

**THE KHOMAS REGION SECONDARY SCHOOL LIFE SKILLS
TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR ROLES AND
RESPONSIBILITIES WITH REGARD TO LEARNERS
DEVELOPMENT**

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the perception of secondary school Life Skills teachers in Khomas Region regarding their roles and responsibilities to promote learners' development was investigated. After independence the government wanted to bring equality in education as seen in the introduction of a policy document: "Towards education for all: A development brief of education, culture and training." In this document the government clearly states "... to provide education for all, we must expand access to our education system. For that, we need not just more schools but other educational programmes where learning is accessible to all Namibian learners". As a result, more educational programmes were introduced. Guidance and counselling was one of these educational programmes extended to all schools since 1994 through the Directorate of Special Education.

To implement the programme, each of the seven educational regions was provided with two professionally trained school counsellors. The regional counsellors were tasked with Life Skills teachers' training in basic counselling skills and psychometric test administration as one of their duties. Against this background, this study was conducted to investigate the Life Skills programmes in secondary schools in the Khomas Region from the teachers' perspective, delving on teachers' understanding of their guiding and counselling roles regarding learners' development.

A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 22 schools with 55 participants. Some of the major findings based on the Life Skills teachers' perceptions were as follows;

- Life Skills teachers carried out various roles and responsibilities under the identified four broad categories; namely, personal, educational, social and vocational development. An overwhelming majority of the respondents**

regarded it as being important or very important for them to carry out their roles and responsibilities to promote positive learners' development.

- The study further showed that the majority of the respondents felt competent enough to teach Life Skills.
- The vast majority of the Life Skills teachers concurred that they are also faced with the following multiple obstacles which are a hindrance in the smooth running of this valuable programme;
 - ✓ Lack of well equipped counselling rooms.
 - ✓ Inadequate Life Skills periods as a result of prioritisation of promotional subjects.
 - ✓ Lack of interest in the programme on the part of stakeholder's e.g. fellow teachers, learners and parents.
 - ✓ Minimal support on implementation of this programme.
 - ✓ Insufficient in-service training.

It is imperative that the Ministry of Education takes note of these findings and use them to develop and implement guidelines regarding effective guidance and counselling programmes in all schools.

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Above all, I thank the Lord almighty for giving me the strength and courage to cope with the pressure of work to be able to complete the course. May the glory always be His!

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my father Obed Tjiharuka, mother Uaripi Kandjou and husband Uaire Ngatjiisiue who have always been my strength and inspiration. Without their attention, love, care and support I would never come this far.

DECLARATION

I, Meriam Utumbovandu Kandjou Ngatjiisiue, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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Date

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Background to the study

According to Grobler (1998) guidance has been offered in Namibian schools since the inception of formal education. Grobler also cites that before independence in 1990 guidance was fully implemented in a few advantaged schools in Windhoek, Swakopmund, Walvisbay, and Keetmanshoop, although the broad curriculum prescribed it to be implemented in every school in Namibia. These schools received full financial and moral support (provided with a full-time counsellor) from the colonial administration to implement the guidance programmes. This implies that only few schools in the country benefited from school guidance and counselling. In the rural schools guidance was normally reflected in the curriculum, but never implemented due to the lack of qualified teachers and funding.

After independence the government wanted to bring equality in education by introducing a policy document “Towards education for all: A development brief of education, culture and training.” In this document the government clearly states: “to provide education for all, we

must expand access to our education system. For that, we need not just more schools, but schools and other educational programmes where learning is accessible to all Namibian learners. (Ministry of Education and Culture; 1993). Guidance and counselling was one of these educational programmes to be extended to all schools since 1994 through the Directorate of Special Education. To implement the programme, each of the seven educational regions was to be provided with two professional trained school counsellors. According to the document entitled “Life Skills policy” (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1994). Regional School Counsellors were tasked with the following duties and functions:

- ❖ To render guidance and counselling services to learners;
- ❖ To execute educational-psychological related research in the area of the counselor’s jurisdiction;
- ❖ To train Life Skills teachers in basic counseling skills and psychometric test administration;
- ❖ To assess learners who show symptoms of behavioral change and loss of abilities to cope in the educational setting;
- ❖ To assist the learners with the choice of a vocational field.

In 1996 due to higher demands of learners who needed help, the directorate of special education tasked the teachers with counselling roles and implemented an in-service training program to full-time class teachers on basic counselling skills (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1996) to meet the rising demands of learners

1.2 Statement of the problem

The purpose of introducing guidance and counselling in Namibian schools was to guide learners' academic affairs such as career choice, subject choices as well as helping learners to make wise decisions in their personal and social lives. Namibia is currently faced with numerous serious social and educational problems and it is expected that schools should play a role in finding solutions in alleviating these problems. The most common problems include high failure rates, unemployment, violence, teenage pregnancies, substance abuse and HIV-AIDS. Teachers should therefore take up guidance and counselling roles effectively in order to address these problems. However, the question is whether all the teachers clearly understand the role they have to play as Life Skills teachers and whether they are adequately equipped to perform these tasks?

Apart from this, there is a need to improve on contact times on counselling sessions. Life Skills teachers do not have enough time to meet needy learners for counselling. And this gives problems to the teachers to do the follow-up work from previous sessions they may have had with the learners; since every new session they are meeting for counselling, teachers are forced to study the learners' cases again due to the time frame that may have elapsed in between sessions.

