it is one of the reasons that made me to take up the call to enrol in the PDHE.

2. ABOUT AND STRUCTURE OF THE PORTFOLIO

This portfolio aims to explore reflective practice in higher educational contexts through the lens of social realist theory. I am going to examine the integration of technology in higher education through the lens of social realist theory. I will explore how technological tools can enhance learning experiences while considering the social contexts and power dynamics that influence their effectiveness. While reflecting on personal experiences with technology in education, this portfolio

will also highlight the role of knowledge, inclusivity, and student engagement in a technology-rich learning environment.

Furthermore, the portfolio will explore the themes of quality assurance and evaluation in higher education. I will examine how the evaluation processes impact curriculum development, teaching practices, and student experiences while considering the social contexts that shape these evaluations. I will also reflect on personal experiences and institutional practices, while highlighting the relationship between knowledge and quality assurance.

Then chapter 4 of the portfolio will dig into the complex landscape of assessments for and of student learning in higher education. Where it examines how assessment practices shape educational outcomes, inform teaching strategies, and impact student engagement while considering the social contexts that influence these processes. Chapter 5 will explore the dynamics of student supervision in research within higher education. It will look at how supervisory practices shape student learning, knowledge production, and research outcomes while considering the social contexts that influence these interactions. The last chapter of the portfolio will explore the complexities of curriculum development in higher education. I am going to look at how curriculum design influences knowledge construction, teaching practices, and student engagement while considering the social contexts that shape educational outcome

CHAPTER 1

TECHNOLOGIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Technology in higher education has become increasingly important in recent years, with institutions utilizing a wide range of technological tools and platforms to enhance the teaching, learning, assessment and graduate study supervision experiences. When COVID-19, has kicked in and affected the gathering, most higher education institutions such as the University of Namibia (UNAM) introduced online teaching and learning. With the integration of digital tools and online platforms, learning has become more interactive, engaging, and accessible than ever before. Virtual classrooms allow students to attend lectures from anywhere in the world, breaking down geographical barriers. Online resources such as e-books, videos, and interactive simulations provide additional support for traditional classroom learning.

Moreover, technologies like Learning Management Systems (LMS), video conferencing tools, and online assessment platforms, streamline administrative tasks for educators while offering a centralized hub for course materials and communication. Discussion forums and messaging features within these platforms facilitate collaboration among students and between students and lecturers outside of class hours. Overall, technologies in higher education have enhanced accessibility, flexibility, and interactivity in learning, ultimately improving the educational experience for both students and lecturers. Therefore, in this essay my golden thread is the integration of technology in higher education using the lens of Margaret Archer's social realist theory (Archer, 1995; Archer, 1996) and providing a distinct understanding of the underlying dynamics and their implications.

1.2 SOCIAL REALISTIC THEORY

Social realistic theory, as developed by Margaret Archer, emphasises the interplay between structure, culture, and agency. Archer posits that social structures and cultural systems make up the parts and shape human actions, while individual and collective agency can, in turn, transform these structures and cultures. This reciprocal relationship is essential for understanding how changes in higher education, such as the adoption of new technologies (Archer, 1995).

1.2.1 Structure

In higher education, the integration of technology is greatly impacted by institutional structures, technological setups, and policies. These structures determine how technologies are adopted, integrated, and utilized within educational settings. Institutional supports such as funding, training, technological infrastructures, examples, Wi-Fi, internet, laptops/computers, and administrative frameworks that shape educational environments are crucial for the successful adoption and integration of new technologies. Significant structural changes in higher education have been brought about by technological advancements. University policies on digital literacy, data privacy, and online learning shape how technologies are deployed and used by students and educators (Archer, 1995).

These structural changes can be seen as both enabling and constraining. They enable new forms of learning and teaching, such as flipped classrooms, online courses, and blended learning environments. However, they can also constrain traditional pedagogical methods, requiring educators to adapt to new tools and platforms.

1.2.2 Culture

Culture encompasses the values, beliefs, and norms that influence how technology is perceived and utilized within educational institutions (Archer, 1995). It includes the attitudes of faculty, students, and administrators toward technology and innovation, as well as the prevailing educational philosophies and pedagogical approaches (Archer, 1996). The integration of technology in higher education is influenced by the cultural acceptance and preparedness of the academic community, rather than being solely imposed from above. Educators and students who view technology as a beneficial addition to their education are more likely to engage with it positively. On the contrary, institutions with educators and students who are resistant to change may struggle with adoption and utilization (Archer, 1995).

1.2.3. Agency

Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and make choices (Josua et al., 2022) . In higher education, the agency includes, students, academic staff (Educators), administrative staff such as faculty officers, exam officers, and registrar as they interact with technological tools and adapt to changes in their educational environments. To comprehend the effects of technology in higher education, one must recognize their agency. Educators and students

exercise their agency in different ways, from choosing specific technological tools to determining how they integrate these tools into their teaching and learning practices.

Some educators may fully embrace technology, leveraging it to create innovative and interactive learning experiences. Others may resist, preferring traditional methods due to a lack of familiarity or perceived effectiveness of new technologies. Similarly, students' engagement with technology can vary based on their digital literacy skills, access to resources, and personal learning preferences. The agency's readiness to embrace technology and its capacity to adjust to new tools and methods have a substantial influence on the success of technological integration (Archer, 2000).

1.3 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH TECHNOLOGIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In this section, I am going to delve into my journey with technologies from my undergraduate level towards 2024 as a student in the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education (PDHE). I am going to reflect on the benefits as well as challenges that I encountered throughout my journey. I am also going to reflect/relate to the corridor talks with my fellow students and colleagues.

During my undergraduate studies, technology was primarily used for administrative tasks such as registration and student records. A computer to me was just a device to store files and to search information's from Google. I did not have a smartphone and when I saw a person with a smartphone, I categorised that individual to be from a rich family. As I progressed with my studies, I remembered well it was in my 4th year were two of my lecturers used to lecture with overheard projector, yet the teaching was done face-to-face. I used to do my assignments all by myself without relying/dependence on the materials from internet. This method has helped me to master or understand the module content and developed my cognitive skill.

When I was employed by UNAM, I implemented the same way I was taught. Teaching to me was my primary focus and students are always the centre of my heart to impact them with knowledge. During 2021, when COVID-19 hit the world, including Namibia, most universities over the world including UNAM was forced to introduce online teaching and learning to made sure that education continued. These new technological methods of teaching and learning have transformed the way I teach and how students learn and access information, collaborate with peers, and engage with course material. Having personally witnessed this shift, I have had the chance to contemplate the influence of technology on my academic journey. One of the advantages that technology stands out is the convenience it brings, it enables me to engage with students regardless of their locations.

Additionally, technology has also enhanced the learning experience in ways that were previously unimaginable. Online collaborative tools platforms such as Moodle (LMS), Zoom, Microsoft Team, etc are examples of the innovative technologies that are now being integrated into higher education. These tools have not only made learning more engaging and interactive, but they have also helped to personalize the educational experience for students. Furthermore, with the constant usage of technology in my teaching, I should comment that technology has reduced some of my workload, examples if I have a multiple-choice assessment the system will mark it for me. Waau...! I should comment that technology does create flexibility.

Even though I have experienced numerous advantages, there are also difficulties linked to technology in higher education. Some of the most significant challenges I have faced are distractions, digital gap, lack of training and support, and increased workload. Having unlimited internet and social media access can lead to distractions and procrastination on tasks. It is crucial for both staff and students to cultivate self-discipline and time management abilities in order to minimize these distractions. Furthermore, during online teaching is difficult to control attendance. Students join with different devices, and some students sign in as if they are present, but they just log in but physically and epistemically they are not. Similarly, the performance of the students is always good on the assessments that are done online but very poor on the assessments that are done face-to-face, this could be linked to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which reduced the students to think cognitively and apply the content.

Consequently, I have also found myself grappling with the challenge of the constant connectivity that technology requires can be overwhelming at times, making it difficult to disconnect from school and truly relax. Furthermore, the increasing dependence on technology has sparked worries about online privacy and security, requiring both students and educators to navigate the intricate realm of data security. I am not well equipped with the technology as can be seen from the appendix below. Ahaa--!!! Technology is here to stay, and we can not free away from it, we need to impress it and learn to transform it in our teaching and learning.

Overall, my reflection on technology in higher education has been a mixed bag. While I am grateful for the convenience and innovation that technology has brought to my educational journey, I am also wary of some of the potential drawbacks. As we progress in this modern era, it will be crucial for institutions, staff and students to find a balance between utilizing technology's benefits and protecting against its potential risks.

1.4 BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In this section, I am going to reflect on the benefits of integrating technology in higher education. I am going to base the reflection on my experience and relevant literature to support my observations while integrating technology into my teaching and learning.

As an educator and a student, I have benefited in numerous ways from the incorporation of technology in my teaching and learning. One of the most significant advantages is that technology provides accessibility and has revolutionized the way I learn, teach, and engage with course material, making the overall educational experience more dynamic, interactive, and efficient. With the use of online databases, e-books, and academic websites, I can access a wealth of information at my fingertips. This has allowed me to explore topics more deeply and engage with course material more dynamically and interactively. Also, with online platforms, students access course materials, lectures, and resources anytime and anywhere, allowing for greater flexibility in studying and learning, thereby democratizing education. I have also experienced and observed that when students can revisit recorded lectures at their schedule led to a deeper understanding and better retention of information. According to a study by Allen and Seaman (2017), 77% of higher education institutions reported that online resources have improved student learning outcomes.

Furthermore, technology has improved communication and collaboration among students and lecturers. Platforms such as email, discussion forums, and video conferencing like Zoom, and webinars have made it easier to connect with peers and lecturers, regardless of geographical barriers. For instance, when COVID-19 hit the country, teaching and learning were uninterrupted. I was interacting with the students through different platforms. Similarly, when I registered for the PDHE, I was able to interact with my peers and my mentor in different geographical areas. This experience aligns with the findings of Garrison and Anderson (2003) cited by Lange and Costley (2015), who emphasize that technology facilitates collaborative learning, enabling students to engage actively with their peers.

Ahaa!!I would be lying if I did not mention that technology can improve digital literacy and personal growth. One philosopher once said, continuous practice makes perfect. I can attest that with the continuous use of technology in my teaching, learning, and assessment has improved my digital literacy skills and personal learning growth. In the modern era of technology, having digital literacy skills is crucial for succeeding in the professional world. My experiences with various educational technologies have equipped me with the skills necessary to navigate the digital landscape effectively. From using learning management systems like Zoom, and Moodle to teach,

learn, and assess, I have developed a proficiency in utilizing technology for academic and professional purposes. According to Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2019), it is emphasized that students need to acquire specific knowledge, skills, and expertise in order to be successful in both their careers and personal lives, with digital literacy being a key skill that employers look for in potential employees. My exposure to various technological tools has not only enhanced my academic performance but has also prepared me for the demands of the modern, where technology plays a pivotal role. Also, personalized learning can lead to improved student engagement and achievement.

1.5 CHALLENGES OF TECHNOLOGY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

With all the benefits that technologies in higher education have brought about, it is important to acknowledge that the integration of technology in higher education is not without its challenges. Challenges such as the digital gap, where not all students have equal access to technology, can intensify existing inequalities in education. Additionally, the over-reliance on technology may lead to decreased face-to-face interactions, which are vital for developing interpersonal skills.

1. 5.1 Unequal Accessibility

Unequal accessibility is a key challenge that emerges when technologies are utilized in higher education. Although digital resources and online platforms have the capacity to democratize education and offer equal opportunities to all students, the fact remains that not everyone has the same level of access to these resources. Students from low-income households frequently lack access to high-speed internet, computers, smartphones, and other essential technological resources. This digital gap creates disparities in learning outcomes and perpetuates educational inequality. Additionally, students with disabilities may face accessibility barriers while using certain technologies, further exacerbating the issue. A study conducted by Vogels (2021) at the Pew Research Center revealed that low-income families have limited access to high-speed internet and digital devices, potentially hindering their educational opportunities. Therefore, institutions must address these disparities and provide support and resources to ensure equal accessibility for all students.

Even though UNAM made sure every registered student has internet bundles, some students stay in areas where there's poor or no network coverage, or no resources such as laptops or smartphones with enough memory. Unstable or slow connections can disrupt their ability to participate in online classes, complete assignments, and access resources, leading to frustration and academic

challenges. Research indicates that students with unreliable internet connections experience higher levels of stress and lower academic performance (Hampton et al., 2020) a constraint to effectively enabling technologies in higher education.

In my first-year class, I have a student who is disabled. This student missed out on almost all the assessments that were done online. Upon enquiring, she indicated that she has nowhere to do the assessments because every time she gets to the library to use those computers, she always finds them all fully occupied and even she waits, she is not the only one waiting, henceforth when one leaves the computer someone will always get there before her. With the UNAM data bundles, she has nowhere to use it because she does not have smartphone neither a laptop. Similarly, if there is an assessment or need to access study materials, most students opt to stay on campus to download the course materials or do an assessment because of unstable internet at their locations.

1.5.2 Lack of training and support

Faculty members may not have the required skills or knowledge to integrate technology into their teaching methods, and students may not be sufficiently prepared to utilize these tools for academic reasons. According to Rogers (2003), not receiving adequate training and support may cause anxiety and resistance towards adopting new technological tools. The lack of training and support can obstruct the effective incorporation of technology in the classroom and restrict its ability to improve the learning process.

Lack of training is a serious concern because it seems the University people simply assume that all is well. I have a serious concern about this. Yet we purport to be okay. Who trains lectures on how to design online assessments or present lessons on Moodle? In 2021 when teaching, learning, and assessments were migrated to online, the lecturer were left on their own with no knowledge on how to navigate the system. I remember I have been watching YouTube videos to learn how to upload learning resources and create folder/activities. If the training has been given to the previous people, the newly recruited are not given the same training. The general training given to either students or staff is not sufficient or may not be appropriate for different fields.

Teacher Matati has pointed out during class time that one day, one colleagues at their campus was printing more than 100 test papers which were multiple-choice questions and when he asked him, he answered that he never had training since he joined the university. In addition, I have a question under the quiz where students are required to upload a document, but some students were not able to do it. Furthermore, UNAM has introduced an online ticket system (for both students and staff) if

you need technical support, but some issue requires an urgent response which will be delayed or sometimes no help/support is given due to few agencial powers and culture. You will find that only two or three persons are allocated to provide support to both staff and students. This could lead to frustration, stress, anxiety, and resistance among faculty members and students.

Bauer and Kenton (2005) pointed out that educators and students who lack proper training in using new technologies may feel unprepared and lack confidence in integrating these tools into their teaching practices. This may lead to technology in the classroom being underutilised or used ineffectively. Furthermore, educators may face difficulties in effectively utilizing new technologies if they lack proper training in the necessary technical skills. This gap can lead to frustration and resistance to adopting new tools (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010).

1.5.3 Resistance to change

One of the common reasons for resistance to change in higher education is the fear of the unknown. Some educators may feel comfortable with traditional teaching methods and may be anxious about using new technologies in their teaching practice (Rogers, 2003). They may worry about the time and effort required to learn how to use these technologies effectively, as well as the potential negative impact on their established teaching methods. Similarly, students may resist technological changes due to concerns about increased workload, unfamiliarity with new tools, or scepticism about the benefits of technology-enhanced learning.

In addition, lack of awareness or understanding of the potential benefits of new technologies can also be a contributing factor to resistance to change . Educators, and students may not fully understand the potential of technologies to improve teaching and learning, enhance access to educational resources, and aid in collaboration and communication. Without clear communication and education about the advantages of technology integration, resistance to change is likely to persist.

In the end, factors within institutions like policies and committees can lead to opposition to change. Higher education institutions frequently have puzzling bureaucratic systems and long-standing customs that may hinder the implementation of new technologies. The process of making decisions may be sluggish, and there might not be sufficient support or resources available for carrying out technological changes.

1. 5.4 Distractions

Another challenge posed by technologies in higher education is the constant presence of distractions. Due to the growing utilization of digital tools in educational settings, students are often face distractions such as social media, online games, and other non-academic applications. These distractions can hinder their learning experience and reduce their overall engagement with the course material and concentration in their studies. Moreover, the constant availability of digital entertainment and communication platforms makes it difficult for students to maintain their focus and concentration during class. Consequently, the pressure to stay connected and respond to notifications, emails, etc can increase stress and anxiety among students and staff.

A study by Junco (2012) shows that students who frequently use social media during study time have lower academic performance compared to those who do not. Furthermore, Kraushaar and Novak (2010) discovered that students who participated in non-academic activities on their laptops during lectures achieved lower academic results than those who did not. Hence, educators must devise strategies and rules to minimize disruptions and create a positive learning environment that motivates students to participate actively. Additionally, a study conducted by Lepp et al. (2014), indicates that greater utilization of technology gadgets like smartphones and computers is linked to heightened anxiety levels and diminished academic achievement in college students.

1. 5.5 Decline in Critical thinking skills

The use of technology in higher education has raised worries about a possible reduction in critical thinking abilities (Greenfield, 2009). Due to the availability of information on the internet, students might increasingly depend on superficial comprehension instead of delving into deeper critical analysis, thanks to technologies like ChatGPT in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Critical thinking and solving intricate problems are important skills for both higher education and the future job market. Hence, educators must create learning tasks that promote critical thinking and support the growth of analytical abilities, even within a technology-driven educational setting.

UNAM has introduced a blended learning whereby we have a hybrid teaching and learning. With our module, we do teach face-to-face and assess student's hybrid. I have realised that in those assessments that are done online, some students pass or perform well on them, but when they come to face-to-face assessments the same students will perform very poorly. This could be caused by when they have online assessments, they rely on the internet to give them answers instead of using

their thinking skills. Furthermore, in the world of the technological era, students are more reluctant, and they want to watch videos rather than being present in class or reading more books, which has an impact on their vocabulary, and understanding which could affect their learning and application the skills in the real world. “Studies show that reading develops imagination, induction, reflection, and critical thinking, as well as vocabulary,” Greenfield said.

1.6 ENABLING STRATEGIES FOR ENABLING TECHNOLOGIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In recent years, technology has become more common in higher education, with schools using digital tools to improve the learning experience for students. However, effectively integrating technology in higher education requires a strategic approach that considers the specific needs of both students, educators and institutions . Institutions can support the successful integration of technology in education by investing in digital infrastructure, offering professional development opportunities, encouraging innovation, and promoting accessibility.

One key enabling strategy for enabling technology in higher education is the development of a comprehensive digital infrastructure. This includes investing in robust network capabilities (Rubel & Jones, 2016), providing access to essential software and hardware, and ensuring that technical support is readily available. By establishing a strong digital foundation, institutions can create an environment that supports the seamless integration of technology into the learning process.

Another enabling strategy is the provision of ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty. Many academics may be unfamiliar with the latest digital tools and technologies and may require training to effectively incorporate these resources into their teaching practices. Institutions need to provide comprehensive training to ensure all staff and students can effectively use technology for learning (Selwyn, 2016). By offering workshops, seminars, and other professional development opportunities, institutions can empower faculty to leverage technology to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Another positive aspect is the ability of technology to foster creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. By engaging with digital tools and multimedia platforms, educators can encourage students to explore new ideas, experiment with different media, and collaborate on projects that require problem-solving, communication, and teamwork. In addition, fostering a culture of innovation and experimentation is essential for enabling technology in higher education. Institutions should encourage faculty (both academics and students) to explore new digital tools and approaches and provide support for pilot projects and research initiatives. This can help to drive

innovation in teaching and learning and ensure that technology is used in ways that are responsive to the evolving needs of students.

Furthermore, ensuring that technology is accessible and inclusivity in education to all students is crucial for enabling its effective use in higher education. Institutions should prioritize accessibility and inclusivity in the design and implementation of digital tools and provide support for students with diverse learning needs. This may include offering alternative formats for course materials, providing assistive technology, and ensuring that online resources are compliant with accessibility standards.

1.7 CONCLUSION

Technological developments in higher education could have a significant impact on students, teachers, and the overall learning environment. From a perspective of social realist, it is evident that technology provides more access to resources and educational chances, enhances collaboration and communication, and presents certain challenges. Educators, students and institutions need to strike a balance and leverage the benefits of technologies while addressing the potential pitfalls.

CHAPTER 2

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In higher education, the term "quality" is hotly debated. Quality concepts are “judgmental” and “value-related” (Watty, 2003). Although everyone is interested in quality, opinions on the matter differ (Vroeijenstijn, 1995a) cited in (Kis, 2005), which causes disagreements among the several parties involved in the higher education sector (Watty, 2003). Quoting “Harvey and Green (1993), who identified five distinct definitions of quality: transformation,” “fitness for purpose,” “conformity to standards,” “excellence,” and “value for money””. In my context, I define quality as the degree to which the expectations /or needs of our customers are meet. The terms of quality assurance and quality evaluation are strongly used in higher education.

Quality assurance is a structured procedure that guarantees the education offered meets set standards or goes beyond them (Williams & Harvey, 2015). It requires creating precise criteria, methods, and protocols to assess and review the efficiency of educational programs and services (Harvey & Green, 1993). This can include conducting regular assessments, gathering feedback from students and stakeholders, and implementing changes based on data-driven insights. Quality assurance mechanisms include internal self-evaluation, external review, accreditation, and benchmarking. These mechanisms ensure that institutions of higher education meet their academic objectives and fulfill their educational mission.

On the other hand, evaluation focuses on assessing the outcomes and impact of educational initiatives to determine their effectiveness and success (Kayyali, 2023). This can involve analysing student learning outcomes, graduation rates, job placement statistics, and other relevant metrics to gauge the overall quality and relevance of the education being provided. Quality assurance and evaluation in higher education play vital roles in guaranteeing the provision of top-notch education and the ongoing enhancement of academic curricula. These actions are crucial in upholding norms, improving teaching and learning methods, and catering to the requirements of students, employers, and society as a whole.

The interplay between quality assurance and evaluation is fascinating. Quality assurance sets the standards, while evaluation measures the extent to which these standards are met (Harvey & Green, 1993). This synergy ensures that higher education institutions deliver on their mandate effectively.

My golden thread in this context is the continuous and consistent focus on quality, which weaves through every aspect of higher education, binding it together.

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION

Quality assurance in higher education is a process that institutions use to consistently monitor and improve the quality of education and services they provide to students. It involves setting standards, developing processes for meeting those standards, and continuously evaluating and improving those processes (Kayyali, 2023). Quality assurance involves both internal and external evaluations to confirm the institution is achieving its aims and objectives. Additionally, it covers various procedures, regulations, and approaches aimed at guaranteeing that educational institutions uphold and improve the caliber of their programs, teaching, research, and support services.

Establishing clear and measurable learning outcomes is a crucial aspect of quality assurance according to Harvey and Green (1993). Learning outcomes define the knowledge, comprehension, and skills students should possess after finishing a program or course. Educators can develop curriculum and assessment approaches that match these objectives, ensuring students are well-equipped for their future careers by specifying these outcomes (Kayyali, 2023). In addition, quality assurance in higher education is crucial for multiple reasons. It aids in the attraction of students, upholding their reputation, and showcasing their dedication to excellence for institutions. Aligning educational goals with industry demands contributes to building a skilled labor force by guaranteeing that graduates possess necessary competencies and meet employers' standards. Procedures to ensure the delivery of high-quality education also safeguard the welfare of students and other relevant parties. Ultimately, quality assurance supports continuous improvement, allowing organisations to adapt to evolving educational trends and needs (Kayyali, 2023) .

Evaluation, on the other hand, involves the systematic assessment of these elements to determine their effectiveness and impact (Harvey & Green, 1993). Higher education institutions such as the University of Namibia (UNAM) have an internal body or department of quality assurance and evaluation that focuses on systematic review and monitoring of academic programs, teaching methodologies, student support services, and institutional practices to ensure that they meet established standards. It aims to promote excellence, transparency, and accountability in higher education institutions. UNAM quality review focuses more on the academic programmes than the institutional level.

UNAM has internal quality assurance such as the Centre of Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM), and academic staff to review programme and make sure that the programmes meet high expectations. In addition, these agents evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching methods, the relevance of curriculum content, and the adequacy of student support services. Feedback is gathered for improvement and implementation of necessary changes to enhance the quality of education.

In addition to internal quality assurance processes, external evaluation mechanisms also play a crucial role in ensuring quality in higher education. External evaluations, by accrediting bodies (such as NQA) or government agencies (for example NCHE) and stakeholders, provide an independent assessment of an institution's performance against established standards. These evaluations help to ensure that institutions are meeting the required benchmarks, and that degrees and qualifications are recognised and respected.

Continuous enhancement is an essential concept in ensuring quality in higher education (Kayyali, 2023). Institutions should consistently evaluate and modify their programs and practices based on feedback and evolving needs. This continuous process of enhancement ensures that education stays current and efficient in equipping students for upcoming challenges.

2.3 SOCIAL REALIST THEORY

Archer's social realist theory, developed by Margaret Archer, provides a framework for understanding how social structures and individual agency interact to shape social practices and outcomes (Archer, 2003). Applying this theory to quality assurance and evaluation in higher education involves considering how institutional structures, culture and individual actors influence the quality assurance processes and outcomes.

2.3.1 Structural level

Structures such as institutional norms, policies, and practices can influence (constraints or enable) quality assurance and evaluation in higher education (Josua et al., 2022; Slemming, 2019). These structures shape the goals, standards, and criteria used to assess quality. For example, accreditation bodies such as NQA and government regulations, example NCHE, establish the standards that institutions must meet.

UNAM has a quality assurance policy which is a one size-fits all. This policy sets the parameters within which quality is assessed and evaluated. All the faculty, schools, and department must follow that standard for their qualifications to be accredited, but each qualification have different needs

and achievements, but they are forced to adhere to the standard put in place which influences the allocation of resources, the establishment of standards, and the implementation of assessment practices.

2.3.2 Cultural level

The cultural domain involves shared beliefs, values, and norms within the higher education sector. There exists a shared understanding within the higher education community about what constitutes quality in teaching, research, and service (Archer, 2003). This cultural framework guides the development of assessment criteria and the interpretation of evaluation outcomes. However, these cultural norms, nevertheless are dynamic and subject to change over time in response to stakeholder needs, social expectations, and in changes educational paradigms. These cultural elements influence how quality is perceived, defined, and evaluated (Whitty, 2006). An example would be a common belief that research productivity is an important factor in determining quality in higher education, as emphasized by UNAM's PMS.

At UNAM there is a culture whereby each department, school, or say faculty has a different quality assurance interview and if you are not from that department/ faculty/school you are not allowed to attend or be in that interview, this could be a constraint/ or challenging to developing effective quality assured qualification(s). The review panel may also include academics from other faculties/schools/programme who have an interest in gaining skills and share ideas that will help to improve the quality of certain programmes. For example, our department offers a service module(s) to other schools such as Agriculture, and Education but people who are developing the curriculum of those qualification(s) may lack or have no knowledge or understanding of the modules to be offered. Due to frustrations and need to fill-up the credit required, they will put in modules that they do not know of, resulting in student maybe given module(s) that were not supposed to be part of their qualification/programme but are approved as part of their curriculum.

Furthermore, there is a culture that students should evaluate their lecturer at the end of the semester. The purpose of this evaluation process is to collect data on how satisfy the students, where they want the content to be improved, how happy were they with the lecturer, but I feel like this evaluation is done very late. For the lecturer to improve or change the teaching approach and hence ensure quality delivery, the evaluation need to be done in conjunction with teaching.

2.3.3 Agency level

Agency is the ability of individuals to act on their own and make choices independently (Josua et al., 2022). Agencies include, individuals, faculty members, administrators, students, accrediting bodies, and other stakeholders (Archer, 2003). The actions and decisions, of these agencies can influence quality assurance and evaluation. Individual agency plays a role in how quality standards are met, how data is collected and analysed, and how feedback is used to improve quality (Archer, 2000). The interactions and relationships among individuals and groups involved in quality assurance and evaluation. These interactions shape the implementation of quality assurance processes and the interpretation of evaluation results.

Archer's social realist theory suggests that quality assurance and evaluation in higher education are shaped by a complex interplay of structural, cultural, and agency factors and it is essential to consider how they interact (Archer, 2012). For example, are quality standards and criteria reflective of the diverse needs and experiences of students? Are evaluation processes empowering or constraining for faculty and staff? How do broader social and economic forces influence the quality of higher education? Understanding these dynamics as domains interact can help institutions design more effective quality assurance processes and promote continuous improvement in higher education.

2.4 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

2.4.1 Personal experience before attending the module of quality assurance and evaluation

After completing grade, 12, when I had to choose the institution where to continue with my study, what was first in my mind was UNAM. My parents asked me why do, I wanted to go to UNAM rather than NUST (that time was Polytechnic of Namibia). My response to them was that UNAM qualification have a good quality and when you graduate you will be employed quickly, but I did not know what quality was.

During my undergrads, my lecturer used to tell me that modules for years 1 and 3 their exams are internally moderated, while years 2 and 4, are externally moderated. When I was in year 2, I remember my lecturer encouraging us to study hard because the exam paper was moderated externally. Throughout, I have been thinking that those papers that are moderated externally are of higher quality than internally moderated papers, and I hope the level of hardship differ. When I was in year 3, in one of the modules only 3 out of 15 students passed the exam, and that lecturer was called all sorts of names by the students who failed. She was labelled as she could not know how

to lecture, she cannot deliver the content well, etc. And this made me turn my mind to think what is meant quality.

Furthermore, I used to think that quality is seen or reflected in how the module content is delivered, the standard of the test and examination paper, and that was the reason why exam papers are being moderated to attest to the standard of questions and see if it is aligned with the curriculum. Hence, I only used to think of quality when it comes to the delivery curriculum content and assessments.

At UNAM there is a culture of evaluation process whereby the students must evaluate their lecturer toward the end of the course. When I was a student, I used to evaluate my lecturer it was merely for compliance, and sometimes I did not do it. I do not use to take it seriously and I was not accountable for why I am doing this. My understanding was, they just need/ or want it to be done for their benefit such as using it for promotion. I do not use to see the transparency in the process.

After being employed as a tutor in the department, I used to provide my students with a long tutorial worksheet, to feed them with knowledge. I aimed to make sure that I developed their critical thinking while helping them to master what is on the curriculum. In short, I used to relate quality to how the basic knowledge is provided to the students. In addition, tutors in the department of physics are not evaluated, hence no student feedback. I therefore used to ask my questions such as Am I doing justice to the students? Will the students be able to relate the content given to them in the real world? I used to have informal interviews/ or surveys with my students, and ask them, how is my teaching. Is there any area you think I need to improve? Consequently, I am also keen to know the relevance of our programme and my module, whenever I meet with our alumni, I ask them where are they working? What do they have to say about the relevance of the module?

Even though there is a quality assurance department at UNAM, I do not usually take part in quality assurance meetings and even, if I was in the meeting, it was just for record purposes. I used to see that quality assurance is for highly qualified people and I am not yet in the position to make any decisions/ or give my views, but my duties or job was to deliver the content provided to me on curriculum to the students.

2.4.2 Personal experience after attending the module of quality assurance and evaluation

After completing the module , I learned that education goes beyond simply sharing information, it involves moulding individuals, encouraging critical thinking, and getting them ready for future obstacles. Therefore, maintaining high standards in higher education is crucial.

Secondly, it alerted me that evaluation provides insights into the effectiveness of educational programs, identifies areas for improvement, and ensures accountability. However, it is essential for evaluation processes to be fair, transparent, and focused on continuous improvement rather than merely compliance. As mentioned before, UNAM focuses only on the use of a student evaluation framework to evaluate the lecturer, but Waau!!! I have learned that student feedback can be collected at different levels (institutional, faculty, programme, courses ...). Even though it left me with a question, does student feedback lead to quality improvement? To what extent do academics use student feedback for quality improvement?

Finally, it made me understand that quality assurance and evaluation is an evolving process with the change in society. One of my ahaa!!! moment was the key insight where I gained that there is a need to balance the demands of accountability and improvement in quality assurance practices. While accountability is important for ensuring transparency and accountability in higher education institutions, it should not overshadow the goal of continuous improvement.

Overall, so- yes!!! Attending the module has deepened my understanding of quality assurance and evaluation in higher education and has given me valuable insights that I can apply in my work.

There are some questions I am left with in my mind such as: As a lecturer how do I make sure that I have delivered quality? As a lecturer, in what aspects can I improve to make sure that my students have received quality from me? But as I continue to navigate the higher education landscape, I am keen to see how these processes (quality assurance and evaluation) evolve to meet the changing needs of students and the broader society.

2.5 CHALLENGES IN QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION

In this section, I am going to provide a general perspective based on my common challenges and challenges that individuals may encounter in quality assurance and evaluation in higher education.

2.5.1 Institutional Policies and Regulations

Higher education institutions are governed by a set of policies and regulations that dictate how quality assurance and evaluation should be conducted, including regulatory frameworks, funding mechanisms, and institutional hierarchies. These structures often shape the goals and practices of quality assurance and evaluation. For example, UNAM has quality insurance policies which is a one-size-fits-all approach that fails to account for the unique mission, context, and goals of each program.

Furthermore, UNAM has introduced a Performance Management System (PMS) which prioritises metrics like research outputs to meet funding requirements, potentially influencing the quality of education provided. I have noted that when signing the IPS is that in our departments/programme, the number of postgraduate and honours students supervised cannot be a key performance indicator as there are not enough students to be supervised. I would like to kindly ask management (Executive dean (ED) or above) to clarify how this will be incorporated into the evaluation.

Further, the staff member must produce a minimum of two research papers every semester as a primary metric, does the overall quantity of publications accurately represent research quality? Can a high rate of success/pass an indication of high quality? This is supported by (Vroeijenstijn, 1995a). This is hypocrisy from the management. In the school of science, we do experimental research, and research might take 2-3 years without the outputs. Quality is not only determined by output measures but also by inputs such as the teaching staff's quality and the available resources like equipment and laboratories in higher education institutions (Thune, 1998) and if the institution prioritise research over teaching, it will lead to poor quality delivery.

In addition, UNAM has a workload policy (system), which determines whether an academic is underloaded or overloaded. Apart from the teaching duties, academics are also required to do some administrative work and attend meetings, which is not counted over their workload. One key indicator used in the workload is the number of students per module. This may provide unreliable information because when preparing for lessons and teaching it requires the same amount of time just like preparing for 1000 students. As a staff do I have control of the students registered on my module? This is not the task of a lecturer to ask student to register for a module at all. Does the number of students have any influence on the contact hours or quality? I could justify that whether I have two students or hundreds of students I am preparing/covering the same content of the curriculum; the only difference is on the marking of the assessments which will take a shorter time for few students and vice versa. Consequently, academics do some online teaching, or assessment but it does not count to an individual workload.

Look at the scenario where an academic is teaching three modules, supervising 16 undergraduates' final year research projects, supervising 4-5 students, serving in 3 different committees, and attending 3-4 meetings, at the end this individual is underloaded. A big problem with high workload, is leading to frustration and under-performance, not providing quality supervision or teaching. Furthermore, heavy workloads can impede the ability to conduct meaningful research and contribute to their academic fields, which can impact the institution's reputation and overall

academic quality. Also, workload could limit the time academics have available to engage with students outside of class, impacting overall student experience and success. How can academics be supported and motivated?

What the hell is the use of workload policy? What defines the workload of an individual? There is a need to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative indicators. Vroeijenstijn (1995b) cited in (Kis, 2005) contends that quantitative performance indicators, such as number student and staff numbers and dropout rate, are typically fundamental data and do not provide insights into quality. Conversely, qualitative performance indicators are factors that have influence on quality (Kis, 2005)

2.5.2 Lack of capacity, inclusiveness, and limited resources

Staff that are responsible/ or involved in implementing quality assurance processes may lack the necessary skills, knowledge, or support to do so effectively. This can result in inconsistent practices and a limited ability to use evaluation data for improvement. Conversely, institutions with limited resources such as manpower will be constrained in implementing comprehensive quality assurance and evaluation processes. Finding creative solutions to work within these limitations while still striving for excellence can be a personal challenge.

An example, on our sister campus as Katima Mulilo campus, Students who are pursuing a degree in Education (Physics and Mathematics) are required to do practical components, unfortunately, 2nd years – 4th years students at Katima Mulilo are not doing any practicals because of a lack of equipment. Their request to travel to the Windhoek campus or other campuses where there is equipment's was rejected and were told that is possible only if they were to use their own money to pay for the costs. The lecture involved in confined to teaching theory and students are not exposed to real-world out there, and this could be a constraint to quality. Parents and students invest a lot of money and with the hope to exchange with quality education. This could destroy the reputation of the universities.