Finally, Life Skills teachers are not assured of the full support and cooperation from the government counselling staff, other teachers and parents. This makes them to feel as if the burden of learners' guidance is on their shoulders. It is impossible for them to carry out these responsibilities alone even if they want to. However, this study is aimed at investigating the guidance and counselling programmes based on the teacher's perspective focusing on their guidance and counselling roles including problems encountered when counselling learners in secondary schools within the Khomas region.

1.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

- 1.3.1 Do Life Skills teachers in the Khomas Region understand their roles and responsibilities as Life Skills teachers with regard to the learner's development?
- 1.3.2 Do they feel competent to fulfill these roles and responsibilities?
- 1.3.3 What are the specific needs of Life Skills teachers in terms of knowledge, skills and support in order to improve their services?
- 1.3.4 What problems do Life Skills teachers experience as they strive to meet the guidance and counselling needs of learners?

1.4 The significance of the study

It was hoped that the results of this study would benefit the Ministry of Education and in particular the Life Skills teachers of Namibia. For the Ministry the study may be a source of information, which may hopefully use the results to formulate policies with respect to Life Skills teacher training. The results of this study may also awaken Life Skills teachers to realize their needs in terms of skills, knowledge and resources to perform their counselling duties effectively. They may also be encouraged to expand on their current knowledge by joining professional training institutions in counselling to update their knowledge and skills.

By realizing the importance of guidance and counselling, teachers may change their attitude towards this subject and spend more time on counselling and stop using Life Skills periods for teaching other so-called "important" subjects. More and more learners may be encouraged and referred by other teachers to the Life Skills teachers for help and counselling.

1.5 Limitation of the study

The study was faced with the following limitations:

- ❖ Due to lack of sufficient funds to collect data from different schools and to print questionnaires this study was only conducted in the Khomas region and not countrywide. Therefore, the outcome of this study cannot be generalized to all Life Skills teachers because Life Skills teachers from other schools and regions might have different views, approaches and understanding about their roles and responsibilities as Life Skills teachers.
- ❖ The views of the Life Skills teachers on the questionnaires may not completely reflect the true situation of their roles and responsibilities as some may have attempted to make a desirable impression.

1.6 Definition of Terms

- 1.6.1 **Guidance** is an activity in which the teacher brings pupils or a student into contact with the world as it really is and helps them to make choices wisely in their day-to-day lives. (Lindhard, Dlamini & Barnard, 1993; Naude & Bodibe; 1990)
- 1.6.2 **Life Skills** is any skill, which enables a person to interact meaningfully and successfully with the environment and with other people (Booth, 1995).
- 1.6.3 **Life Skills teacher**: A teacher is assigned with the task of teaching learners skills that will enable them to acquire knowledge develop attitudes and skills, which support the adoption of healthy behaviour (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1994).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the views of other authors on school guidance and counselling to provide a general background for this study. The first section focuses on the meaning and aims of guidance and counselling. The second section will focus on the theoretical approaches for this study. The third section addresses the roles and responsibilities of Life Skills teachers followed by the problems they are encountering while counselling learners. The remaining section focuses on skills, knowledge or support needed to perform their tasks effectively.

2.2 The meaning of guidance and counselling and its purpose in schools

Guidance is a process, developmental in nature, by which an individual (learner) is assisted to understand, accept and use his/her abilities, aptitudes and interests in relation to his/her aspirations (McLaughlin, Clark & Chisholm, 1996). Therefore guidance can also be looked at as a programme presented to individuals (learners), which is based on the need of each individual as well as the understanding of his/her immediate environment and the influence of the environmental factors on the individual. It requires experienced Life Skills teachers to

assist each learner to understand him/her to accept him/herself and live effectively in his/her society (Naude & Bodibe, 1990).

While counselling is an interactive process with the aim of helping a person to learn more about him/her, it also helps to facilitate the personal growth of the person experiencing a problem with a view to bring about change through self-knowledge.

It is thus a process of assistance by a concerned person (Life Skills teachers) to a person (learner) in need. (Smit, Yisa, Kruger, Cloete & Dippenaar, 2005).

As stated by McLaughlin et.al. (1996) the main aims of guidance and counselling are:

- ❖ To aid learners in decision making and problem solving;
- ❖ To support learners in a constructive manner at times of difficulty;
- ❖ To monitor and detect learners who are at risk or under pressure and to react to this in an appropriate fashion.

Guidance and counselling can and does work effectively if it is properly done, for instance, it is through counselling that individual learners can be helped to change their behavior and enhance their psychological health and personal growth (Herr, 1997). Provision of proper guidance enables learners to make informed decisions in their academic and social lives. Through guidance, a learner can be helped to discover more about him or herself in the classroom. For example if a learner discovers his or her strength in certain subjects, he/she will work hard to improve his or her marks in those subjects or fields of study.

2.3 Theoretical approach

In this section a brief review is presented of the theory on which this study is based. The study is based on the developmental approach of school counselling (Thompson, 2002). This approach helps to explain why learners constantly need counselling throughout their school career.

The developmental approach to school counselling considers the nature of human development, including the maturing from one stage of life to another, for example from infant to toddler, teenager to adulthood. The developmental approach centers on self-concept. It acknowledges that one's self-concept is formed and reformed through experience and education that one gains as one is maturing from one stage of life to the other. For example an adolescent will not have the same view on self-image as an adult due to the experience that the adult has gained over the adolescent.