Furthermore, the ongoing problem is the absence of inclusiveness and ownership in the process of reviewing the program. Individuals within institutions or review panels may have unclear roles and responsibilities related to quality assurance, leading to confusion and inefficiencies in the evaluation process. During the internal review for program evaluation and change, I observed that the heads of departments, program coordinators, and Deans were mainly responsible, with less involvement from lecturers, students, and other stakeholders. In support of including academics

and students in the review process, Borman (2004) argues that faculty are crucial for quality assurance and deserve proper recognition for their impact on effective teaching.

Students feel disengaged from evaluation processes or perceive them as bureaucratic exercises with little relevance to their learning experiences. Students feel that their voices are not being heard and feel not included, as there are no improvements. No effective measures to make sure that student(s) feedback is/are co-operated. I was having a corridor talk fourth-year students and I asked them why they did not attend the student-lecturer forum? And some of the students do not carry out lecture evaluation form that is done at the end of the semester. They replied that it is a waste of their time because no changes have been made for the past 4 years, they have been in UNAM. They still experience clashes, their exam timetable is always meshed up, hence what is the use of them attending and or do lecturer evaluation? My question is then what is the use of student feedback if nothing comes out of it? How to improve student feedback? Who made sure that the student(s) feedback is/are co-operated? There is a gap between the purposes of quality assurance and evaluation in higher education. No consistency on programme review. Quality assurance focused during curriculum review/ or transformation.

2.5.3 Technology

The rapid pace of technological advancement presents challenges for quality assurance and evaluation. As new disciplines emerge, institutions must adapt their programs to meet the demands. This dynamic poses challenges for maintaining consistent quality across diverse fields of study. Online learning, for example, has expanded access to education but also raises questions about the quality and rigor of online courses compared to traditional classroom-based instruction. At the same time, institutions are challenged to adapt their teaching methods and assessment strategies to meet the needs of diverse learners. This requires a delicate balance between traditional pedagogical approaches and innovative, technology-driven learning experiences (Bates, 2019)

An example, if the test is online, some students do not do the test themselves, but someone else might be doing it for them, or they are copying/ or searching on the internet while taking the test. Furthermore, artificial intelligence (AI) usage has become a challenge whereby some student's thinking is being reduced and relied more on AI. A student who relies on the usage of AI will graduate but will lack the required skills. At the same time, students have access to technology, but they lack discipline.

2.7 ENABLING MECHANISM

Archer's concept of social morphogenesis highlights the dynamic nature of social change, suggesting that educational quality is not static but evolves in response to shifting social dynamics (Archer, 1995). Quality assurance frameworks should be adaptable and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities in higher education, ensuring that they remain relevant and effective in promoting educational excellence (Archer, 2012).

A. Reflexivity: Reflexivity involves individuals' awareness of the social structures and cultural influences that shape their actions. In the context of quality assurance and evaluation, reflexivity is important for ensuring that these processes are not just reactive to external demands but also critically reflect on their assumptions and impacts (Archer, 2012). For example, institutions may engage in reflexivity by regularly reviewing and revising their evaluation criteria to ensure they align with their educational goals and values and helps to meet the institution's mission and vision.

B. Training and capacity building: I believe that effective quality assurance and evaluation require collaboration and communication among faculty, staff, administrators, and students to ensure that everyone is working towards the common goal of continuous improvement. It is important to create a culture of transparency, accountability, and open dialogue to address any issues or challenges that may arise. Equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively carry out their responsibilities and contribute to institutional quality enhancement.

In addition, training promotes continuous improvement. Cultivate a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging faculty and staff to regularly review and reflect on their practices, seek professional development opportunities, and engage in collaborative assessment activities.

C. Involve students as stakeholders: During the programme review and curriculum transformation done in 2022, I realised that students were not considered to have an impact during the review or decision-making bodies, but students' voices have an impact on the quality of education that they are receiving. Students pay a lot of money for the belief that they will receive quality education. I, therefore, suggest that there is a need to create opportunities for students to voice their opinions, share their ideas, and engage in dialogue with administrators,

faculty, and staff on matters related to quality assurance and evaluation. Furthermore, there is a need to create a culture of transparency, inclusivity, and collaboration that values student input. Encourage students to participate in institutional reviews, accreditation visits, and quality audits conducted by external agencies. Students can share their perspectives on institutional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to contribute to the overall evaluation process.

D. Peer evaluation and Assessment: Encourage educators and students to engage in peer evaluation and assessment to cultivate a culture of academic responsibility and assistance. Consequently, as an educator, one can motivate students to give helpful feedback to their classmates on assignments, projects, presentations, and group work in order to foster learning and development.

By implementing these enabling mechanisms, institutions can strengthen their quality assurance and evaluation practices, demonstrate a commitment to excellence in higher education, and ultimately enhance student learning outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

2.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, quality assurance and evaluation are essential components of higher education that ensure the delivery of high-quality education and the continuous improvement of academic programs. I recognize that quality assurance and evaluation procedures may be intricate and require a significant amount of time, but they are essential for upholding the integrity and standing of higher education establishments. Institutions can equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies for success in today's dynamic world by setting clear standards, evaluating teaching and learning methods, and encouraging ongoing development.

CHAPTER 3

TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions refer to establishments that provide education beyond the secondary level, primarily, colleges and universities. The goal of higher education is to create individuals who contribute to society and their countries. In these establishments, students are provided with abilities and understanding that prepare them for the workforce. The interaction of different elements such as teaching methods, student involvement, and advancing technology make teaching and learning in higher education a complicated process. My personal experiences as both a student and an educator have shaped my understanding of these dynamics. The landscape of higher education is continuously evolving, necessitating innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Social realist theory, which emphasizes the importance of social contexts and structures in shaping knowledge and educational practices, provides a valuable framework for understanding and enhancing teaching and learning in higher education.

Social realism posits that knowledge is not merely a reflection of individual cognition but is deeply embedded in social contexts and power relations. According to Maton (2014), social realism emphasizes the importance of understanding the social conditions that shape knowledge production and dissemination. This perspective encourages educators to consider the broader societal influences on learning, including cultural, economic, and political factors. By applying social realist principles, educators can create more inclusive and relevant learning environments that acknowledge the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students. The golden thread is connecting theory to practice that fosters effective teaching and learning in higher education. This essay explores how social realist theory can inform pedagogical practices, promote equity, and foster meaningful learning experiences for all students.

3.2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, I am going to use social realist theory framework to make us understand the interplay between social structures and educational practices in higher education.

3.2.1 Social realist theory

Grant and Osanloo (2014) “identify the theoretical framework as a moonpath or blueprint of research and one of the significant facets of the inquiry procedure. It is a theory that informs and clarifies the structure and visual modality of the research. A theoretical framework- underpins a study or is an analytical lens through which a study is viewed.”

Archer (1995, 1996, 2000), admitted that external reality is “independent of human action and thought”, and advanced the philosophical theory of critical realism, which Roy Bhaskar advocated since the 1970s (Slemming, 2019). Margaret Archer distinguishes the dual worlds of structure and culture within the domain of structure (the external world) (Archer, 1995, 1996). The structure is concerned with material commodities (inequitably dispersed throughout society) as well as social roles and positions.

The realm of propositional knowledge present in fields like science and engineering, along with the realm of myths, perspectives, and convictions, are all components of the notion of culture, which encompasses a world of ideas and beliefs. Agency is the term used to describe the domain of human interaction and behavior (Josua et al., 2022). We are examining structure, culture, and agency at both the individual and collective levels through Archer's perspective on the social world.

A social or natural world is used to categorize reality. Physical reality is what makes up the natural world, while social world strata are made up of people, cultural systems, and other entities (Archer, 1995). This sort of knowledge about reality can only be developed after it is recognized that reality exists on numerous scales and in diverse realms. As my golden thread focuses on the connecting theoretical frameworks to practical applications in the classroom, this concept serves as a foundational element that connects various aspects of effective teaching practices, including active learning, constructive feedback, and the integration of technology. The chapter will illustrate how fostering an inclusive environment enhances student engagement, participation, and success, ultimately creating a richer educational experience for all students.

Bhaskar (2008) categorizes reality into three levels known as "the Empirical", "the Actual", and "the Real". The Empirical refers to the tangible world we inhabit; in essence, it is what we see, notice, encounter, and are able to feel and comprehend. The Real pertains to occurrences that are tangible. These events happen regardless of whether we are involved or aware of them. The Real's level possesses causal abilities that give rise to events in the Actual realm or trigger generative

mechanisms (Shalyefu, 2017; Josua et al., 2022). We have no power over the domain of the Real as it is separate from human influence and understanding in both natural and social realms.

Archer's Social Realist framework presents a practical viewpoint on distinguishing societal influences that lead to social change (morphogenesis) or uphold the status quo through identification or reproduction (morphostasis). Further in this chapter, I am going to use a morphogenesis approach tool to help us understand events and experiences on the social world about the integrating technology in teaching and learning in higher education.

According to Archer (1995), "parts" and "people" are the components of any social world. The prevalent social structures or cultural systems are referred to as the "parts". "Culture" is defined as "the ideas, beliefs, theories, values, ideologies, and concepts which are manifest through discourses used by particular people at particular times" (Comas-Quinn, 2011). For instance, in a higher education system, Comas-Quinn (2011) recognized institutional discourses of "transformation (including access, equity and redress), teaching and learning" as being present to varied degrees in all higher education institutions. Contrarily, "structure" alludes to material concerns (both physical and human) (Archer, 1996). According to Comas-Quinn (2011), "[material] relations are typically justified and upheld by concepts from the cultural system, and in some situations and changes in the structures can influence changes in an institution's culture." Because structures and cultures always pre-exist the situations that people encounter, according to Archer (1995), the "parts" come before the "people's" acts. The "people," sometimes known as "agents," are individuals who conduct their functions within a specific structural or cultural framework. The effectiveness of teaching and learning online may be constrained or enhanced depending on how the three areas are viewed independently. Emergent qualities and powers emerge when individuals interact with structure or culture within the dynamic relationship among structure, culture, and agency (Mogashana, 2015; Shalyefu, 2017).

3.2.2 Analytical Dualism and the fallacy of Conflation

Archer claims that many social theories mix together different ideas, making it difficult to fully understand how social structures interact with human actors. Thus, Archer presents the idea of analytical dualism as the notion that opposes any merging of the "parts" (structure and/or culture) and the "people" (agents) (Archer, 2000). Archer warns about the possibility of the "fallacy of conflation" in the forms of upward, downward, or central conflation (Archer, 1996; Josua et al., 2022; Slemming, 2019).

When the powers of the "people" (agents) exceed those of the "parts" (structure and culture), upward conflation takes place. To put it another way, in upwards conflation, the involvement of people—most likely those who have extensive access to resources—could be incorrectly considered to imply that they may significantly alter social conditions regardless of the existing cultural norms. Downward conflation, on the other hand, refers to the idea that the "parts" have more control and influence over what the "people" do. Structure and agents are viewed as co-constitutive in central conflation, where the structure is reproduced by agents who are both constrained and enabled by structure. The social realism theory of Archers is pertinent to this research because it identifies the constraints of the three domains and the support mechanisms that enable effective online teaching and learning.

Thanks to Archer (1995) perspective on "morphogenetic cycles", I could understand the structure, culture, and agency dimensions in Namibian HE regarding teaching and learning provision as either reproducing or changing through ongoing social and cultural interactions. The morphogenetic cycle is a method to monitor changes in the higher education sector over time. As higher education (HE) continues to change over time, such as with the emergence of online learning, there is an expected transformation (referred to as morphogenesis) in the systems to adapt to these changes and meet current needs in terms of agency, culture, and/or structure. If the HE sectors continue to evolve in terms of the introduction of new delivery methods, but the institutional systems, policies, and practices stay static (morphostasis), these systems will not serve their intended function and will eventually become outdated. To conceptualize and understand the various underlying mechanisms and structures, a social realist theory by Archer will be used as the analytical tool. This approach resonates with the inherent complexities of the higher education landscape, where the interplay between individual agency, institutional structures, and societal influences shapes the experiences and outcomes of both students and educators.

3.2.3. Learning and teaching theories

As I reflect on my journey through higher education, I am struck by the profound impact that various teaching and learning theories have had on my academic experience. The interplay between pedagogy and student engagement has shaped not only my understanding of the subject matter but also my approach to learning itself. This section aims to explore my personal experiences with different teaching and learning theories, highlighting how they have influenced my educational journey and my development as a staff and student.

A. Cognitive-constructivism

This theory highlights the importance of hands-on learning and the building of knowledge through practical involvement. According to Stewart (2012), the general belief is that knowledge can only be formed within the learner's mind. In my role as an educator, my goal is to create a supportive environment where my students feel at ease to express themselves freely and confidently, without worrying about facing any negative consequences. I inform my students that making mistakes during the learning process does not reflect negatively on their intelligence and they should not be embarrassed. My students find me more relatable and enjoyable due to my warm personality and unique teaching style, enabling me to engage with them effectively. This aids in boosting their motivation by providing guidance throughout their learning journey. By giving students the necessary materials, tools, and resources, they can conquer any learning challenges that arise. This doesn't mean every student will communicate similarly. Rather, it means all students will have the chance to express themselves to the best of their ability. Motivation is important in learning, so I aim to inspire students to become more independent and eager to think and learn on their own. My function shifts to being supportive. Students engage with task performance by actively constructing knowledge and negotiating meaning. In order to be actively involved in their learning, students must utilize their creative, intricate, and analytical cognitive abilities to communicate while learning from one another. To the best of my abilities, I advocate for a learning community or a student community, with collaboration at the core of the learning process. I utilize tutorials and encourage students to review their previous work in order to help them develop critical thinking skills, construct their own understanding, and apply their knowledge. I think creating a feeling of belonging among students in the classroom is crucial for successful learning, and the constructivist method helped with this.

As the theory is good at promoting learning, I have to say that students are mostly challenged when they are required to apply knowledge from one module covered previous years to another year, for example a module done in the first year to the module in the second year and students use to sell their materials and books to fellow students. As I identified this challenge, I involved fellow colleagues who are lecturing second years to design a quiz for the students to link knowledge from previous modules. This method works well, and it made student to understand why the other module was relevant and the importance of keeping their previous notes or materials close to them.

During tutorial sessions, I let my students solve problems by themselves and ask me when they encounter challenges. I walk around the venue to see/observe how they are solving questions on their own. On the tutorial worksheet, each question is accompanied by the final answer at the end. Students are encouraged to engage in group discussions and collaborate as they are solving those

questions. This method of teaching changed many of my student's thinking capabilities and stimulate their potential to solve problems. Consequently, students' dependence on the lecturer was minimised, and students were diverted from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centred approach.

B. Behaviorism

This theory emphasizes the role of external stimuli in shaping behavior and learning through reinforcement and punishment (Blaise, 2011; Pritchard, 2013). In my early education, I encountered behaviorist techniques frequently. For instance, teachers often use a reward system to encourage positive behaviour and academic performance. When students completed assignments on time or participated actively in class, we received stickers or points that could be exchanged for small prizes. This immediate reinforcement motivated me to engage more in my studies and adhere to classroom rules.

In addition, the emphasis on feedback and assessment was what I have experienced, and I have been practicing this philosophy. In high school, I remember receiving grades on assignments and tests that served as a form of reinforcement. High grades acted as positive reinforcement, motivating me to continue studying hard, while lower grades prompted me to reassess my study habits and seek help when needed. This cycle of reinforcement and adjustment was crucial in shaping my academic behaviors and attitudes toward learning. Furthermore, in the school of science, there is always an award ceremony every year, where the school awards the best student per subject, best student per year in each year/level, best student per department, and best student in a faculty. As an educator, I always encourage my students to do their best and become the best students. I also, used to praise my students when they have done well in their test and motivate them to continue doing that and help another student. Consequently, I give a chance to my student who has done good to stand and explain to other and this motivates other students to also want to be front. It boosts their confidence while improving their learning. I don't like to punish the student who did badly because I see this as discouraging. Later I call this student to my office and discussed in person to identify the problem.

Also, some students have the behaviour of just missing class, which affects their performance and understands of the module content. To change the behaviour of my students, I implemented a strategy where I started giving unannounced quizzes in class. As a lecturer, I understand student attendance is very crucial, and it plays a major role in their learning and performance in both continuous assessments (CA) and examinations. This has motivated my students to attend class and

learn because they understand well that if they do not write the quiz, they will get zero and it will affect their continuous assessment marks. This method we have implemented it at the second years level in some modules and it works out well and it has also improved the performance of the students. I am still finding it difficult how to implement this method in my first-year class because is a large class.

While behaviorism has been effective in shaping my learning experiences, I also recognize its limitations. For instance, the focus on external rewards sometimes overshadowed intrinsic motivation. There were times when I completed tasks solely for the sake of receiving a reward rather than for the joy of learning. This realization has led me to appreciate the importance of balancing behaviorist approaches with other learning theories, such as constructivism, which emphasizes the role of internal motivation and personal meaning in the learning process.

C. Self

This theory encompasses various principles and approaches that emphasize the importance of learner autonomy, motivation, and reflective practices (reference). I encourage students to engage with materials, ask questions, and apply concepts to real-world scenarios, while promoting deeper understanding and allowing me to identify their learning needs, formulate goals, and evaluate their progress. Consequently, this philosophy fosters critical thinking and encourages students to reflect on their experiences, leading to personal and social transformation, and making the learning experience more meaningful and engaging.

For example, during tutorials, as an educator, I support and motivate my students and assure them that the more they practice the better their understanding of the module concepts. I allow them to ask questions as they apply the theoretical to the real- world problems. When I notice student(s) that is/are struggling with the module, I will invite the student(s) to my office so that we can identify where the difficulty is and identify the appropriate learning style, since each student learns differently.

In summary, my journey through various teaching and learning theories has equipped me with the tools to navigate the complexities of education. By reflecting on my experiences and remaining open to experimentation, I am better prepared to adapt my learning strategies to meet the challenges of the future. Embracing both behaviorism and constructivism, I look forward to continuing my exploration of knowledge, driven by both external motivations and a deep-seated passion for learning.

3.3. REFLECTING ON STUDENT PROFILING AND INCLUSIVITY

3.3.1 The Importance of Student Profiling

Student profiling in higher education is a critical component and it involves collecting and analysing data about students to better understand their academic performance, and when it is done thoughtfully, it can be a powerful tool for understanding the diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and needs of students (McMahon, 2013). In my experience, UNAM has the office of student affairs that actively engages in profiling students, considering factors such as cultural background, academic history, and personal interests, with the purpose of creating tailored support systems and improving overall educational outcomes.

During my time as a student, I have not encountered any of my lecturers doing the student profiling of their class, henceforth when I was employed, I employed the same method. I was made to understand that my role is to make sure I cover the whole curriculum and do the assessments as required of me. Nevertheless, I always say other social support is offered at the dean of student office. Even though I used to treat my student equally and with equity, I do not look at their special needs such as learning style, etc. For example, in the year 2019, one of my students was disabled. This student writes slowly, and she was short sighted. One day I gave a test that was one hour long, and we expected all the students to finish within the time limit. This certain student requested more time due to her situation, but I refused to add extra time for her, and I went to the extent to ask for a supporting letter from the office of the dean of students, which the student did not had, because she was not aware and did not know the support that the dean of student can offer. This has impacted her performance.

I felt bad about my action a day later and, I called the student to my office and told her the steps to follow to get that letter and through this, I realised that to know the personal background of my students is very crucial. The student was very grateful because this was affecting her performance for almost all her modules. She was also demotivated, and she wanted to give up her studies. The support that I have rendered to the student has helped her to improve academic and personal growth. This agrees with the study by Kuh et al (2006) that student profiling enhance support. By understanding individual needs, institutions can provide tailored resources that resonate with students. Personalized support services can lead to improved academic outcomes and student satisfaction.

Ahaa...!!! I should point out that as an educator I understand teachers must understand their students' learning styles, but did not know about profiling. All thanks to Dr Nchindo Mbukusa who

made me understand well what profiling is about and how can a teacher make use of it for the benefit of the students as it helps the teacher to identify their students' academic strengths, weaknesses, learning preferences, and personal interests.

In the first semester of the year 2024, I employed the concept of profiling 10 students among my 4th year students using the questionnaire on appendix 1 and based on their response, I identified some students who struggled with time management. I was able to assist with resources that helped them develop better study habits, ultimately leading to improved academic performance. As higher education continues to evolve, student profiling will play a crucial role in shaping the future of student support services, ensuring that every student can succeed.

As profiling is beneficial to both institutions, teachers, and students, there are some challenges involved such as students are refusing or hesitant to answer the questions because of privacy concerns, fear of misinterpretation and discrimination, and issues of equity. The collection of personal data raises ethical concerns regarding student privacy and data security. Henceforth, one collecting this data must ensure that this set of data is handled responsibly and transparently (Cohen, 2019).

3.3.2 Inclusivity in Higher Education

Inclusivity in higher education refers to the practice of ensuring that all students, including those from marginalized or underrepresented groups, have equal access to educational opportunities, resources, and support. This concept encompasses various dimensions, including race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, and sexual orientation. According to Braunsteiner and Mariano-Lapidus (2014) cited in Shipena et al. (2022) inclusive practices not only enhance the educational experience for all students but also contribute to a more vibrant and innovative academic community. In the context of higher education, this means that inclusivity cannot be achieved merely through policy changes or institutional initiatives; it requires a deep understanding of the social realities that students face and the agency they possess to navigate these realities.

I conducted a Survey at UNAM to determine educationally marginalized groups and policies in this institution to support Inclusion. A survey consisted of seven disabled students, see appendix 2, of which five are undergraduates and two postgraduates at master's level in the school of science. Disabilities can be physical, sensory, cognitive, or psychological. Each type presents unique challenges that can affect a student's ability to participate fully in academic life.

At the beginning of the survey, I visited the management offices such as the student affair and Dean of the school science offices to obtain the statistics of the students with disability in the school of science and obtain the policies if any on support for inclusion. I assure both the offices and students that data to be obtained will be kept confidential and is to be used for the study only.

The student affairs point out their office is meant to profile the students and correct the information in order to render supports that will aid their learning. As it can be seen in appendix 2, the school of science has seven (7) disabilities students in the year 2023 and kind of support/ assistance they need was well profiled. Some students were identified that they need a laptop, extra time, and other academic life support. After they determine the students needs, they work together with disability unit and UNAM management to make sure that the student get the recommended support for their learning to be effective. Furthermore, the Dean of Science office indicated that in their office they do not have any specific policy regarding inclusion, but they work in hand with the university disabilities policy. They do not discriminate against students because they are disabled, if the student shows interest to study any course within the school if the student qualifies for the course, thus the school is dedicated to accommodating all students regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. Five students out of seven were interviewed telephonically between November and December 2023. All five students were asked the same interview questions such as but not limited to, What challenges do they face? What support do they need? What support do they receive? The respondents were very positioned to answer the questions with no fear and their responses were almost the same.

The respondents responded that the disability unit is not giving them enough support. This unit was supposed to be communicating link (channel) with their respective lecturers, but unfortunately is always the vice versa. Thanks to some lecturer who support us both academical and emotional. Furthermore, with the world of technology, they find themselves in the dilemma where they have no resources such as laptops, mostly in their first year to do their academic work. The university is very slow to acquire them these resources and when they get them, is almost toward the end of first semester or end of the year when they have missed most of their academic work, and it demotivates them. Most of them indicated that they have bursaries from Ministry of Gender Equality which caters for tuition, accommodation and living allowance, unfortunately, even they receive such allowance, it is limited, and basic necessities are becoming expensive...

Further, they have indicated that their disabilities do not define their ability. And one being disability will not put a boundary to define who they want to become in further. One student who

has her arm imputed indicated that she was not born like that, but her arm was imputed when she was involved in the accident. With her disability that she found herself in does not limit her to achieve what she dreamed off ever since she was young. She indicated that she used to feel down off herself but the support she received from her lecturer and fellow students has motivated her to achieve her dream. One student who is an albino says that she does not feel comfortable writing at the disability unit because this put her down and she always feel good when is among the group of other students.

Most of the students were very pleased with the support that they receive from their fellow students, their lecturer and dean of student office. “We appreciate the inclusive environment that the university has toward us”. We feel welcome and this helps and motivate us to take our study serious and focus.

Students have suggested that more awareness and workshops where they can share and motivate other students. Most students indicated that the support that the university gives they mostly hear this from their lecturers they identify our challenges and refer us to those offices. More open awareness and workshop will be helpful to us so that we do not feel left out.

The university has a disability unit, with the most valuable support was the provision of extended exam time and access to alternative formats for course materials. Where students with disables take their exams in a quiet, distraction-free environment significantly reduces their anxiety and allows them to demonstrate their knowledge effectively. Those who are visually impaired are provided with the reading screen for their condition. Furthermore, the university allows students to participate in a diversity and inclusion workshop organized by the student affairs office. This workshop provides a platform for students to share their experiences and discuss the importance of representation in academic settings. Consequently, there are support systems in place, such as counselling services and academic advising tailored to diverse student needs, which were instrumental in my overall well-being.

I, therefore, recommend that there should be an interplay between the agency and structures to enhance student satisfaction. Hence, creating an environment that acknowledges and celebrates diversity, and institutions that help students develop a sense of belonging. Research by Davis (2020) shows that effective support can lead to improved academic performance and increased retention rates among students with disabilities. Therefore, faculty and Community support is crucial element in fostering inclusivity. Educators should be open to discussing student needs and adjusting their teaching methods to accommodate different learning styles. Moreover, cultural competency

training for faculty and staff is essential in understanding and addressing the diverse needs of students. By equipping educators with the skills to engage with students from various backgrounds, institutions can create a more supportive and inclusive atmosphere. This creates a notion of reflexivity, where individuals reflect on their social contexts and adapt their actions accordingly. In addition, empowering students to exercise their agency is crucial for fostering inclusivity in higher education. This empowerment can take many forms, including providing opportunities for student leadership, encouraging participation in decision-making processes, and promoting self-advocacy skills. Further, institutions should prioritize hiring practices that promote diversity among faculty and staff, ensuring that students have access to mentors who can relate to their experiences.

3.4. REFLECTION ON TEACHING YOUNG ADULTS AND ADULT LEARNERS

Andragogy is the term referred to the method and practice of teaching adult learners. Adult learners customarily defined as the individual who are 25 years or older entering higher education institutions. Young adult learners are individuals who are between the ages of 17 years and 25 years entering university for the first time. Numerous adult students come back to school in order to acquire more credentials for better job prospects, career growth, or advancement, with the ultimate goal of boosting their income (Roths et al., 2014; Hunter-Johnson & Smith, n.d.)

Over the course of my career as a physics lecturer, I dealt with different students of different ages, those regarded as young adult' students that just joined the higher education institutions fresh from secondary school and those regarded as adult learners. While teaching these different age groups, I observed that young adult's learners are less motivated and need constant simulations compared to adult learners. In addition, adult learners are autonomous and self-directed, and they are willing to learn without being pushed, whilst, the young adult learners, since they are coming from secondary school where teachers were always forcing them to go study, they need to adapt to the new environment. Although adult learners are accountable for their learning and possess superior time management abilities, their learning approach is impacted by the culture and setting of their location, as well as their social and cultural context, employment status, and aspirations, all of which play a role in shaping their learning methods. Moreover, I noticed that these adults were going back to school with a wide range of objectives including changing careers, improving skills, and increasing their chances of finding better job opportunities in a competitive market.

In my observation, financial problems, lack of technological skill, parental support, lack of understanding of the subject, balancing between work and study, refusal to get study leave from work, feeling intimidated because of their age, uncomfortable, lack of interaction with peers and

lecturer and fear of failing are some of the implications I have observed among my adult students. These implications were reported by Hunter-Johnson and Smith (n.d) and it has a negative effects on the learning.

In the literature, there has been much discussion of the institutional (Falasca, 2011), ethnic (Villarruel, et al., 2001), and “distance and e-learning (De Vito, 2009; Morris et al., 2005; Muilenburg & Berge, 2005)” on barriers that adult learners face when pursuing higher education. Online education is a relatively recent phenomena that has been expanding quickly for many years. Numerous studies have demonstrated that there are no appreciable differences between “face-to-face and online instruction” in terms of students' performance (Arbaugh, 2000; Johnson et al., 2000; Neuhauser, 2002; Nichols et al., 2003).

However, Muilenburg & Berge (2005) identified “social connection, administrative/instructor concerns, learner motivation, and time/support for studies were, nevertheless as barrier to their studies”. Similarly, a study by McGivney (2004), also showed that several impediments in higher education were seen as both bridges and barriers. Furthermore, Villarruel et al., (2001) in their study on barriers experienced by Hispanic nurses revealed the more frequent barriers as financial, institutional, perceived discrimination by faculty and peers, and cultural values such as family and gender roles. Within this study, it was also revealed that some barriers such as personal factors, open and distance learners, gender differences, lack of family or partner support, financial, course, and institutional-related factors, inadequate pre-course information and guidance, perfunctory interviews, managing study time, institutions that are not 'adult friendly' and lack of support. were equally viewed as bridges in higher education.

Despite these barriers, research has shown that adult learners of any age can learn and succeed in their pursuits if they are afforded the opportunity, assistance, and support they need McGivney (2004). With what I have learned from the course and the help of understanding the importance of profiling my students. I am going to start profiling my students to boost their confidence and facilitate their learning, in addition to gaining more culture-specific knowledge, I sought to discover what my students' expectations are and provide information that they could relate to their work. I strove to create a friendly learning environment so that students' obligations would not obstruct their learning and drive for competence.

3.5 CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS TO ENABLE EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Archer's framework argues that each domain at the level of the Real has different generative mechanisms and causal powers that impact effective teaching and learning. I am also going to suggest some possible interventions to address the challenges of effective teaching and learning. This section will be viewed in the framework by Archer.

3.5.1 Structural constraints and enabling interventions

As discussed in the previous chapters, structures such as policies, regulations can have an impact in the higher education. For instance, committees are social structures that determine the rules for who should be present at meetings where crucial choices regarding teaching and learning may be made and how they could affect the students and society in general. The structures can be complementary or opposing to one another and require individuals with skills and resources to make changes in the context of society.

A. Structural constraints

Structural constraints or challenges such as lack of resources and technology, and lack of funds are identified in this study.

1. Lack of resources and technology:

Resources such as laptops and internet connection are very crucial to effective teaching and learning in the modern world of technology. Students come from different families with different lifestyles. With the increasing use of technologies in higher education has become a threat to equity as students who do not have access to the appropriate technological tools, software, or the internet are disadvantaged. Most especially students who reside in rural areas encounter problems. Their primary difficulty lies in the fact that, despite having devices like computers available to them, they are facing difficulties with connecting to the internet or digital platforms. As noted by Adnan and Anwar (2020), rural areas often lack efficient ICT-related infrastructure like electricity and telecommunications. In order to address this issue, these students have no choice but to move to cities with better network connection, which results in higher studying expenses due to rent payments. Therefore, undermining education. Teaching and learning can be successful as long as all students are able to utilize the internet.

As technology is evolving in higher education, most of my students do not have laptops to connect to digital platforms and they use their smartphones, which they complain is not ideal. Some student's smartphones have very small memory, which is not enough to store their learning resources such as recorded videos and lecture notes. Some of my students stay in the places where there is no electricity or electricity is often interrupted. Picture yourself... you're in the middle of a lesson mhn...and the electricity suddenly goes out... this interrupts the entire teaching and learning experience and can cause frustration. Some students are challenged by not having internet data or poor signals. The university provided students with Wi-Fi on campus, but students complains that it is very weak and cannot handle many students. It is off unforeseen that the university also provided internet packages to easiness and made sure that each student has internet access from the comfort zone of their houses, unfortunately, due to different geographical locations such as green well, Havana, etc, these locations are populated, the network covered over those areas is very weak and very slow, especially if you are in the valley. Consequently, the students complain that the data bundle is not well distributed, whereby most data from their packages are allocated to UNAM platforms only while few data are allocated to social media such as WhatsApp, YouTube, etc and students interact more with other students or lecturer through WhatsApp, or different social platform. As a results, when they diminished their social data, it is very costly for them to purchase other data for them to stay connected, which leads to educational inequalities. Not all students have internet access... so... therefore, sometimes I occasionally have classes with twenty or fewer students out of a total of two hundred or more. I can experience a situation whereby I have a class of twenty or less students over a total number of two hundred [200] and above. In addition, Students are being challenged to attend live sessions to save their data for other learning activities because they have complained that online classes take up more data.

The available resources such as computers for students or laptops for lecturers are not enough. Students share a few computers that are available in the library. Some lecturers have no laptops or malfunctioning, and they must book the departmental laptop, and if they find it not available then they must cancel their lesson.

I have been using my old laptop, whereby response is very slow. Sometimes I used to wait for a longer time for websites to open and at some points, it is failing to connect to the internet. I used to get discouraged sometimes from using it to connect online in my teaching because I was always afraid that it might stop working while in a lesson. Sometimes it will freeze, and it will require me to switch off before joining back in the meeting. Also, I used to share my laptop with my house

mates for them to join online classes. In addition to that, I do not have Wi-Fi at my place, therefore for me to have online lectures from home, I must always buy data, and it is very costly.

This discovery is not exclusive to the latest research, as Dube (2020) also discovered similar results in which participants mentioned a lack of ICT as a barrier to online teaching (Hako et al., 2021). (Basar et al., 2021) and Irfan and Iman (2020) assert that online learning is not effective if it is carried out improperly. They use several examples to illustrate this, including inadequate internet access, a teacher's incapacity to adopt online learning, and the lack of parental support. "Various research studies indicated several reasons for the lack of access to technology. In Sicilia's (2005) study, teachers complained about how difficult it was to always have access to computers". The author gave reasons like "computers had to be booked in advance and the teachers would forget to do so, or they could not book them for several periods in a row when they wanted to work on several projects with the students." In other words, a teacher would have no access to ICT materials because most of these were shared with other teachers.

2. Lack of funds

Most of our students are relies on the funds from NSFAF which pays at almost end of the year or sometimes a year can pass without receiving their funds. The funds they receive is not sufficient to cater for their needs and to get a private financial sponsor is very scare these days.

B. Structural interventions

Provide adequate Technological tools and resources

I recommend that UNAM should acquire sufficient computers and upgrade the internet server to accommodate multiple users simultaneously. Furthermore, I propose that having an adequate number of computers could enable students to take online exams and tests on campus in a supervised environment, reducing opportunities for cheating and plagiarism. This provides additional confirmation of the existing proof that there are not enough library computers available, as reported by Hako & Shikongo (2019) and Hako et al. (2021). Furthermore, UNAM should also go back to the negotiation table and negotiate on the allocation of data to the student's internet packages/bundles. This recommendation aligns with other findings indicating that teachers found the internet to be frequently unreliable, causing delays in uploading notes and assessment activities for students.

3.5.2 Cultural constraints and enabling interventions

Culture involves the way individuals perceive things and has the ability to impact certain individuals in order to facilitate or restrict actions. The culture in a social context can either limit or support effective teaching and learning. Culture in higher education institutions is demonstrated through policy documents, vision and mission statements, and discourses. This article identified different cultural constraints, like insufficient education, that lead to a knowledge divide between academic faculty and students.

A. Cultural constraints

1. Lack of training: Training challenge involves meeting the training needs of educators so they can properly learn and effectively utilize the features and functions of technologies in their teaching and learning endeavours. Training is necessary to ensure that teachers and students can effectively utilize evolving technologies in their daily teaching and learning tasks.

At UNAM there are different technology platform such as Zoom, Big Blue Button (BBB) and Microsoft team that the lecturer can use to connect and engage with the students, unfortunately, I only make use of zoom because I do not know how to use the other platform. On the contrary, this platform has a size limit of 100 participant, while my class is about 200 students. Furthermore, there is a time limit of 40 minutes per meeting while the lecture is 55 minutes long. Furthermore, these platforms allow one to contact assessments in many ways, uuh... unfortunately, I mostly only utilise multiple choice question, true/ false and essay questions. With essay questions, I ask my students to write, scan, and upload their file. As a physics lecturer I would want to ask my students to provide a mathematical formula online, unfortunately, students cannot write that formula online because they lack skills. I am also very much concern, who, when and how often do students get trained on how to navigate Moodle? It is crucial to provide step-by-step guides to assist students with limited technological skills .