Self image or positive self-concept refers to the way people see themselves correctly and accept themselves as they are. For learners to accomplish appropriate life transition they need to acquire skills, knowledge and attitudes. According to this approach the ultimate objective of guidance and counselling is to help and prepare learners more effectively and efficiently through teaching them life- coping skills, which they can apply throughout their developmental stages from infant to adulthood. This means that every learner should be helped to understand him/herself as unique person growing, changing and developing in constant response to the demands of his/her cultural, social and physical environment (Behr, 1990). In order to accomplish these demands learners should constantly be assisted to know their own strength, weaknesses, abilities and values. The knowledge of self will help the individual learner to deal more effectively and satisfactory with situations which affect him/her directly and to adjust to the environment and deal with life and living. Above all the

learner should at all times choose to accept him/herself unconditionally, and care for him/herself minimal comparison with others.

In the course of development learners are always meeting new people and making new friends. Throughout the developmental stage they should be helped to recognize that human life is social and therefore they should at all time act morally and protect and respect the rights of others. A guidance and counselling programme should be concerned with preparing learners for the citizenship what will be required of them, as an adult. In a healthy environment problems which arise at home and in the community should be considered and dealt with by the school, while new knowledge, skills, attitudes and values acquired at school should be carried into the home at the same time the school should keep in mind that parents' behavior shape children's' personalities to great extent and that their parental belief system is influenced by the overall beliefs of culture, and is entwined with many other aspects of life in that society (Glassman & Hada, 2004).

The developmental approach also recognizes that feeling, ideas, and behaviors are closely linked together and that they are learned. (Thompson, 2002). Therefore the ultimate objective of a guidance and counselling programme should be to help learners to develop into mature, well-functioning and competent members of a society with life goals which they have chosen freely with knowledge of the kind of persons they are becoming and the type of society they live in.

According to Baker (2000) a developmental guidance and counselling programme should also include primary intervention and prevention programmes, to help learners with problems or developmental tasks they are facing. The main purpose of prevention is to help learners

become better prepared to cope with future events, including developmental task. On the other hand some learners are more vulnerable to life challenges and are more at risk for trouble than others. For example learners that are using drugs can be help to overcome their problems through intervention.

This approach is relevant to this study in the sense that school guidance and counselling programmes should be prepared in a way that will meet the developmental needs (personal, social, educational and vocational) of children in life and provide answers and explanations for real life situations and encounters. This means that the school guidance and counselling programme of learners at primary schools should not be prepared in the same way as that of secondary schools learners due to the differences in development and experience which will affect their need for information and help about life. The needs to be met can be within the context of the school, home, neighborhoods and communities at large. In addition, they can be based on past, present or future challenges. Emphasizing developmental guidance and counselling programmes, Life Skills teachers (or school counsellor) should recognize the need of guidance and counselling for every learner rather than concentrating merely on those in trouble since all are growing and need help and information to accomplish appropriate life transitions. In order to meet developmental needs, the Life Skills teachers must have a general knowledge of the educational needs, personal needs and social needs affecting the development of learners during adolescence.

Learners manifest their needs through their behaviour. For example they join gangs out of the need to belong or they become alienated from school because of feelings of inferiority. Using this information as a foundation, Life Skills teachers can create comprehensive school counselling programmes at their schools that meet the developmental needs of all learners

within the context of school, home, neighborhoods and communities.(Thompson, 2002; Conger, 1994).

2.4 Roles and responsibilities of Life Skills teachers with regard to learners' development

According to Thompson (2002), Baker (2000), Maluwa–Banda (1998), and Thomas (1990), Life Skills teachers have a primary obligation and loyalty towards the learners; they are to treat the learner with respect as a unique individual whether assisted individually or as a group setting. This implies that Life Skills teachers should be concerned with the total needs of learners (educational, vocational, personal and social) and should encourage the maximum growth and development of each learner. It is essential that the majority of Life Skills teachers' time should be devoted to individual or small group counselling. Here the Life Skills teachers should seek to develop in learners great abilities to cope with and solve problems and an increased competence in making decisions and plans for which they are responsible.

In order to perform this important function, Life Skills teachers should systematically identify the learner's needs and systematically develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive programme of guidance and counselling services. Such a programme should include designing a well-developed calendar of activities for the entire academic year that helps to ensure that particular needs of learners are attended to at the appropriate time and that all activities concerning the gratification of learners' needs are satisfactory completed.

This calendar should be flexible to allow rearrangement and rescheduling of events. In order to meet those different needs, Life Skills teachers should provide guidance and counselling

with regard to the learners' personal, educational, social and vocational needs. Each of those needs is therefore discussed in more detail below.

2.4.1 Personal needs

On a secondary school level, it is common to encounter friction, misunderstandings as well as isolated similar problems. This results in the violation of the needs of learners when transitioning into adulthood. The main cause of these problems dwells on the way learners view themselves as individuals. Hence, the need for Life Skills teachers to open up dialogue channels in order to share information with learners pertaining to individuality. The information sharing needs to be centered on are self concept, self knowledge, healthy personality, problem solving skills, decision making techniques and goal setting. Following is an in-depth discussion of the above mentioned.

The self-concept is formed and reformed through experience and education that one gains as one is maturing from one stage of life to the other. Life Skills teachers should help learners to know themselves and develop positive self-concepts, which is the way people see themselves correctly and accept themselves as they are. A Life Skills teacher's first job is to help learners to know themselves. They must know their strengths and weaknesses, their abilities, and they must recognize their values, which are the standards that a person set for him/herself and by which he/she judges others. (Lindhard, et al. 1993; Hopson & Scally, 1981).According to Lindhard et.al. (1993) a person with a healthy personality is someone who functions well as a person. He/she knows him/herself well as well as how others see them, and how they accept others. Life Skills teachers should help learners to develop those mature personalities seeing themselves correctly and accepting themselves as they are. To help learners to develop sound values, abilities and personalities they should be assisted to determine how much of this can

be changed, what they must do to change and accept that which cannot be changed. This will help them to make mature decisions and to develop greater coping skills, which are skills of dealing with problems of life and living (Naude & Bodibe, 1990).