Pelgrum (2001) discovered that teachers lacked sufficient training opportunities for utilizing ICTs in a classroom setting. Likewise, Beggs (2000) discovered that the insufficient training was among the top three obstacles preventing teachers from utilizing ICT in their teaching. A study conducted in Turkey revealed that the primary issue hindering the adoption of new ICT in education was the lack of adequate in-service training for teachers. Özden (2007) and Toprakci (2006) found that inadequate teacher ICT training in Turkish schools is a barrier. Gomes (2005) also found that insufficient training in digital literacy, pedagogy, didactics for ICT use in classrooms, and

technology use in specific subjects are hindrances to integrating modern technologies in classrooms.

B. Cultural interventions

Provide training to Lecturers and students: At the university there are different learning platform such as Zoom, Big Blue Button (BBB) and Microsoft team that the lecturer can use to connect and engage with the students, unfortunately, zoom is mostly used because of the lack of training on how to use the other platform. Consequently, since these platforms (zoom and BBB) have a size limit, lecturers need to be trained how to link the platform together. Teachers require sufficient support in infrastructure, emotions, and instruction in order to effectively carry out suitable strategies. Continuous training in education with technology is essential for enhancing teacher and students' skills and must be consistently provided.

I am grateful to CILT for the workshops they always arrange. I suggest that continuous workshops be made compulsory to all academics and students in their respective disciplines. Both lecturers and students require additional training to possess the necessary skills and knowledge for success in the digital age. It is important to receive training on accessing and utilizing e-learning resources. In order for online teaching and learning to be successful, it is necessary for both staff and students to receive adequate training in computer skills and the utilization of different online platforms. Likewise, UNAM should ensure that campus-based technical support is easily accessible to improve connectivity and accessibility. Lastly, I encourage lecturers and students to share their experiences and skills in their departments, schools, and faculties.

Regarding the insufficient information during the orientation provided to first-year students at the University of Namibia, I recommend that introducing students to Moodle in addition to providing course selection information and campus tours, this will help them navigate the online platform with ease. Similarly, I supported the idea of providing the new lecturers and students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, with internet devices and tools to ensure they can keep teaching and learning smoothly.

This discovery aligns with the research conducted by Hako and Shikongo (2019), which suggests that the existing orientation program should be revised and enhanced to effectively support the success of both teachers and students by assisting those who lack technological skills and financial resources.

Furthermore, to overcome the time limit while in the middle of the lecture I suggest that the university purchase the adequate teaching platform for all the lecturer to use. Maybe UNAM, can involve stakeholder, such as Government, Ministry of higher Education, NCHE and NCRST to assist financially to fund such important initiative.

3.5.3 Agential constraints and enabling interventions

Agency is about human action and interactions that may change or transform things or keep them the same. Agents are people who operate within a particular structural and cultural system (Josua et al., 2022; Shalyefu, 2017). Social interaction of agents in a particular context can bring about structural or cultural changes (i.e. morphogenesis) or may keep things unchanged (i.e. morphostasis). Emergent personal powers and properties are exercised as people interact with parts (structure and culture) (Archer, 2003). Agency includes Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor: Academic Affairs, CILT, academic staff, students, parents, Minister of Higher Education which can be constraints or enable effective teaching and learning in higher education.

A. Agential constraints

1. Lecturer-Student ratio

Teacher-learner ration is well taken care off at the primary to secondary level but is neglected at higher education. Imagine one lecturer has more than two hundred students. Lecturers are supposed to devise differential learning support approaches depends on the abilities of specific students. How can such a lecturer interact, engage with, motivate, offer supports to all those students at once? If the student is not receiving the support, it makes the student to feel isolated and demotivated from learning and this could also causes stress to the lecturer. It also, makes it difficult for the lecturer to identify the learning style or focus on the needs of individual student, as a result it will affect the learning of the student. Large number of students entitled to one lecturer is not effective for teaching and learning.

In literature, a study by Koc and Celik (2015) was focusing on the impact of the large class to the student achievement in different cities on Turkey. Their results show a negative correlation. Negative correlation between the student teacher ratio and achievement revealed that the cities with greater number of students per teacher tend to have a low achievement. Time management challenges frequently happen in day-to-day teaching and learning activities. In every meeting of the course, there are only 40 minutes allocated per meeting on the basic zoom. With 55 minutes lecture time I must connect twice. Sometimes, technical problems occur, and it

does disturb the whole-time management of that course. In addition, I fail to balance my time, technology teaching and learning creates a significant workload for me, it also takes lot of time for me to creates an assessment online. The e-leaning method requires several hours of thinking to find out how a concept can be taught in the form of virtual education.

Academics that use e-learning systems face difficulties in managing their time. According to Reeder et al (2004) some of the “cyber culture values” are characterised by speed, reach and quick response. However, in recommendations set out by Burd and Buchman (2004), the prerequisite needed to be an effective online instructor is that academics must visit the discussion page at least once a day to see if there is a posting by students. A viable question is that visiting the discussion board once a day may not be seen as adequate according to cyber culture values. Some researchers have stated that academics should always maintain a vigorous presence on online discussion boards, so they control discussion, provide answers and feedback so students do not disengage from the course (Vonderwell et al., 2007; Mayes et al., 2011; Nandi et al., 2012).

According to Sicilia (2005), the most common challenge reported by all the teachers was the lack of time they had to plan technology lessons, explore the different Internet sites, or look at various aspects of educational software. Sadiku et al. (2018) found that the problem of lack of time exists for teachers in many aspects of their work as it affects their ability to complete tasks, with some of the participant teachers specifically stating which aspects of ICT require more time. In addition, based on the study by Chang and Fang (2020), it concluded more 70% of the teachers experienced an increased workload during the COVID-19.

2. Control over assessment/Quality assessment compromise

Students gets high marks on the activities taken online, but if you bring them to write face to face, the students’ marks will shock you, the student will fail or get very low marks compared to those marks they obtained online. I am speculative whether, if it was the students themselves who were doing the activities or perhaps other family members, or former students were doing the activities on their behalf. Online activities really promote cheating and compromise quality. In fact, students take tests and examinations in groups...ooh...lecturers have no proper control over online assessments.

I remember well in 2021, I was with the students in a cab, there was a test going on that day. One student took a screenshot of almost all the questions of the test and post them on their WhatsApp

group for assistance. I was seeing students discussing the questions and I was very much disappointed to witness this as a lecturer. It also proves that students are not honest to themselves.

Equally, Assareh and Bidokht (2010) study in Iran also documented the difficulty for online assessment of different domains progress and curriculum, ambiguity, quality, resource, teaching process, evaluation.

3. Environment and attitudes

Some students complains that their home environment is not conducive for eLearning. Namibia remains one of the most unequal societies in the world (Kaisara & Bwalya, 2021) and several students enrolled for higher education domicile in a crowded high-density location. It is therefore not unsurprising that some homes conditions may not be conducive for learning. Consequently, students spend more time on their computers for recreational and other purpose than that of learning. During online learning, some participants forgot to mute themselves and sometimes it causes unwanted noise during the online class and is very destructive to others.

Also, student attitude toward online learning is a critical factor in the learning environment supported by online learning tools. People's attitudes relate to what they think and feel about, and how they behave toward an attitude object (Guido, 2013) Strong attitudes can guide behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning can contribute to the effective employment of learning strategies. Brown (2000) defines an attitude as emotional involvement, such as feelings, self, or relationships in community. Attitude shapes our life and our feelings toward the external world. Ajzen (1988) considered disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or an event to be attitude. Learner attitude plays a significant role in online learning, (Mboniyirivuze et al., 2021). According to Weinburgh (2000) attitude influences behaviour and achievement. Positive and negative attitudes have strong impacts on students' online learning.

B. Agential interventions

This study suggested some of the intervention to address the constraints related to lecturer-student ration, environment and attitudes as discussed below.

1. Address Lecturer-student ration:

I suggest that the university agents should do research in this regard on how to either solve the problem of lecturer-student ration. I further suggest that the University could consider recruiting

more academic staff to lecture those modules where this challenge is being experienced. I observe that Windhoek based campuses, are the most campuses finding themselves with these problems, since most students are migrating to the city. It is therefore advised that parents be made to understand and encouraged to let their children's register at other campuses. In addition, to foster the movements of students, UNAM should consider offering variety of courses to other campuses apart from Main campus only.

Class size tends to correlate with the number of students per teacher, and it is generally seen that smaller classes promote better teaching and learning. Numerous countries, including the USA, Europe, China, Japan, and many others, share these views and have implemented policies to minimize class sizes (Blatchford & Lai, 2012).

2. To address the issue of Environment and Attitudes

Change in attitudes is needed. There is a relation between attitudes and achievement or learning. I argue that both academic staff and students to cultivate a positive attitude, since positive minds produce good results. Also, I suggest that the university should made us understand to why the transformation is needed and important, and its benefit, since the knowledge keeps one motivated. Lecturers should improve their pedagogical methods to render it suitable for online learning.

Parental support and community understanding is needed. I suggest that parental, sibling, co-workers, spouse supports be utilised or used. The higher education institution or member can go around to educate the community and can make the community understand the importance of education and how their involvement plays a role to education. This is supported by the study by Stone et al. (2016) who find out that the inter-play/support from community or family members has impacted their education and enhanced their learning.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Teaching and learning in higher education is a multifaceted process that involves various pedagogical approaches, student engagement strategies, and assessment methods. Using Archers social realist theory, I conclude that there are some structural, cultural, and agential challenges that could constraints effective teaching and learning in higher education. By embracing diverse pedagogical approaches, fostering active engagement, and integrating technology, educators can create enriching learning environments that cater to the varied needs of students. Institutions must prioritize academic support services, mentorship programs, and inclusive practices to ensure that

all students, including those with disabilities, have equitable access to educational opportunities. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and collaboration, institutions can empower all students to succeed and thrive in their academic journeys, ultimately contributing to a more diverse and equitable society. Also, the commitment to enhancing teaching and learning in higher education is essential for preparing students to meet the challenges of the future, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary for personal and professional success.

CHAPTER 4

ASSESSMENT FOR AND OF STUDENTS LEARNING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a critical component of the higher education process. Assessment aims to verify whether the students have master or learned what they supposed to learn. In other word, teaching must be assessed to determine the degree of learning. Learning and assessment are inseparable. Assessment refers to a variety of tasks by which the teacher's collect information regarding the performance and achievement of their students. Assessments serves two main purposes: One is FOR students also referred to as formative assessment and the second is OF students also called summative assessment. Formative assessment is essential part for teaching and learning, it aims to enhance learning by providing feedback and guiding students and it does not add or contributes to final marks, while summative if for certification purposes, it focuses on measuring students' achievement and determining their overall performances. Unlike formative assessment, summative assessment does contribute to the final marks. Most of the higher institution in the world William (2014) including UNAM, are more focused on summative assessment. Formative assessment ensures information and feedback during the learning process, while summative assessment occurs after the learning process has been completed and provides feedback and information regarding the process (Figa et al., 2020; Paul et al., 2016). My golden thread is integration of Assessments FOR and OF student Learning. However, the seamless integration of these two assessment types presents several challenges. This essay explores the challenges of assessment FOR and OF student learning in higher education while emphasizing the importance of maintaining a golden thread connecting them. It is largely based on my own reflection and experience of assessments and assessments practices.

4.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1.1 Social realist theory

A theory by Margaret Archer will underpin this reflection. In sociology and philosophy, social realism is a theoretical perspective that emphasizes the objective existence of social structures and their impact on individuals and society (Archer, 1995). It focuses on understanding how social structures and institutions shape behaviours, attitudes, and outcomes. Assessment OF and FOR students in higher education is a complex process influenced by various factors, including structure, culture, and agency. These elements contribute to shaping how assessments are designed,

conducted, and interpreted within the higher education context. In this assignment I am going to explore how each of these component's constraints or enable effective assessment.

4.2.1.1 Structure

The structural aspects of assessment refer to the institutional frameworks, policies, and guidelines that govern how assessments are organized and administered. These includes the formats of assessments (e.g., exams, essays, presentations), grading systems (or criteria), academic regulations, assessment schedules, and the allocation of resources for assessment-related activities. These structures often reflect the institution's values and priorities. Institutions may prioritize certain assessment methods or weightings, impacting the types of skills and knowledge emphasized in the curriculum. For instance, an emphasis on timed exams might suggest a focus on recall and time management, while project-based assessments might encourage creativity and critical thinking.

The choice of assessment structures can have a profound impact on students' learning experiences. Some structures can promote surface-level learning, where students memorize information solely for the purpose of passing exams. On the other hand, well-designed structures can encourage deep learning, where students engage with the material, connect concepts, and apply knowledge in meaningful ways. In my experience, assessments that allow for flexibility and diverse ways of demonstrating understanding tend to foster a more holistic understanding of the subject matter.

4.2.1.2 Culture

The culture of assessment encompasses the shared beliefs, values, and practices within the higher education institution. This includes the attitudes of educators, administrators, teaching, learning and students towards assessments (or evaluation). The assessment culture can influence the emphasis placed on different types of assessments (e.g., exams, projects, presentations) and the expectations for student performance. It also shapes how feedback is provided and received and the overall perception of assessment as a means of promoting learning rather than just measuring outcomes.

4.2.1.3 Agency

Agency refers to the capacity of individuals, both students and educators, to act and make choices within the assessment process. Students' agency involves their ability to engage actively in their learning, set goals, select assessment methods, and take responsibility for their academic progress. Educators' agency relates to their autonomy in designing assessments that align with learning

objectives and their pedagogical approach. Both students and educators contribute to the assessment process by providing clear guidelines and allowing flexibility through their decisions and actions. Assessments that allow for choice and self-direction can foster a sense of ownership over learning outcomes. For instance, giving students the option to select a project topic or explore a specific area of interest can enhance engagement and intrinsic motivation.

However, agency is often constrained by institutional norms and assessment requirements. Striking a balance between maintaining academic standards and allowing flexibility for individual learning preferences can be challenging.

Archer (1995) emphasised that structure, culture, and agency should be analysed separately without conflating them. There is an interplay between the three factors and the interactions between these elements can constraint or enable the assessment process in various ways. The assessment OF and FOR students in higher education is a multifaceted process influenced by the interplay between structure, culture, and agency. A balanced approach that acknowledges these elements' interactions can lead to assessments that are meaningful, engaging, and conducive to student learning and growth. Therefore, if we interplay the social realist theory, it can either result in transformation or change in form or maintaining of the status quo or stability form.

4.2.2 My experience

4.2.2.1 Before PDHE

During my undergraduate study, as a student my courses were assessed following summative assessment. In my context, we have a practical component, whereby at the end of the practical session, students are expected to go write a practical report and submit next day for it to be assessed. When it is marked you receive the report back, with mark or grade, without any proper explanation as to how that grade was obtained. There were no grading criteria, I did not know how I was assessed. I should admit here that in order for me to excel in my tests, etc, I would recapitulate all that my lecturer(s) have given me. It was all about the grades, the results, and the outcomes. This is still current practice for most part, even in these technological times.

When I was employed as a tutor in the department of Physics, Chemistry and material Science previously called department of Physics. I wanted to develop my students critical thinking and help them to apply theory to real life world. Hence, my priorities were to develop highly skilled students with a variety of attributes such as problem-solving capacity, analytical thinking, stress management, and so on. I used to tell my students that is always hard when you do not try but it

becomes easy when you try. Even though this was my driving force, I still use to assess my students the same way I was assessed because is the only way I know. As a tutor, I do not set their exam, but my duties were to interact with students during tutorial sessions, do practical's, mark test(s) just to mention few. As one of the academic staff trying to assist the learning of the students, the year 2015 we (department) have introduced weekly tutorial test at the end of every tutorial session. Whereby every group will have a different question, and we give them feedback the following week and solutions were always posted on the notice board. I recall, one week, I gave a tutorial test that consist of questions that were almost similar to the previous group. One of the students just answered what was asked in the previous group. I suspected that this student has seen the previous group test and memorize what is being asked. When I show this, it gotten me very disappointed and upset me, and I just marked the student with X. I did not ask the student whether she understood what was expected of her. I just assumed that student(s) have the tendency of memorizing, and they answer without reading what are they expected to do.

After that incidence, we have decided to withheld solutions and do not give feedback. We just give their marked scripts with grades back, but I allow them to come to my office and discuss with me where they do not understand or how the grades come about. Even though we have introduced these strategies to support our students in their learning, the grades for tutorial test were used to contribute towards their continuous assessment marks. In addition, since students were not performing well in this tutorial test, some students were discouraged and some even dropped off. Consequently, this strategy has increased my workload and is time consuming, because for one to produce different questions for five groups every week, requires lot of time in addition to other duties. I must stress out that before attending the module of assessment, I thought assessments was a “one-size-fits-all.

4.2.2.2 After PDHE

After this module assessment FOR and OF students in higher education it has opened my eyes. Ahaa....!! It made me distinguish the types of assessments. At first, I was asking myself, why there is OF and FOR and in capital letter, what do they mean and what am I going to learn? I did not know that there were different types of assessment, I thought assessment is just assessment. I learned that we have assessments FOR (formative assessment) and OF (summative assessment) FOR learning, my Ahaa—moment! ‘

Furthermore, I learned that student need to get feedback that is specific, positive, and constructive which would allow them to take corrective action toward improving their work. Also, I grew to realise that the “one-size-fits-all” approach was outdated and does not attend to the students’ needs

and interest. I also learned that assessments can either break or make a student and such assessments practice should be as diverse or flexible as possible to embrace and support students learning.

In the PDHE programme all the grading criteria are well defined, and it uses different methods of assessment, such as reflective writing, whereby the mentor gives developmental feedback. I, as a student, know from the onset how I am being or going to be assessed. I know exactly what I have to do if I hoped to achieve a particular grade. This is what is still absent in most higher education institution today. Students are assessed and often times handed a mark or grade, without any proper explanation as to how that grade was obtained. Students need to be provided with grading criteria, especially when preparing assessment tasks for students in order to promote transparency. Such practice should be encouraged in higher education institutions.

I must say that I am going to use what I have learned from this module and began to make steps toward encouraging a student-centered approach to learning, teaching, and assessments. In addition, I have to make my assessment authentic. I do realise the need to upgrade my teaching and assessment methods so that all students can learn, ensure that my assessments are aligned to my learning outcomes, which is indicative of CA. I will also try to practice inclusive practice to all my students. I will by all means try to adopt inclusive approach to my teaching, learning and assessment. Furthermore, I will try to see how I will adopt other method of assessments such as peer assessment, group assessment, etc in my context.

4.3 CHALLENGES OF ASSESSMENTS FOR AND OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Structure, culture, and Agency can either constraints or enable assessments. In this section I am going to discuss or disclose challenges that are experienced due to the three domains. This section will be based on my own challenges that I have encountered, what I use to hear from the corridor talks with my colleagues and what I use to hear from the students. Further, I will look at the possible intervention that enable assessments.

A. Academic integrity and dishonest: Ensuring academic integrity and preventing cheating during assessments can be a significant challenge. With the advance in technology, it has made it easier for the students to access unauthorized resources or collaborate during test/ assessment. I have some assessments that are done online, the question that always arise within me is whether the students have done or taken the assessments by themselves, or someone has done it for them. Also, the students are taking assessments such as test somewhere, and I have no control over the online assessment. In addition, some students are paying the third party to

produce/do an assessment on their behalf that they subsequently submit as if it was their own work. Because of that you will find a student who performed well in the assessments done online but when the same student is brought to write the face-face examination or an assessment such test, the student will perform very poor.

It could be good to mention there that I was in the certain WhatsApp group with students, but students were taking photos of the test questions and ask for assistance from their groupmates. Students were able to interact with each other and assist each other while taking the test.

B. Time Management and Resources: Construction of quality assessments online is time consuming, increases workload and can be stressful. In addition, administration and grading assessment can be time consuming and requires substantial resources, especially in large class. I am basing this to my experience of 2021 when there was an outbreak of COVID-19 and teaching, and assessments were done online.

I thought working and giving assessments online was going to be enjoyable, because with online teaching and assessment can be done from the comfort zone of your house or from any environment but what I get was not what I expected. I found myself sitting in front of my laptop screen for more than 8 hours. For me to put up a quality assessment of 20 questions was taking me up to 2-3 days. I have to watch movies from YouTube and follow their instruction on how to set online questions, especially those with hard science, it was really challenging. But as time goes and gaining experience, online is becoming useful and seems to reduce workload mostly from marking especially for large classes.

I would want my students to write mathematical formula online, but students lack experience, as a results multiple choice questions are mostly used for the online assessments which some students use to get high marking because they sometimes just guess the answers even though they do not understand the concept. For me to test their understanding, I have to create a quiz where they have to scan their documents and upload. This method that many students complain that sometimes the system is very slow, and it takes lot of time for them to upload and data consuming. This method a lecturer is required to do a manual grading, which is takes time especially for large class and it can be very stressful.

In addition, I am struggling to balance these assessments with other teaching responsibilities, limiting my ability to provide ongoing feedback and personalized support. More discussion

under feedback section. According to the study by Young and Jackman (2014) it found that negative attitudes of the teachers due to the lack of confidence, incompetency, fear of workload, pressure from guardians of the students or administration, time, and resource constraints do affects effective assessments.

C. Effective learning outcomes: Designing assessments that align with intended learning outcomes can be challenging. Assessments need to accurately measure students understanding and skills, which requires careful consideration of the curriculum and the students' academic level. Many students see a written assessment as the way to secure university degree.

In my experience, assessments that allow for flexibility and diverse ways of demonstrating understanding tends to foster a more holistic understanding of the subject matter.

D. Diverse learning styles: Students have different learning styles and preferences. Designing assessments that cater to various learning modalities can be challenging, as some students may excel in written exams, while others may perform better in hands on projects or presentations. Whether it is for formative assessment or summative assessment, students learning styles is being ignored by the curriculum, and hence to identify and accommodate learning style of each student may be difficulty if not possible. Institutional structures often have standardized assessments, which may limit the flexibility to tailor assessments to individual learning styles and needs.

The university policy on the assessments and the curriculum does not allow me to test the students differently. We have a “one-size-fit-all” assessment methods that UNAM focus more on one assessment method which is summative assessment, but all students may not be accommodated, as a result it compromises student abilities, as students learn differently, and no student can be compared to the other. In addition, the assessment document has the predefined formula in the curriculum how the assessments should be conducted. The university culture places more emphasis on the grades lather than learning, as a results students focus more on passing or achieve higher grades rather than on deep learning or understanding of the module concepts.

López-Pastor and Sicilia-Camacho, (2017) discussed that some teachers refuse to apply formative assessment as they believe that their students should be assessed just as they were assessed by their teachers in their student life, and this is ineffective.

E. Feedback, fair and transparency: Feedback is mostly used in the formative assessment, and it is very crucial because it helps students to understand more and improve on their learning. Unfortunately, providing feedback maybe challenging because for the limited time that the module content has to be covered, might be less or time consuming.

Toward the end of every lesson, I use to leave my students with the homework question(s) that we will come discuss next lesson before we continue where we left off. This is time consuming, because the lesson has a limited time, sometimes by the time I finish discussing those question(s) only few times remains to the end of period and this constraints feedback. And as a result, I may not finish covering the whole content. Hence forth I stopped giving feedback to the homework questions and I allowed my students to do self- assessment and come to my office if they have any questions or do not understand. I, therefore, do little examples with them in class, in order for me to save my time to made sure that I cover the entire content as specified in the curriculum.

In addition. grading criteria sometimes are not well defined. Sometimes feedback may be inconsistencies especially if multiple lecturers are involved. As a result, it hinders fairness and transparency. Consequently, feedback sometimes can be misinterpreted by the students. Whereby it makes them be too much independent on the lecturer and makes them lazy to practice or understand on their own, hence feedback can destroy or build one. For example, after every test or tutorials, I use to give my students feedback whereby I use to share with them the solution (s), some students do not take this feedback as a way to improve, but they later go and memorise those solutions without an understanding. This has forced me to an extend of stop sharing the solutions with them and allow them flexibility to come and discuss with me. Feedback is not only required or needed for test(s), quizzes etc, but also for summative assessments such as exams, or project. In this regard, sometimes lecturers tend to over-grade favourite students or under-grade unpopular students because of the problems like political pressure, administrative pressure, and nepotism. This might compromise the quality and outcomes of assessments. This is in the agreement with the study by (Hanefar et al., 2022) on implementation of formative assessment in Bangladesh. UNAM or maybe all higher institutions do not give feedback to the students for the exams. Up until now I do not know the reason why some lecturers refuses to give back or at least show the exam answer scripts to the students.

Especially students who fails needs to know where they went wrong for them to improve and learn from their mistakes. Fair and transparency is a challenge from the university.

F. Pressure: For many students, summative assessments represent high-stakes evaluations that can significantly impact their academic standing and future opportunities. The pressure to perform well in these assessments can lead to increased stress, anxiety, and even academic dishonesty. Finding ways to reduce the high-stakes nature of summative assessments while still maintaining their importance is a complex task for educators and institutions.

Institutional structures such as Performance management system could have significant impacts to assessments (both for OF and FOR). These systems are designed to monitor, evaluate, and improve various aspects of educational institutions, including teaching quality, student outcomes, and institutional effectiveness. However, these systems can also introduce constraints that influence how assessments (such as quality) are conducted and their impact on students and educators.

Lecturers may feel pressured to meet predetermined benchmarks or targets set by performance management systems. This pressure can influence the design of assessments, sometimes leading to a "teaching to the test" approach, where educators will prioritize preparing students for assessments, leading to the lowering of standards to achieve better pass rate that align with these benchmarks. Meaning that this will compromise the standards and quality of assessment of students learning. A high number of students will graduate will pass the module or graduate without the needed cognitive skills. Access without success is a hollow achievement, does little or nothing to meet Namibian social and economic needs, and if may gradually destroys/tarnish the name of the institution.

G. Institutional policies and regulation

Institutional rules and regulations on assessments could be constraints effective assessments. For example, the university has two exams, first opportunity exam (previously known as Regular exam) and Second opportunity exam (Previously known as supplementary/ special exam). A thank you to the management for relooking at some rules regarding second opportunity after many years. The university has a rule that if the student wrote the second opportunity, provided that the student attempted the first opportunity and fail, that students final mark is downgraded to 50%. The students yes are tested in the same content, but the questions are not necessary the same. Why should the student's final marks be re-adjusted to 50% if the student maybe obtained even 80%? This rule is in contradiction with proving the student

knowledge and understanding of the content that we are testing on assessments. This could also send a bad image to the prospective employers.

4.4 ENABLING STRATEGIES/ INTERVENTIONS

A. Incorporating technology: I try to minimise cheating, when I create online assessment, I create a question bank with multiple questions and questions are selected randomly and shuffled. The institutions should provide more continuous support and training on the use of online for teaching and assessment, for the teaching and learning to be effectively. I also suggest that continuous training should be given in different discipline. No faculty or school or course have the same needs. Lather than giving a general training to all the faculty or school, the training should focus on the needs of the students and staff for different disciplines. For example, members (staff and students) from Chemistry or Physics or Microbiology will have a different needs and expectations, even though they are from the same school they have different needs when it comes to the use of online teaching and assessments. I would be more interested to see my students be able to write a mathematical formula.

B. Personalize learning experiences: Different students have different learning styles, therefore a system that acknowledge different learning styles Different or different ways of assessing their students will enable the learning and assessments effectively.

Further, if students as the Agency can be given/ or allowed the flexibility to choose the assessments methods or providing input on the assessment design and their individual preferences and strength be considered, it will increase their motivation, engagement, and investment in their learning. It has been proven that assessment structure that allows for a variety of assessment methods can enable educators to choose the appropriate methods for their learning objectives.

In addition, in order to effectively enable learning and assessments in higher institutions, the student-Centered approach need to be introduced. A positive assessment culture that prioritises student learning over grades encourages the adoption of assessments that foster deeper understanding and critical thinking.

C. Emphasise continuous assessment and regular feedback: During my teaching, my focus is to equip my students to develop critical thinking and apply theory to problems. I started giving them more problems related to real world practice, where I provide them with the last answer

toward the end of every question in the tutorial worksheet. These questions are constructive aligned to their curriculum, and I want them to connect the theory and workout those questions. The main idea is not to get the correct answer but is to stimulate their thinking capabilities, self-confidence and also for the engagement between the lecturer and students and improve on their knowledge, understanding of the module content, while boosting their learning.

Furthermore, I allow my students to come and discuss with me where they do not understand or where they need clarification. This has helped my student's confidence to solve problems on their own and it has improved their learning. Students have the right to know how they performed even in the exam. In order for the students to improve and correct their mistakes or not to repeating the same mistakes, is good if the students want to see their exam script, this should be done freely and transparency.

I also introduce more continuous assessment with regular feedback throughout the semester. A student who gets regular feedback helps them to know where they went wrong and hence enhance learning.

D. Focus on learning outcomes: The learning outcomes need to be constructive alignment (CA). According to Biggs (2014), this design for teaching in which what it is intended students should learn and how they should express their learning is clearly stated before teaching takes place. If students know what they will be assessed on they will be motivated and encouraged, while boosting their learning.

On top of the strategies that I have adopted, I also, recommend an implementation of formative assessment in the curriculum to all the educators in addition to summative assessment that is currently embraced. In line with this, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) cited in Hanefar et al. (2022) recommended a shift from summative to formative evaluation in 2009, citing successful assessment as one of the most significant factors in improving learning outcomes (Bjornsrud & Engh, 2012). In their study, Harlen and James (1997) cited in Hanefar et al., (2022) argue that the real learning is something that comes through human interaction or/and exchange of ideas and actions in the real-life situation. In this regard, a study by Umer and Omer (2015) found that formative assessment helps students to grow as an 'independent learner'. Dochy et al. (1999) cited in Hanefar et al. (2022), also argue that formative assessment is a more effective way of assessing students in order to prepare them for the current competitive world.

4.5 DECOLONISING THE ASSESSMENTS

The aim of the assessments is misunderstood nowadays. The main objective of the assessment is to help students develop understanding and improve learning. Therefore, we (all educators) need to acknowledge that there is no single universal standard of success, I therefore call for revising evaluation criteria to better accommodate diverse learning styles and knowledge systems. In most often all that we (educators) focus on is the memory test through one time test all skills through paper and pen. Every student comes with own strengths, unique abilities, and different types of learning. Hence, students can be empowered to contribute their own experiences and voices through the use of alternative evaluation methods such as portfolios, group projects or self assessment. For too long, teaching and learning were teacher-centered with no real concern for what the student was expected to do. The University need to diversify assessment format, incorporating not only traditional written exams but also project based, oral presentations, reflective writing, or journals,

In addition, engaging students in the assessment design process, allowing them to co-create assessment criteria and methods, empowers them, and ensures assessments are culturally relevant and inclusive. Consequently, there is a need to create the culture of feedback in order to facilitate continuous reflection and growth instead of just grading. Furthermore, in order to ensure an environment of inclusiveness and equal opportunities for all students, educators need to take a proactive approach towards the inclusion of scholarship from different cultures as part of curriculum design and assessment procedures. Finally, it is essential to raise awareness of the colonial legacy embedded in education itself so that all students' needs, and background are adequately addressed through systematic reflection and institutional change towards a decolonized assessment regime which truly serves each student's needs and background.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the challenges of assessment FOR and OF student learning in higher education are undeniably complex and multifaceted. While formative assessment strategies provide valuable insights into student progress and offer opportunities for growth, summative assessments remain essential for measuring overall achievement. However, the tension between these two assessment types persists, often creating a delicate balancing act for educators. Moreover, the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, coupled with the increasing diversity of students and learning contexts, adds further complexity to the assessment process. Despite these challenges, it is crucial that institutions and educators continue to engage in thoughtful discussions and innovative practices to ensure that assessment remains a tool for fostering student learning rather than a hurdle to

overcome. By embracing a holistic approach to assessment and recognizing the dynamic nature of learning, higher education can better meet the needs of its students and equip them for success in an ever-changing world.

CHAPTER 5

STUDENT SUPERVISION IN RESEARCH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of higher education is continuously evolving, with an increasing emphasis on research as a critical component of academic development, growth and advancing knowledge in various studies. The outcome of the research depends on the input. As students engage in research activities, it is essential that they receive adequate supervision and guidance to maximize their potential and ensure the quality of their work. Student supervision, it is a dynamic and interactive process that involves regular communication, feedback, and collaboration between students and their supervisors, who may be faculty members, teaching assistants, or other designated personnel. Supervisors provide guidance and support in the areas of research, writing, critical analysis, and presentation skills, ensuring that students develop the necessary competencies to thrive in their academic pursuits.

Effective supervision is a critical component for the successful research in higher education, as it plays a pivotal role in guiding and supporting students throughout the research process. This essay explores the significance of enhancing student supervision in research through the lens of Social Realist Theory to analyse and reflect upon this crucial aspect of higher education. My golden thread is going to focus on the integration of social realist theory to ensure continuity and coherence throughout the student's research journey.

5.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT SUPERVISION IN RESEARCH

One of the key components of effective student supervision in research is the establishment of a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters intellectual growth and creativity. Supervision in research serves multiple purposes such as, it guides students through the complexities of their projects, provides mentorship, and fosters an environment conducive to intellectual growth. However, the effectiveness of supervision is often contingent upon various factors, including the supervisor's expertise, the institutional framework, and the socio-cultural context of the students (Halse & Malfroy, 2010). By employing Social Realist Theory, we can better understand how these factors interact and influence the supervisory relationship

5.3. SOCIAL REALIST THEORY AND STUDENT RESEARCH SUPERVISION

Social Realist theory by Margaret Archer posits that social phenomena are shaped by both structural and cultural factors, as well as individual actions (Archer, 1996). In the context of student supervision in higher education, this theory can be applied to understand how institutional policies, cultural norms, and the individual characteristics of students and supervisors interact/operate to influence the supervision process (Archer, 2000). By recognizing these dynamics, institutions can develop strategies/ mechanism to enhance student supervision effectively.

5.3.1 Structure

Refers to the institutional frameworks, policies, guidelines/procedures, and resources in which the research occurs may constraints or enable effectively supervision. Effective supervision requires higher institutions to provide adequate resources, such as access to research materials, funding, and administrative support. In addition, the quality of supervision is determined by important factors such as policies on workload, supervisor training, and student-supervisor ratios.

5.3.2 Culture

Cultural factors such as norms, values, and expectations surrounding research practices and supervisory relationships play a crucial role in student supervision and can either constraint or enable effective supervision. The academic culture within a department or institution can influence how supervisors interact with their students. For example, a culture that values open communication and collaboration can foster a more supportive supervisory relationship (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), while a competitive or hierarchical culture may hinder effective communication and limit students' willingness to seek help.

To enhance student supervision, institutions should promote a culture of mentorship and support. This can be achieved through training programs for supervisors that emphasize the importance of building positive relationships with students. Additionally, fostering an inclusive environment that values diversity can help address the unique needs of different student populations, further enhancing the supervisory experience.

5.3.3 Individual (Agency)

The actions and interactions of supervisors and students within the research environment may constraints or enable research supervision. Individual agency is central or vital to the supervision process. Both supervisors and students bring their own experiences, motivations, and competencies

to the relationship. Supervisors must be adept at providing guidance, feedback, and mentorship, while students must be proactive in seeking support, managing their time, and taking ownership of their research.

While structural and cultural factors are significant, personal autonomy also plays a vital role in the supervision process. Both supervisors and students each contribute their unique experiences, motivations, and skills to the relationship. Students need to be proactive in participating/ taking responsibility for their research, seeking support/assistance needed, and managing their time. Supervisors must excel in offering guidance, feedback, and mentorship.

Applying social realist theory to student supervision can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the challenges students face and promote practices that support equity, inclusion, and effective mentorship in academic settings.

5.4 CRITICAL REFLECTION ON MY EXPERIENCE

I am currently not directly involved in supervising students at any level, but I am going to reflect on my experiences as a student being supervised in both my undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

As a student within the research environment, I recognize how social structures have deeply influenced the dynamics of supervision. As a student, I encountered a range of supervisory styles, some characterized by a hierarchical and directive approach, where the supervisor's expertise was paramount, and my role as the student was primarily obedience. Although this method offered clear guidance and direction, it frequently hindered my critical thinking and innovation, leading to a feeling of reliance instead of empowerment.