Learners should be made aware that every person has personal problems caused by their physical make-up or outside factors. Problem solving skills should be communicated to them and be helped to develop in them, knowing that some problems can be solved while others can never be solved. They should know that if there is no solution then they should accept the shortcoming and live with it (Chuenyane, 1990; Lindhard and Dlamini, 1990).

It is also argued that, learners on a secondary school level need to be helped in order to deal with problems of peer pressure, hero-worshipping and false expectations. This will enable such learners to have self-understanding and fulfillment (Hopson & Scally, 1981). It is therefore the obligation of Life Skills teachers to assist each learner to develop independent decision making competences in order for them to make informed individual decisions.

Learners should be encouraged to set for themselves both short-term and long-term goals, since this will necessitate some form of commitment and motivation from their part. Goal setting should be set as directives and should activate learner's behaviour as they work towards achieving their goals.

2.4.2 Social needs

Every individual learner needs to understand him/herself, get along with others and acquire new skills in dealing with different kinds of personalities. The individual must be assisted to learn appropriate manners and etiquette, acceptable appearance and conduct, social skills and

values, financial planning and healthful living. The child must be made aware of the fact that he/she is living in society with others in home and at school. It should be communicated to him/her to live in peace and tolerance with other people. This means that a good social relationship and conduct with others should be developed in them. In order to accomplish this, the child needs social information, which refers to valid and usable information about an individual, his peers and others, which will help the learner to understand and accept him/herself and enhance his/her interpersonal relationships (Chuenyane, 1990).

The best way of getting on with other people is to show consideration towards them. This means respecting and accepting them as they are, being tolerant of their differences from you, taking a genuine interest in them and their abilities and being sensitive to their feelings. Life Skills teachers should promote in learners an understanding for people from other cultures, races, religions and customs (from all walks of life) and make them realize how important an attitude of tolerance is to a peaceful society. Make learners aware of how important it is for others to experience your acceptance through your actions, such as being friendly, smiling and doing things for other people. (Lindhard, et. al. 1993, Chuenyane, 1990)

The basis of any good relationship is trust. Life Skills teachers should prepare learners to be reliable friends. In other words, a friend who is willing to help, support and defend their friends even if others are against them, and not running them down behind their backs. They should promote in learners a spirit of sincerity. Learners should develop a spirit of keeping a balance between tact and sincerity with all their actions. Tact means to be considerate towards other people's feelings. Life Skills teachers should also equip learners with skills that are necessary for effective verbal and nonverbal communication, for example, attitudes of

empathy, genuineness, clarity in expressing ideas and opinions, and giving and receiving feedback (Thompson, 2002).

Everyone wants to fit in and be able to identify with his or her peer group but it is important not to lose your individuality. Life Skills teachers should help learners to understand that pleasing themselves is more important than pleasing everyone around them. Skills to cope under peer pressure should be given to them, for example, by learning strategies on what to do if friends do not accept and like them when they say no to them. (Lindhard, et. al. 1990)

Life Skills teachers should assist learners in the transition to adult status and to give them knowledge of sex, marriage, family organization and child up bringing (Naude & Bodibe, 1990). They should also give learners skills to improve their abilities in communicating with parents, stepparents, and siblings to bring about a more harmonious family life (Thompson, 2002). Naude & Bodibe (1990) suggested that learners should be helped to develop into mature, well functioning and competent members of society with life goals which they have chosen freely with the knowledge of the kind of persons they are, the kind of persons they can become and the kind of society they are living in. In short Life Skills teachers must prepare the learners for the future when they will be adult citizens.

2.4.3 Educational needs

The educational and vocational development of learners begins in their home as they learn the values of their families to education and to work (Conger, 1994). The process continues through their school years and never really ends. The Life Skills teachers must give guidance on immediate educational problems such as study difficulties or the choice of subjects most

suitable for a student's abilities and future career as well as the effect of current subject choices and performance on further education after school.

Learners must be helped to choose from various study methods the best that will meet their learning needs. Study methods can include surveying, reading and marking, summarizing, memorizing and repeating. Above all the Life Skills teachers must reinforce in the learners that they must realize and know that they are responsible for their study attitudes, and they must learn critical and creative thinking skills. (Mwamwenda, 1996; Grove, 1992).

All this should be done to improve learner's academic work by developing greater academic mastery and enhancing study skills. Learners should be assisted to create a timetable and use time constructively for both work and play, together with setting both long and short -term goals (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2001).

The Life Skills teachers should prepare learners thoroughly for examinations. This can be done by reinforcing in learners enough practice in the answering of questions and teach them to read the instructions carefully or to ask help if they do not understand. They should encourage learners to plan their time in answering questions to ensure that they finish in the given time. They should also know that they should be physically in a good condition before they arrive at the examination room, for example they should have enough sleep and a good breakfast and ensure that they are on time at the right examination location.

In conclusion all these efforts should be made to create educational awareness in the learners. Awareness of knowing and accepting that education is the best basis for progress and success, and they should be working hard to obtain it.

2.4.4 Vocational needs

There are literally thousands of occupations to choose from. Therefore there are many young people who are undecided and sometimes confused about what they want to do with their future. According to Cloete, Van Biljon & Landberg (1999) a career is an involving, developing, unfolding process and some changes will be inevitable as time goes by. As learners are growing they develop new skills, interest and abilities. They will meet new people and discover new talents and values.

Therefore the Life Skills teachers should adequately prepare them for this ever-changing future by giving them the needed information that will enable the learners to explore research, analyze and experience various occupations in order to make free, wise and appropriate career plans, choices and decisions (Chuenyane, 1990). In order to make informed decisions about a future career, they will need to know themselves and the world of work.

Life Skills teachers should make sure that the students know about all the possible job opportunities in the economy. They should be aware of entrance requirements to be accepted to particular jobs- for example job knowledge, skills and experience. This information should be given to them so that they can know which jobs they can choose from, as well as on how to keep it and how to get promoted. They should also know how to deal competently with changes in a fast moving world in particular with transitional change from school to work or from school to higher education. Life Skill teachers should create career resource centers at their schools.

In this career center he/she should display and disseminate the most recent career information to the learners. Information should include amongst others, entry requirements to different tertiary institutions, duration of courses, graduation requirements, institutional expectation, conditions and problems of student life. This information can be shared using brochures, prospectuses, posters and bursary lists from various institutions (Van Niekerk & Prins, 2001).

To be fully prepared to face life and the world of work, each learner must gather sufficient information about the career of their interest and file this information in a personal career file or folder so that it is available to refer back to when necessary (Cloete, et.al, 1999).

A variety of special days can be organized at the school to disseminate career information and this should be special days set aside to give learners the opportunity to make contact with the world of work and they can obtain the most recent career and study information from role models and career specialist. While on the other hand exhibitions, videos, films and other audio – visual aids can also be used (Hornby, Hall & Hall, 2003).

Life Skills teachers should share all relevant information concerning different ways of financing learner's studies. This includes aspects such as bursaries, loans, scholarships and the conditions and advantages as well disadvantages of each. Information about application procedures, budgeting and student accommodation should be provided to learners (Van Niekerk and Prins, 2001).

2.5 Problems that Life Skills teachers experience as they strive to meet the guidance and counseling needs of learners.

Life Skills teachers tend to encounter several problems almost on a daily basis, as they go on implementing the curriculum as provided for in the syllabus. This among others includes the following:

2.5.1 Time allocation and workload

Due to the limited time allocation for guidance most Life Skills teachers feel that they have insufficient time for guidance. This makes them unduly reactive in their work, forcing them to concentrate on learners in trouble or those with obvious problems at the expense of ordinary learners. (Howieson & Semple, 1996).

Naude and Bodibe (1990) argues that Life Skills teachers should not be involved in any subject teaching which limits the counselling time to be available to all learners and work with them in relation to their needs. If they are given counselling duties, Life Skill teachers should plan their counselling or guidance sessions well in advance and be, well prepared for each session with learners (Booth, 1995).

2.5.2 Record keeping

Some Life Skill teachers do not keep a record of learners. Life Skills teachers should be able to keep accurate, detailed, appropriate and organized records of all counselling sessions, meetings and discussions (Borr, Landy, Gill and Brace, 2002). These records should be clear and easy to read and should be kept in a safe and secure place. Keeping records contribute to effective guidance and are essential in case of follow-up, referral, and information sharing with other staff members or parents.

2.5.3 Lack of teamwork, communication and consultation

Most staff does not operate as a team, which advances information sharing and assistance, if practiced properly. Several teachers do not make individual contributions to help learners to achieve maximum benefit from the guidance program. General staff consider that as the Life Skills teacher's work, while Life Skills teachers value their ideas and contributions.

2.5.4 Lack of professional training in the field of guidance

Lack of training makes it difficult for Life Skills teachers to perform the counselling duties effectively to all learners in need of help. It also hinders them to administer psychological test and to perform other administrative duties related to counseling.

2.5.5 Poor understanding of roles of Life Skills teachers by subject teachers

Most subject teachers are not positive about the value of guidance and counselling, which make them uncertain about the Life Skills teacher's role and this leads to poor referral of learners for guidance. This means that Life Skills teachers attend to fewer learners.

There is also a lack of understanding and appreciation of the guidance programme from other teachers especially when a learner misses a class due to counselling sessions. Teachers tend to wonder whether it is worth it, whether the learners' work will improve as a result of counselling, or if the learners are merely using it to bunk classes or get attention or self-pity.

2.5.6 Fears and misconceptions about Life Skills teachers

The fact that Life Skills teachers know so much about other teachers and learners, make them a threat to others unless they can prove to everyone concerned that they are sincere and that all information is confidential and that they respect and value each individual.

2.5.7 Beliefs

The Life Skills teachers sometimes are experiencing problems with the beliefs learners are having about the correct ways of behavior in certain environments, (Borr, et. al, 2001) since some parents' standards may be different from the school's and this richly affect how a learner responds in the counselling session and how the learner is likely to cope with life.

2.5.8 Confidentiality and accountability

Life Skills teachers often feel uncertain about whether or not they must report certain cases to the principal or parents due to the expectations of confidentiality from the part of learners (Naude and Bodibe, 1990). Life Skill teachers are also uncertain about what they are accountable for before and after the counselling session and what the consequences of various actions might be, to the learners, parents and other learners (McLaughlin. et. al, 1996).