On the other hand, I was also fortunate to experience a more collaborative and supportive approach, where my main supervisor valued my input and encouraged me to take ownership/ responsibility for my research. This method encouraged a feeling of independence and responsibility, enabling me to develop my research skills and confidence. However, even within this more positive environment, I acknowledge the slight impact of power dynamics on our exchanges. My co-supervisor, by their position and experience, held a significant degree of influence, and my perspectives and contributions were often framed within their overall research agenda. I felt humiliated, to the extent that I wanted him to be removed from my thesis. When my master was complete, he was requesting my book to go and claim.

However, as a student, I strive to create a more collaborative and equitable environment, where I value my supervisors as partners and friends in the research process. However, I was acutely aware of the inherent power imbalances that exist within the student-supervisor relationship. I was very conscious and mindful of my language and actions to ensure that I was creating a space where both (myself and the supervisor(s)) felt comfortable expressing our ideas and challenging our perspectives. I also recognise the importance of receiving ongoing support and guidance, not just in terms of research methods but also in navigating the overall academic landscape.

Through my experiences as a student, I have come to understand that the effectiveness of supervision is not solely determined by individual personalities or skills. It is linked to the broader social structures that shape the research environment. By acknowledging and addressing these structures, my supervisors used different supervision models towards a more equitable and supportive one that empowers me as a student to become independent and critical thinkers.

After attending the module of TLS4800, I have learned of the SWOT framework and V-U-C-A tool. I was also introduced to different models. In addition, I have learned that individuals' actions are guided by both internal and external factors. Waau—I have learned that it is always important to identify your internal factors and leave out the external factors because you have no control over them. Furthermore, for both students and supervisors, it is important to identify the model that will work best for them. When I become a supervisor, I am going to use the knowledge and understanding that I have learned from this module. I am going to create a friendly environment for both I and my students. Ow-yes!!! Let me not forget to mention that your action will define your output.

5.5 CHALLENGES

Some policies and regulations that are put in place can either constraint or enable effective supervision. In this section, I am going to look at the challenges encountered while relating to my own experiences as a student who is being supervised.

5.5.1 Institutional policies and regulations

Rigid institutional policies regarding supervision can limit flexibility in mentoring approaches. For instance, strict guidelines on meeting frequency or documentation requirements may hinder the development of a more personalized supervisory relationship. In addition, Policies regarding research funding, ethical considerations, and institutional guidelines can often seem opaque to

students. For instance, I recall a situation where I had faced difficulties securing necessary approvals for their research project.

Even though, UNAM has a clear policy that outlines the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of both supervisors and students. The policy needs to be reviewed, for example, the number of pages, the margins etc. Imagine a mini-thesis of about 130 pages, double spacing, 4.0 left margins, etc. Some people believe that a huge amount/volume is quality, which is not true because quality reflects how the excellence of the work/outputs. Furthermore, a big margin just increases pages that will be very costly to printing. A margin of 2.5cm on the left is appropriate for binding.

I have a colleague who studied at a university in South Africa, and she indicated that their university did not have defined pages and margins. When she shows my master thesis, she said this look like a box.

5.5.2 High Workload

High workloads can limit the amount of time supervisors have available to dedicate to individual students. This can lead to less frequent meetings, reduced feedback or dishonest feedback, and insufficient support for students who require it. In addition, A heavy workload can lead to burnout among supervisors, which can affect their motivation and ability to effectively mentor and supervise students. Furthermore, supervisors who are overloaded with administrative or research work may prioritize administrative or research responsibilities over student supervision due to workload pressures. This can lead to students feeling neglected or undervalued. This scenario is not uncommon in academia, where the “intensity of academic work can lead to diminished attention to student supervision” (Fletcher & Major, 2020).

UNAM has a workload policy that stipulates the maximum working hours of an academic. The same academic staff supervises students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. During my time in postgraduate studies, my main supervisor was the academic coordinator for the programme, he had 2 undergraduate modules and 2 postgraduate modules to lecture on the top of the five postgraduate’s student he was supervising. It has affected me as a student because, you cannot interact with him anytime and it has led to burnout whereby I was stressed, and my health condition was affected. In addition, the Performance Management System (PMS) which UNAM has introduced in 2023 requires academic staff to supervise a certain number of students which could be overwhelming

5.5.3. Time constraints

Time constraints can manifest in various forms. For example, the academic calendar often could be harsh, with deadlines intimidating for both students and supervisors. During my time as a student, from a group of 5 master candidates, I noticed that as the semester progressed, the pressure to meet deadlines often overshadowed the quality of mentorship the supervisor's could provide. I found them racing against the clock, struggling to allocate sufficient time to each student while managing their own research, teaching commitments, and administrative responsibilities. This can result in less personalized guidance, reduced feedback quality, and a lack of support for students who may need more attention. Furthermore, Insufficient time for supervision can hinder a student's academic and professional development. For example, I observed students struggled with confidence in presentation skills, partly due to the limited feedback they received. The lack of thorough preparation left them feeling unprepared, impacting their performance and overall experience.

During my undergraduate studies, the research topic was given in the final year and there is not enough time to carry out the research of quality, but rather produced substandard work, because I wanted to finish. On the contrary, in postgraduate studies, there are long process for one to get/receive the required documents such as ethical clearance and research permission.

My master's took me 4 years to complete, with which I even took a gap year because it took me more than one year to get the research permission and ethical clearance to be completed and accepted. This makes me not want to study for my PhD at UNAM, because of the long process and after obtaining these documents the time you must carry out the research is limited.

5.5.4 Lack of Funding

During my master-level studies, my research was a quantitative type of research, whereby I had to go to the field to collect samples and bring them to the laboratory for analysis. It was very saddening that I had to take a gap year because there was no money to fund my journey to collect data and buy the necessary accessories to carry out my research. Unfortunately, when we (I & supervisor) went in the field, it was unfortunate that we had to folk money out of our pockets for the accommodation and food for the second day, because UNAM can only pay for one day, while the trip was for two days.

5.5.5 Supervisors' experiences and resistance to change

Supervisors with extensive experience may develop overconfidence in their own methodologies and approaches. This can lead to a rigid supervisory style that does not accommodate the unique needs or perspectives of individual students, potentially stifling creativity and innovation in their research (Harrison & Gibbons, 2016).

Furthermore, some experienced supervisors might be less open to new ideas or emerging research trends, preferring traditional methods that they are familiar with. This resistance can limit students' exposure to contemporary practices and hinder their ability to engage with current research paradigms (Boud & Lee, 2005).

For instance, during my master level, my main supervisor preferred that I should always have hard papers when we are meeting for discussion. Whenever you send him any document, he will print it and give you comments in handwritten. He claims that, such method is easier for him and the comment line on the soft copy is hard on him to read and to follow.

5.6. ENABLING MECHANISM

The golden thread refers to a continuous and coherent approach to research supervision that aligns with the principles of Social Realist Theory. To effectively integrate these enhancements, institutions should adopt a holistic approach that involves recognizing and addressing the diverse social, economic, and cultural contexts of students. Here are some enabling mechanisms that the supervisor can apply to effectively enable student supervision.

A. Build Trust and Rapport: A trusting relationship between supervisors and students is foundational. This trust allows students to express their ideas and concerns openly, fostering a sense of belonging and security. Supervisors should actively engage with students, demonstrating empathy and understanding of their unique challenges.

According to Harrison and Gibbons, (2016) a supervisor who build a good trust and rapport with their students helps the students to feel more comfortable discussing their ideas and concerns, which is essential for effective supervision.

B. Cultural Awareness: Supervisors should learn to understand the cultural backgrounds of their students. This includes recognizing the values, beliefs, and practices that influence students' learning experiences. By being culturally aware, supervisors can create a more inclusive environment that respects and values diversity.

C. Fostering a collaborative learning and supervision environment: Creating opportunities for collaboration among students from different backgrounds can enhance learning and supervisory experience. Supervisors can facilitate this by organizing group discussions, workshops, or peer review sessions that allow students to share their perspectives and learn from one another, fostering a sense of community and mutual respect.

Furthermore, in the world of technology, students and supervisors might be far away from each other, but digital tools such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc made it easier for people to connect. Therefore, institutions should prioritise training and support both supervisors and students.

D.Flexibility and Adaptability: Different students have different needs and recognizing that each student has different needs and learning styles is crucial. Supervisors should respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodate varying research styles, address equity and inclusion, and adjust to the dynamic nature of academic research to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to engage in research activities and benefit from close supervision. Supervisors should adopt a flexible approach, offering personalized guidance and resources that cater to individual circumstances (McCallin & Nayar, 2012). This tailored support can significantly enhance student engagement and motivation. For instance, a supervisor who acknowledges the socio-economic challenges faced by a student may offer flexible deadlines or additional resources to help them navigate these obstacles. Furthermore, a supervisor who is willing to adjust his/her supervision methods/ models (responsive to change) based on individual student needs and circumstances can lead to more effective outcomes. Consequently, a flexible supervisor may modify meeting schedules, provide different types of feedback, or extend deadlines to better support a student's progress. This personalized approach enhances the effectiveness of supervision by addressing the unique challenges faced by each student (Lee, 2008).

E. Fostering effective Communication and regular feedback: Communication is very vital, in student supervision. It Establish open lines communication between supervisors and students fosters trust and ensures that expectations are understood. When students feel comfortable expressing their concerns or challenges, they are more likely to engage openly and honestly. Consequently, communication encourages students to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences. This dialogue can lead to deeper insights and a more collaborative learning environment.

In addition, a major role of the supervisor is to coach the student and timely feedback is effective to enable effective supervision. A student would not want to wait for a longer period for feedback. Therefore, providing timely and constructive feedback helps students identify areas for improvement and reinforces positive behaviours.

Research by Hattie and Timperley (2007) indicates that feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning. Therefore, fostering a culture of open communication and feedback among students and supervisors can lead to improved research outcomes. Institutions can facilitate this by organizing regular seminars, workshops, and peer review sessions that promote collaborative learning.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Student supervision plays a crucial role in enhancing students' research capabilities and fostering their academic development in higher education. By applying the principles of Social Realist Theory, educators can create a collaborative and supportive learning environment that empowers students to engage in research effectively. Through effective supervision practices, students can develop essential research skills, critical thinking abilities, and a deeper understanding of academic inquiry. By prioritizing the enhancement of student supervision in research, higher education institutions can cultivate a culture of academic excellence and research innovation among undergraduate students.

CHAPTER 6

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is one of the important aspects in education. Henson (2015) referenced in James Macdonald who defined curriculum as “planned actions for instruction”. Henson (2015) also quoted other writers who defined curriculum as ‘school planned experiences’, ‘all learning opportunities provided by the school’, ‘experiences that students have under the guidance of the lecturer,’ and ‘planned or formal specification of content to be taught.’ The term Curriculum is very dynamic, very confusing to define, but in this essay, I define curriculum as the document that contains academic content and a guidance or instructions of what the lecturer is expected to teach in a specific programme or course. In all the given definitions, the common factors show that curriculum outlines what will be taught or rather, what we teach and hence what the students will experience. An effective curriculum should reflect the philosophy, goals, objectives, learning experience, instructional resources and assessments that compromise a specific program. An effective curriculum is the one that meets the needs of the students and industry, current demands of the culture, the society and of the population being served and it focuses on the development of accessible interactive curriculum materials. In other word, effective curriculum is the one which is responsive. Because the need of the country keeps changing, hence higher education institutions such as the University of Namibia (UNAM) also keep changing/ transforming their curriculum to meet up with the demands of the society. Higher education institutions are regarded as as the primary institution of knowledge, whereby students are made to be independent, competent, and empowered with the relevant skills that they need to perform a certain work/job.

Most of our students who have completed undergraduate course in Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Physics did not secure job in the field, as a result they have shifted to Education courses to become teachers or other careers where they could secure job easily. The question will be why our undergraduate fails to secure job in the career they have chosen first? Could it be that our curriculum is not responding to the needs and demands of the employer? Are our students not equipped enough with the skills they need to have to perform job out there? Moreover, Physics first year modules always have a low pass rate. The blame always comes to the lecturer. The question is, is the higher failure rate associated with poor/ ineffective teaching and learning or it’s linked to poor curriculum development/ planning? Furthermore, the number of students showing interest to study Bachelor of Physics is dropping every year. To improve the quality of education, curriculum documents

always undergo reviews after certain years. For proper curriculum implementation to yield good results in tertiary institutions, it must be effective and properly planned to be in tandem to the societal needs. The university of Namibia have been with the norm of revising its curriculum every after 5 years.

Due to the introduction of Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level in 2021, UNAM undergone curriculum transformation, hence Bachelor of Science in Physics was also transformed in order to provide the students with a strong foundation in Physics and Mathematics and related important fringe skills that are relevant to the 4th and 5th Industrial Revolutions. The goals of science education can include preparing today's students to become future scientists, or science teachers or rendering them capable of responsible decision-making in terms of economic, social, and environmental concerns. Furthermore, research in physics and the principles involved in many advanced technologies and devices make a physics establishment vital for any advanced economy. Physics lies at the core of our intellectual understanding of all aspects of nature and at the foundation of many of the other sciences. Consequently, Curriculum changes are intended to improve the quality of education for the benefit of students and lecturer. Curriculum transformations comes with many benefits such as it helps to meets the needs of students, Articulating the strengths of a program; Identifying specific actions to address gaps within an academic program; Increase discussion and collaboration between instructors and others who play a role in the program and Improve teaching and learning practices, it also comes with some challenges and thus this chapter is going to focus or highlights the challenges that constraints the effective implementation of the curriculum at UNAM. Ineffective curriculum implementation means ineffective teaching and learning. My golden thread is from a passive to an active curriculum development practitioner or tutor.

6.2 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

For the duration I have been employed, I never valued my self to be someone who can or an assert to take part in the curriculum development or transformation. I always follow and adopt to what is implemented, even though I do that with lot of challenges. My main task was to make sure that I deliver what is expected from me. I did not know that curriculum document and course outline were the same thing. I used to provide my students with course outline whereby I clearly show the test dates, prescribed textbook, and content to be covered.

After a one week of attending a module, Curriculum development in higher education (TLC 4800), it opened my mind, and it made me realise how important is for the lecturer or everyone who is involved in teaching to be part of a curriculum development process. It brought out the confidence

in me that in future when there is curriculum transformation or review , I should be involved than just accept or take what others have developed. I also, learned that students need to be involved in curriculum development, this was an “ahaa—moment” for me and I still have questions on how can the students be involved if they are the receiver of what is being adopted/ implemented?

I am determined to learn and understand my role in handling my students in a more creative way. Even if there are changes in the curriculum, I am willing to adopt to these changes so I can give the best possible instruction to my students. As a part of curriculum change, I will be the one to guide my learners on the knowledge they need to adopt and learn in a specific time. As I believe that a teacher plays an integral role in planning, implementing, and innovating the curriculum, I am determined to become a catalyst of change and work in the frontline to achieve our goals successfully.

6.3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature review starts with discussing the social realist theory. Further, I move to decolonising curriculum. Later I look at the challenges to effectively implements curriculum and lastly, I will look at the strategies to enable effective implementing curriculum.

6.3.1 Social realist theory

Archers’ social theory as an analytical tool that can be used by the academic development (AD) practioners to understand the social context (i.e. Higher education curriculum development). Margaret Archer's Social Realism Theory is relevant to this study because it unveils the structural, cultural, and agential constraints and enabling mechanisms to the revised curriculum implementation at UNAM.

6.3.1.1 Structure

Ensuring effective curriculum implementation is crucial, so it's important to include supporting mechanisms within structures. In higher education institutions, structures like committees, policies, finances, human resources, and infrastructure play crucial roles. For instance, organisations committees establish limits on which individuals should attend specific meetings or events where crucial decisions related to curriculum implementation, and their impact on both students and society, are made. In addition, there are different stages/ cycles that the curriculum goes through before being implemented, hence the template that is being used keeps changing.

6.3.1.2 Culture

The culture is visible through the discussions employed by certain individuals and performers during a specific period. Conversations exist and can either limit or support the execution of a curriculum in a specific setting. Culture is the way individuals perceive things and can affect certain individuals to either allow or restrict actions. Effective implementation of the revised curriculum may be constrained or enabled by the culture within a social context. Glatthorn (2000), argues that in most cases when curriculum reforms are being considered, teachers' beliefs, views, values, practices, and interests are not normally considered by policymakers.

The curriculum developers assumes that students are well advised in technology, hence very minimal or no training is offered to them on how use technology tools or platforms.

Yes, is true that students are more advanced on technology, but they spend more of their time on social media doing other things rather than learning educations platform. Hence more training is required for the students.

On the developing of curriculum, there is a culture of *top-bottom approach*: A person without knowledge or skills is instructing you to come up with the curriculum and they give you unreasonable deadlines which has an impact on quality of curriculum. Therefore, the culture is that if the person on top or coordinating (managerial power) says do, you just must do it. Some lecturers including myself become only the receiver and are not involved in development of curriculum.

Lecturer involved in decisions regarding teaching and learning unfortunately they are not the same people who develop the curriculum.

Debates on teaching, such as who decides what to teach and how to teach it, are contentious matters that need careful handling in higher education. People that develop curriculum have a tendency of them to be known. They want to be known of who established what without knowing/ testing whether it is working, it is suitable.

Another cultural discourse is the *issue of trust among staffs*. There is a culture whereby a staff within the same department trust more on the other. Is vey difficulty to find a staff from another department or faculty going to engage or ask something to a staff of different department.

Implementing curricula should consider local cultural norms. This means that postsecondary education should be used to change how individuals act to develop graduates who are favourably

repping the society. If the curriculum is not reflecting the immediate need of the environment, the products of such education will not be justified as educated people since their behaviour will be anti-social. When this happens, the aim of the education is defeated, and the graduates will not contribute meaningfully to the society in line with development. For a meaningful education to be achieved there must be a relationship between the learned outcome and the values and norms in the society for the behaviour of the graduates to be in tandem with what the society upholds (Isife & Ogakwu, 2019).

6.3.1.3 Agency

In the context of higher education, agency are academic staff (lecturer's), HoD's, Dean's. Lecturers are the critical element in the implementation of a curriculum (Angula, 2015). Amunkete (2020) suggested that lecturers have a significant role in directing curriculum designers by identifying the requirements of students, lecturers, and society. However, at HE, the HoD or someone who hold a certain title such as Professor or Doctorate are the ones who are supposed to handle all tasks. Unfortunately designing a curriculum does not need to depend on the qualification, but rather be developed in such a way that it responds to the society and students needs. Ultimately leaving this in the hands of the HoD that are already overloaded, and they are given tight deadlines, will lead to producing ineffective curriculum and because they have a lot in their table. It is therefore crucial that HoD's deploy/task staff, teaching allocation, etc. These agency must have the required abilities and characteristics to effectively carry out their roles in implementing different aspects of the revised curriculum.