2.5.9 Referral expertise

The Life Skills teachers should be competent to identify and refer learners out of their domain of expertise to other professionals, such as doctors, psychologists, social workers, employment and training programme, vocational rehabilitation services, or even special school programme like afternoon classes (Jones, 2003; Van Niekerk & Prins, 2001).

2.5.10 Lack of acknowledgement of the work

Life Skills teachers need acknowledgement from other staff members, that they are doing a worthwhile and often a difficult job. They want the other teachers to acknowledge their difficult job of guidance and counselling rather than the criticism they often receive from them.

2.5.11 Misconceptions of guidance and counselling

According to Baker (2000) most learners, when they arrive at the Life Skills teachers' classroom or office, display symptoms of tension and anxiety since many learners view Life Skills teachers as disciplinarians. This situation makes it difficult for learners to approach Life Skills teachers for help, no matter how deserving it is.

2.5.12 Learners are reluctant to admit to having problems

Life Skills teachers sometimes face situations where learners deny having a problem, which make it difficult for them to offer help. Learners do this because of reasons for example not wanting their peers to know they have a problem or seeing Life Skills teachers as a threat, or a general mistrust of adults who might be their only source of help (Cowie and Percherek, 1994).

2.5.13 Lack of adequate facilities and money

In some schools, where counselling is accepted and valued, facilities which the Life Skills teachers should use are inadequate. There are no private offices or classrooms and equipment (tables, chairs and filing cabinets) where they can do effective in-depth counselling and guidance. Although the guidance programme cost are incorporated in the total school budget, special needs sometimes arise in the guidance programme that the school did not budget for and the school is refusing or is unable to provide for those needs. This can make the whole guidance programme unsuccessful.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted theoretical approaches of Life Skills teachers, illuminated learner needs and problems that need to be addressed in Life Skills teaching as well as in guidance and counseling. It is concluded that much is required, if all learners are to be effectively helped to develop holistically.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the method that was used to collect and analyze data is discussed. The chapter describes the accessible population and the sampling techniques, the type of research instruments that was used and the procedure for data analysis.

3.1 Research design

Deciding upon a research design is a process that is determined by several factors. According to Mouton (2001), factors such as the research problem, the researcher's ability, research questions, limitations, time and money, should all be considered. For the purpose of this study it was decided to use a quantitative non-experimental design.

A non-experimental design is a design where the researcher does not manipulate the situation or condition. People simply answer questions. This means that the teachers that were asked the questions were not subjected to any pre or post experiments or control groups (Yeaidis & Weinbach, 2002; Rubin & Babbie, 2001).

A survey was used to collect the data and in a survey the researcher asks people questions in a form of a written questionnaire that were hand delivered to people.

3.2 Sample

The Khomas educational region was selected for this study since it was more accessible to the researcher. All schools and all Life Skills teachers took part in this study. The study comprises of 55 teachers from 22 secondary schools. The total of 55 Life Skills teachers is based on the fact that some schools, had more Life Skills teachers than the others, ranging on average between 1-4 teachers per school (Ministry of Education, 2007). The total number of learners per school and the need of guidance and counselling determine this. Those teachers are full time teachers mainly assigned with the duty of teaching Life Skills at those secondary schools.

3.3 Research Instrument

This study used a questionnaire to collect data. The reason for selecting such a research instrument was that, with a questionnaire there was a potential of gaining first hand information directly from the respondents (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2002).

The questionnaires were divided into four major sections. The first section dealt with the biographical data of the respondents and the second section required the respondents to give their perception regarding their role and responsibilities as Life Skills teachers at school and also to indicate their competence with regard to these roles. In section 3 the respondents were asked to give their views on their specific needs in terms of skills, knowledge and support from the ministry, parents, learners and other teachers to improve their service. Lastly they were required to give their perception on problems they experience as they strive to meet the guidance and counselling needs of learners.

3.4 Pilot study

A pilot study is a small-scale trial- run of all the aspects planned for use in the main research. The main objective of the pilot study was to detect whether the research instrument was biased, not clear (could be misinterpreted) and to identify ambiguous words or terms that might cause misunderstanding or confuse the respondents. By identifying all these problems the researcher can have an opportunity to rectify them (Mitchell & Jolley, 2001). The researcher tested the questionnaire at Immanuel Shifidi School using four ordinary teachers. Results of the pilot study showed that the instrument would be suitable for the present study and all items in the questionnaire would be clear to the respondents. The fact that the questionnaire was evident and the teachers could complete it increased the validity and reliability of the study.

3.5 Ethical considerations

The researcher sought the regional director's office (Ministry of Education in the Khomas region) permission to conduct this research in the targeted secondary schools. As a result, a letter of permission was obtained to conduct the study (see appendix B). This letter was taken to the relevant principals, where the purpose of the study was discussed with the principals and permission was obtained to conduct the research with the Life Skills teachers.

After this, an appointment with the teachers was set to conduct the research. The participants' right to confidentiality and privacy was respected at all times. The researcher informed the participants as much as possible about the aim of the study before asking them to participate, as well as their rights to withdraw from the research at any time if they wanted to. The participants were also informed about their right to remain anonymous throughout this study, and the researcher did not require any personal information from the participants in the study.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher went personally to the schools and delivered the questionnaire to each participant. A covering letter, explaining the purpose and significance of the study, was attached to all copies of the questionnaire. The researcher discussed the instructions and contents of each questionnaire for clarity and understanding with the participants before they completed it. The researcher remained around the schools while the participants were completing the questionnaire and collected the completed questionnaires after completion for data analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

The completed questionnaires were coded and the data was entered into the computer using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Frequency tables, using percentages were run for the close-ended components of the questionnaire.

With regard to the open-ended questions the completed questionnaires were analyzed and responses with similarities in negativity, positivity, criticism and suggestions were grouped. Based on the grouping of responses, it was then that the responses were studied to seek similarities and differences, and these were also divided into smaller groups according to meaning. It was then that conclusions were drawn and recommendations were made for the improvement of the Life Skills programme within the region.

The chi-square test was used to determine significant relationship or differences in responses based on gender, age, experience as Life Skills teacher, school level, highest teaching qualification and training in guidance and counselling (Powers, Meenaghan & Toomey, 1985).

Chapter 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the descriptive and inferential results on the Life Skills teachers' responses regarding their roles and responsibilities in promoting learners' development. After this, a report on how competent they feel to fulfill these roles and responsibilities is presented. This is followed by a discussion on the types and quantity of materials that are

available which they use when guiding and counselling learners at their schools. After this the amount of support teachers receive from different stakeholders within the education system and the value those stakeholders attach to guidance and counselling is presented. Lastly, a report is given with regard to teachers' needs in terms of skills, knowledge and teaching materials that will improve their competence in teaching Life Skills. Tables have been used in most instances for clarity, ease understanding and interpretation.

4.1 Background characteristics of the Life Skills teachers

This research was carried out in March 2008. The target group was the 55 Life Skills teachers from the 22 secondary schools in Khomas educational region. Of the 55 questionnaires issued out, 40 were completed successfully. 10 of the remainder were not done to completion and the last 5 were spoiled.

Table 1 provides the frequency and percentages of the background variables of the Life Skills teachers who responded to the questionnaires. Variables will be discussed in the order of appearance in the questionnaires (See appendix A).

According to Table 1, of the 40 valid cases that participated in the study, 31 (78%) Life Skills teachers were female, while 9 (23%) were male. The majority of the Life Skills teachers fell in the age category of 31 – 40 years (50%), followed by nine teachers (23%) in the category of 21-30 and 41-50 years respectively. Lastly only two (5%) of the respondents were over 50 years.

Responses regarding the highest qualification obtained revealed that most of the teachers (48%) had teacher training diplomas while 35% had bachelor degrees, followed by 13% with honors degrees; and only one of the teachers had a masters' degree.

According to responses regarding the respondents' experience in the subject, Life Skills, the data revealed that the majority of the Life Skills teachers had taught Life Skills for less than 5 years, (58%). The first group is followed by teachers with 6–10 years of experience, (28%). While 13% fell in the range of 11 –20 years of experience. Only 3% had more than 20 years of experience.

Responses regarding training in guidance and counselling revealed that all the respondents received some kind of training in guidance and counselling. The majority received their training while in service as Life Skills teachers (53%) and the others (48%) as part of their formal education. Lastly, the data also revealed that an overwhelming majority of respondents (75%) felt either very competent or competent to teach Life Skills. Nevertheless 25% felt slightly competent or not competent to teach Life Skills.

Table 1: The frequency distribution of background variables of Life Skills teachers

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequenc y</i>	<i>Percentag e</i>
Gender	Male	9	23
	Female	31	78

Age	21 – 30 years	9	23
	31 – 40 years	20	50
	41 – 50 years	9	23
	Over 50 years	2	5
Teachers' highest level of qualification	Teacher training diploma	19	48
	Bachelor degree	14	35
	Honors degree	5	13
	Master degree	1	3
	Further education diploma	1	3
Years serving as Life Skills teacher	0 – 5 years	23	58
	6 – 10 years	11	28
	11 – 15 years	3	8
	16 – 20 years	2	5
	More than 20 years	1	3
Type of training receive in guidance and counselling	Part of formal education	19	48
	In service training	21	53
Level of competency to teach Life Skills	Very competent / competent	30	75
	Slightly competent / not competent	10	25

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

4.2 The results related to the importance attached by Life Skills teachers to their roles and responsibilities to promote learners' development

In this section, the respondents' views about the importance of their roles and responsibilities as Life Skills teachers are examined. Included in this analysis are respondents' views on how well they feel they have mastered their teaching skills.

Answers to this section were obtained from the Life Skills teachers' responses to a list of roles and responsibilities given by the researcher. The respondents had to indicate how important they viewed the suggested roles and responsibilities as well as how well they felt they had mastered the suggested roles. There was a four-point scale for each of the roles. For clarity and ease of understanding the roles were divided into the following categories: personal, social, educational and vocational development of learners. Generally the Life Skills teachers regarded the suggested roles as very important and important.

4.2.1 Personal development

All teachers (100%) felt it was very important and important for them to help learners to know themselves and develop positive self-concepts. This is shown in table 2 on page 31. The fact that all teachers consider it as very important and important for them to help learners to help themselves may be as a result of their desire to present themselves favorably.

Table2: Life Skills teachers' views regarding helping learners in personal development

<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<i>Very important / important</i>	<i>Slightly important / not important</i>
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	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
HELP LEARNERS TO:				
Know themselves	40	100	0	0
Develop mature personalities	40	100	0	0
Develop problem-solving skills	40	100	0	0
Develop independent decision making skills	40	100	0	0
Obtain skills that will enable them to set both short and long term goals	40	100	0	0

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

4.2.2 Social development

The vast majority of the respondents 98 – 100% (see table 3) viewed that it is very important or important to help learners to develop good social relationships and conduct with others. Therefore they should supply learners with valid and usable information about an individual, his peers and others, which will help the learners to understand and enhance his/her interpersonal relationships. The present data is supported by the findings and opinions from literature. Thompson (2002), Chuenyane (1990) and Naude and Bodibe (1990) reported that learners should be assisted and it should be communicated to them that they are living in a society whether in the location, at home or at school; and it should be communicated to them that they should live in peace and tolerate other people at all levels. Furthermore, the result revealed that two (2%) of the respondents viewed it as slightly important for teachers to help learners to make friends and to obtain good communication skills respectively.