6.3.2 Decolonising curriculum

Curriculum should be responsive, and it should be constructively aligned. Decolonizing the curriculum entails confronting and unlearning ingrained biases that exist in academia. It entails having awkward but important conversations that cause institutions to internally reflect on what they consider to be authoritative information, how this is delivered to students, and the impact that this has. Additionally, it's about giving staff and students the tools they need to select or develop curriculum of their own communities for teaching and learning (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Decolonising curriculum does not only reshape educational content but also influences personal growth and understanding. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, "decolonization is not a metaphor," and this sentiment resonated with me as I witnessed the tangible impact that thoughtful educators could have on students' understanding of complex issues. Decolonization in education is a collective responsibility that requires the commitment of educators, students, communities, and

policymakers. It is not a destination but an ongoing process of reflection, learning, and action. By embracing diverse perspectives and challenging dominant narratives, we can create educational environments that are more equitable, inclusive, and reflective of the variety of human experiences.

As we move forward, it is essential to recognize that decolonization is not just about adding new content to the curriculum; it is about fundamentally rethinking the ways in which knowledge is constructed and shared. This involves questioning who gets to tell the stories, whose voices are amplified, and how power dynamics shape our understanding of history and culture as emphasised by Ladson-Billings (2014) .

In this context, educators must be willing to engage in difficult conversations about race, privilege, and systemic inequities. By fostering a culture of openness and vulnerability Ladson-Billings (2014), we can create spaces where all students feel valued and empowered to share their own narratives. This not only enriches the learning experience but also cultivates a sense of belonging and community among students.

Furthermore, the role of educators as advocates for social justice cannot be overstated. By actively seeking out and incorporating diverse perspectives, educators can challenge the status quo and inspire students to become critical thinkers and change-makers in their own communities. This transformative approach to education has the potential to reshape not only individual lives but also the broader society. As Gay (2010) emphasizes, “culturally responsive teaching” acknowledges the importance of students’ cultural backgrounds in shaping their learning experiences. By aligning the curriculum with students’ lived experiences, educators can enhance engagement and motivation.

Finally, the decolonisation of education is a vital endeavour that calls for collaboration, critical reflection, and a commitment to justice. By working together to create inclusive and equitable learning environments, we can honor the diverse histories and experiences that shape our world and empower future generations to navigate its complexities with empathy and understanding

6.4 CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTING CURRICULUM EFFECTIVELY

Developing curriculum is not an easy task, hence there are challenges that affect implementation of curriculum effectively. These challenges are lack of training and knowledge; lack of infrastructures, funding and resources (human and physical resources), lack of communication; etc.

6.4.1 Lack of infrastructures, funding, and resources

From my experience, I understand no meaningful teaching and learning take place without adequate resource materials. This applies to curriculum implementation as well. Mkandawire (2010) asserts that poor funding and a lack of resources can have negative effects on the implementation of curriculum. In addition, a study by Mandukwini (2016) indicated that there are numerous consequences of underfunding that can be seen in implementing curriculum. The lack of resources required for effective teaching and learning might stymie curriculum implementation. Textbooks, teacher's reference materials, and the availability of technology equipment are only a few examples of these resources. By providing vital materials, teachers may concentrate on educating their students rather than looking for materials they don't have (Mandukwini, 2016). According to Mkandawire (2010), the lack of or insufficiency of teaching and learning materials can be a major roadblock to curriculum implementation.

The edition of the prescribed textbook for the General physics I was not available on campus library or campus bookshop. I asked my colleague who bought the soft copy. Due to copy right, I can not share the soft copy with students. As a result, this is constraint to teaching and learning, thus curriculum cannot be implemented effectively. Consequently, Physics modules have a practical component, some practicals could not be done because of the lack of equipment's required for those practicals. The availability and quality of resource material and the availability of appropriate facilities have a great influence on curriculum implementation.

Most of our students depends on NSFAP fund, which pays toward the end of the year and sometimes they a year will pass without receiving the fund, as a result they cannot be able to buy/ acquire the resources such as textbooks they needed. Internet is also an hinderance, because not all the students have resources such as laptop, data needed for them to go to internet.

Furthermore, the component of practical is affected. When students are carrying out experiments in laboratories students are affected, where they are always overcrowded at one set up due to not enough equipment's as a result, they are not able to practice or carry out experiment effectively, and this is an hinderance or factor to implement curriculum effectively.

6.4.2 Lecturer-students ratio

First year undergraduate Physics modules are always overcrowded. This module is not only offered to students who are pursuing their studies in pure sciences but is a service module(s) to other School such as Education and Agriculture.

Students require more supports from the lecturer in the revised/ transformed curriculum. But, with the imbalance of the teacher to student ratio this is making it difficult for the lecturer to offer equal support to all the students. In addition, students have different pedagogical style, thus no one way of delivering is fit for all students.

Numerous authors in literature have made similar observations. According to Tambulukani (2014) cited in Mothowanaga and Gladwin (2021), crowded classrooms hinder lecturer-student interactions. Lecturers, for instance, failed to focus on specific students with learning impairments. Due to congestion in the classroom, the workload of the lecturers was also increased (Makunja, 2016).

6.4.3 Lack of Communication

When the newly transformed curriculum kicked off, it seems there was no awareness made to other faculties where the service module(s) is/are being offered. As a results when students were registered for the year 2023, students were registered for the wrong modules than later were deregistered. Students found themselves being moved from right -left- centre. Because there was a lack of communication of what modules should take depends on their grade 12 level.

I remembered I found myself seated in a meeting with my Head of Department (HoD) regarding this issue, where students were deregistered and registered to other module(s) after about four weeks of attending lectures. Students were in confusion as they found themselves with timetable clashes. After the communication with the other faculties where this module(s) is/are also being offered, some students were again registered back to my module, while missed classes for almost two weeks again. Imagine how frustrated students were and how much content did they miss? This has caused confusion and demotivated students of which some just cancelled the module(s). Therefore, lack of communication is a contributing factor to effectively implement curriculum.

6.4.3 Environment and attitudes

New curriculum is accepted differently by the students and lecturer. With the changing in social world, whereby technology is dominating. Most students see the transformed curriculum to be very costly, as the students are required to learn more on their own then depends on the lecturer.

I did not well accept the newly developed/transformed curriculum. I feel the newly introduced curriculum is more challenging. I also feel that Bachelor of Physics seems to focus or train students more on one field of study than developing our students to variety of fields.

From what I use to hear from the mere talk of students and parents, they are more confused with the newly curriculum and worried whether they will be able to secure job upon completing their studies.

Lecturers are demotivated, because off too much pressure that the managements or to say top to bottom power. People at the bottom are expected to do more with less resources or incentives.

A study conducted by Makewa and Ngussa (2015) suggests that teachers' motivation is a key element in the implementation of the curriculum as a process of change. Unfortunately, the teachers' freedom and innovation are being restricted more and more by the rules and guidelines from the higher offices such NQA, NCHE , and teachers are required to accomplish more tasks with limited resources and incentives.

6.4.4 Lack of Time

As an educator, the content on the curriculum is a lot to be covered in one year and this impact both the students and the lecturer, regarding the time to deliver and assess and the time for the students to master or understand the content as required.

General Physics I & II module has about 24 chapters, and this need to be taught in about 14 weeks. As for the students who are studying online or say distance students, a lecturer is required to produce/ merge 24 chapters to 7 units with limited pages.

The template/ format to be used keeps changing all the time, at the same time the format is a one size fit all which can be time consuming by trying to figure out what to include in order to make sure that the curriculum and the objectives are specific and clearly understood.

6.4.5 Lack of training, technology, and knowledge

The interpretation of the curriculum policy into practice depends essentially on the teachers who have the influence to change meaning by means of numerous different teaching methods. This requires that they have the knowledge, skills, positive approach, and passion for teaching.

Lecturers are not aware of their roles and are overlooked or not viewed as valid in curriculum process. Conveners were selected regardless of whether they have skills or knowledge about curriculum transformation/ design/develop and sometimes the process they must follow is unclear. On the other hand, in any curriculum implementation process not all teachers will have the chance to be involved in these processes.

The quality of the teaching profession has decreased because of the fast growth of the education system and high unemployment rates. Therefore, a lack of professionalism exists. Individuals become educators not due to their passion for teaching or a strong desire to educate, but rather because they were unsuccessful in securing their preferred positions in alternative industries. Their dedication to educating and growing their students is uncertain in these situations. Thus, kind of people they lack skills and knowledge and some they do not understand the subject content and they choose what to teach from the curriculum and leave out some content.

“Most of Science undergraduates did not secure jobs hence they went into teaching profession to secure jobs” The question is are they well equipped with the subject content, relevant skill and knowledge?

According to Alade (2011) and Josua et al.(2022), “the main reason for the failure of the well-formulated curriculum is the lack of understanding of the changes by both the experts outside and teachers inside the school system”. Therefore, the successful implementation of the curriculum requires understanding the roles and the responsibilities of individuals in the higher education system.

Erstad and Voogt (2018) claim that technology is one of the contributing factors to ineffective curriculum implementation. Technology is regarded as essential to the implementation of 21st-century courses. Technology as a social component is therefore integrated into the prerequisites and justifications for new curricular changes as societies become more and more digital in all spheres of social life. Because curriculum cannot function well without it, technology may be a challenging hurdle to overcome. The assessment is carried out with the use of technology.

Curriculum ingenuity have an effect in curriculum implementation. There are some modules that are offered as service modules to other programmes such as those doing Agriculture, Education etc. The curriculum content that is designed for students pursuing course such as Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Engineering may not be relevant to the other students or they may not need all that content, hence the students will not be able to acquire the understanding they need. Therefore, the way knowledge is structured is very important.

6.4.6 Type of leadership

The leadership in power is the policy maker who decides on the nature of the curriculum to be implemented. The execution of the curriculum will be badly impacted by certain instructors' lack of dedication, lack of discipline, loose professional standards, poor curriculum mastery, and other

factors. Furthermore, leadership that is influenced politically will affect implementation of curriculum, for example during the curriculum design stakeholders are being consulted to see whether they are supporting the curriculum, they will respond being in support of the programme. But once the curriculum is implemented, the same stakeholder would not want to employ the graduates saying they are not fit and not meeting the needs for their industry. Even though we have a well planned curriculum on paper, because of political powers there is no action.

“People from external are viewed more valid than the internal people. As a result, the external people will leave us with some documents that are not talking/ corresponding to our institutional demands”

6.5 STRATEGIES TO ENABLE CURRICULUM EFFECTIVELY

To overcome the challenges and for the curriculum to be implemented effectively, I suggest the following enabling mechanism:

1. The higher institutions can try to use their own people / internal sources develop the curriculum than getting/ relying on the external sources. Consequently, training is very important. Lecturer should be trained or be equipped with necessary skills needed to develop curriculum and they should be more actively involved because they are more involved in teaching and learning.
2. For the officially designed curriculum to be fully implemented as per plan, the government or Ministry of higher education and stakeholders should supply the institutions with adequate resource materials such as textbooks, laboratories equipment's etc, and helps with funds to enable lecturers and students to play their role satisfactorily in the curriculum implementation process.
3. It is crucial for the educators to be inspired in order to support the effective execution of the curriculum. Nevertheless, educators must participate in the development of policies focused on implementing curriculum changes, and their opinions should be considered.
4. For the lecturer to be able to translate curriculum intentions into reality, it is imperative that the lecturer understand the curriculum document or syllabus well to implement it effectively. Lecturers must be involved in curriculum planning and development so that they can implement and modify the curriculum for the benefit of their students.

5. Create awareness among lecturers about the newly transformed curriculum for them to be able to help the students. For example, a student might come with the need of which module to register, but if that lecturer/ HoD/Dean etc. have no information about that that student will go without some help. Therefore, if awareness is being created it will equip the person with knowledge.

6.6 CONCLUSION

Developing, designing, and implementing a curriculum is not easy task—especially in the evolving world with technology . A curriculum that is not constructively aligned will pose challenges to students. By integrating the social realist theory, the educators will understand the importance of creating an inclusive and relevant educational environment in higher education. This approach will foster a more meaningful learning experience that resonate with all students. This approach not only enhances student engagement but also prepares them to navigate and contribute to an increasingly complex and interconnected world. As higher education continues to evolve, embracing social realist principles will be essential in developing curricula that truly reflect and serve the needs of all students. Effective curriculum development is essential for fostering an inclusive and relevant educational environment that meets the needs of a diverse student population.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 : STUDENT PROFILING

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS, CHEMISTRY AND MATERIAL SCIENCE

NUCLEAR PHYSICS STUDENT PROFILING

This student profiling activity is designed to gather information which will be used to develop appropriate learning approaches and explore opportunities to make your educational experience more productive.

PART 1

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Name and Surname	
Student number	
Age	
Sex	
Marital status	
Citizenship	
Ethnic group	
Race	
Mother Tongue	
Degree currently being pursued	

SECTION B: LIVING ARRANGEMENTS (TICK APPROPRIATE WHERE NECESSARY)

Area of residence	
With parents	
With relatives other than parents	
On campus	
Rented housing	
Own home	
Conducive to studying (yes or no)	

SECTION C: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

OWN PRIVATE FUNDS	
NSFAF FUNDING	
OTHER (INDICATE)	

SECTION D: HEALTH

Disability (yes or no)	
Vision problems (yes or no)	
Hearing problems (yes or no)	
Chronic health problem (yes or no)	

PART 2

SECTION E: PREFERRED LEARNING STYLE

Choose the answer which best explains your preference and tick the box next to it. Please tick more than one if a single answer does not match your perception. Leave blank any question that does not apply.

- Have you participated in the following learning activities before? Mark all those that apply
 - ☐ Teamwork/ groupwork
 - ☐ Presentation/Field trip
 - ☐ Research project
 - ☐ Others

If others specify, _____

- Have you used any online learning management system before (e.g., Moodle)?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

Question 3-9, use the chart below to indicate how often the sentence applies to you.

1	2	3	4
Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never

	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
3. I can remember best by listening to a lecture that includes information, explanations and discussions				
4. I prefer to see information written on the board and supplemented by visual aids and assigned readings				
5. I do best in academic subjects by listening to lectures and go online to watch Youtube.				
6. I chew gum, smoke or snack while studying.				
7. It helps me to look at the person while listening; it keeps me focused.				
8. It is better for me to get work done in a quiet place.				
9. I study and put more effort in my courses				

SECTION F:

10. What are your expectations in this module and how you choose to fulfil them?

11. Are the learning objectives in align with your expectation?

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE ON INCLUSIVITY

PERMISSION LETTER



Introduction and Authorization Letter for Diploma in Higher Education Students

To Whom It May Concern: The Vice-Chancellor / Dean of Students/ Director of/
Chief Executive Officer/ Students

From: Dr. C. K. Haihambo Ya-Otto

Head: Department of Applied Educational Sciences

Faculty of Education and Human Sciences

University of Namibia

Fax. (061) 2063980

E-Mail: chaihambo@unam.na

Tel. +264 81 149 2257 (mobile)

Tel. +264 61 206 3785

Subject: **Diploma in Higher Education Institutional Inclusive Education
Audit Research**

Date: **15 May 2023**

Dear Managers and Students in Higher Education,

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Diploma in Higher Education, students who pursue the course inclusivity in Higher Education, are required to apply the theories they learn at the University by studying higher education institutions to help them understand the realities on the ground. The students have to select any educational institution in order to do an institutional audit in relation to inclusivity of their selected institutions through a mini-research. The students will conduct a small-scale research by doing interviews and/or administer a survey with staff and a few selected students, observe teaching and learning; consult with experts in the institutions; and write an academic report. Depending on the focus area each

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individual student has selected, some might need to consult with more key players in your institution. The students are aware of the ethical conditions and confidentiality requirements of research and are committed to adhere to them. To a limited extent, they might need to make use of the institution's resources to gain access to information in order to fulfil the requirements of this academic exercise. Please grant them your permission and assistance they may need. The students will, upon completion of their mini-research, come and share their findings to your institution.

As partners in shaping our students, we value your voluntary participation in this activity.

Ms./Mr. Mrs. Monica Nambingo student number:

200970941 has chosen

University of Namibia (Name of Institution) for this task. We would like to assure you that the information the students acquire will be used only for academic purposes and no names or pictures that compromises the image of the institution or their stakeholders will be published. Should you have any doubt, please do not hesitate to contact me at the address above. The students will present a student card or any document confirming that they are registered University of Namibia students.

Thank you for your kind understanding and cooperation.

Yours truly,

Dr. C. K. Haihambo Ya-Otto

Senior-Lecturer Department: Applied Educational Sciences

STUDENTS WITH DISSABILITIES

SCHOOL OF SCIENCE					
BSC in Math(Stats)	Full time	Main Campus	4 th year	Extra time exams/test. Laptop	Physical
Computer Science study	Full Time	Main Campus	2 nd year	Extra time	Physical Disability
BSC. Microbiology	Fulltime	MAIN	4 th year (repeat)	Extra time	Social Anxiety Disorder
B.sc Physics	Fulltime	MAIN	4 th year	Extra time	Social Anxiety Disorder
Applied biomedical	Fulltime	Main	2 nd year	Laptop	Physical/ amputee
Masters of science (biodiversity management & research)	Fulltime	Main	1st year	Laptop/ lip reading/ Extra time	hearing Impaired
Masters in Applied statistics and demography	Full time	Main	1st Year	Extra time	Physical disability

Assignment for Inclusivity in HE 2023

Lecturer: Dr. C. K. Haihambo Ya-Otto

E-Mail: chaihambo@unam.na

Conduct a Survey in your HE Institution to Determine Educationally Marginalized Groups and Policies in HE Institutions to Support their Inclusion

- Work with Student Affairs and other relevant offices to get statistics on Educationally Marginalized Groups.
- Choose one to focus on.
- Identify students: Interview them.
- What challenges do they face?
- What support do they need?
- What support do they receive?
- Recommendations

- Go back to Management.
- Does the Institution have policies in line with inclusive education?
- Name policies and their aims and provisions.
- What are their achievements and challenges.
- Report
- Submit your report on Moodle. Discuss and propose a submission date.