Table 3: Life Skills teachers' views on helping learners to develop social skills

<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>	<i>Very important/important</i>	<i>Slightly important/ not important</i>

	<i>Frequenc</i>	<i>Percentag</i>	<i>Frequenc</i>	<i>Percentag</i>
HELP LEARNERS TO:	<i>y</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>y</i>	<i>e</i>
Make friends				
Cope under peer pressure	39	98	1	2
Show consideration of other people	40	100	0	0
Accept and live with people from other cultures, races and religion	40	100	0	0
Obtain good communication skills	40	100	0	0
Understand and prepare themselves for family life and adulthood	39	98	1	2
	40	100	0	0

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

4.2.3 Educational development

From the responses it is concluded that 95% to 100% (see Table 4: P33) of the respondents were of the opinion that it is very important or important for them to give guidance and counselling to learners on their immediate educational needs, that will help to enhance their current as well as future educational levels. The present data is supported by the findings of other researchers (Thomson, 2002) regarding the reasons for this role to be done which is in order to improve the learner's academic work by developing greater academic mastery and enhancing study skills.

Table 4: Life skills teachers views on helping learners in their educational needs

<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<i>Very important / important</i>		<i>Slightly important / not important</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
HELP LEARNERS TO:				
Recognize and know the importance of education	40	100	0	0
Choose subjects that will best meet their learning needs	40	100	0	0
Create and follow a study time table	38	95	2	5
Get ready and take examination properly	40	100	0	0

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

4.2.4 Vocational development

All respondents (see Table 5: P34) felt it was important or very important for them to assist learners to adequately prepare themselves for the ever-changing job market by supplying them with the needed information. This would enable learners to make free, wise and appropriate career plans, choices and decisions. Considering the fact that all respondents felt it is important to assist and prepare learners for the ever-changing job market, may have been a result of social desirability whereby teachers attempted to make a desirable impression.

Table 5: Life Skills teachers' views on how important it is to prepare learners for the job market

<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<i>Very important / important</i>		<i>Slightly important / not important</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
HELP LEARNERS TO:				
Follow a suitable career	40	100	0	0
Find information about careers	40	100	0	0
Obtain information about various learning institutions	40	100	0	0
Find information about financial sources for further studies	40	100	0	0

Source: Ngatjiisue (2009)

4.3 Life Skills teachers' views regarding their abilities to perform their duties towards learner's development

The Life Skills teachers' views regarding their abilities to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively are presented in this section. Respondents were required to indicate their level of mastery of each one of the provided roles on a four-point scale: well mastered or mastered (positive); slightly mastered or not mastered (negative).

4.3.1 Personal development

According to Table 6, there were 70 - 75 % of the respondents who felt they had mastered their roles and responsibilities in helping learners to obtain personal development. On the other hand 25 - 30% felt that they had only slightly mastered or not mastered their roles and responsibilities in helping learners in their personal development.

4.3.2 Social development

The results of this study indicated that the majority of the respondents 70 -85% felt that they had mastered the skills of helping learners regarding their social development. A substantial number of respondents (15-30%) had mastered the skills slightly or not at all (see Table 6).

4.3.3 Educational development

The majority of the respondents (68-90%) who where in this study felt they had mastered their roles and responsibilities of helping learners in their current educational needs, while the remainder (10-33%) were of the opinion that they had only slightly or not mastered their roles and responsibilities in this regard (see Table 6: P36).

4.3.4 Vocational development

According to Table 6, there were 63 - 83% of the respondents who were of the opinion that they had mastered their roles and responsibilities to prepare learners for their future vocations. However, several respondents (17-37%) shared the opinion they had only slightly mastered or not mastered the skills of helping learners in their vocational development. This is shown in table 6 on page 36.

Table:6 The extent to which Life Skills teachers have mastered the skills of promoting learners' development

<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>	<i>Well mastered/mastered</i>		<i>Slightly mastered/</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Not mastered</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
HELP LEARNERS TO:				
Personal development				
Know themselves	29	73	11	27
Develop mature personalities	29	73	11	27
Develop problem-solving skills	29	73	11	27
Develop independent decision making skills	30	75	10	25
Obtain skills of setting both short and long term goals	28	70	12	30
Social development				
Make friends	32	80	8	20
Cope under pressure	31	78	9	22
Show consideration towards others	30	75	10	5
Accept and live with people from other cultures, races and religious	34	85	6	15
Obtain good communication skills	29	73	11	27
Understand and prepare themselves for family life and adulthood	28	70	12	30
Education development				
Recognize and know the importance of education	36	90	4	10
Choose subjects that will best meet their learning needs	30	75	10	25
Create and follow a study time table	17	68	13	32
Get ready and take examination properly	32	80	8	20
Vocational development				
Follow a suitable career	31	78	9	22
Find information about careers	29	73	11	27
Find information about various training institutions	33	83	7	17
Find information about sources of financing studies	25	63	15	37

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

4.4 The types and quantity of materials available for Life Skills teachers.

In this section the respondents were required to respond on the availability of written materials that they could use as sources of information to enhance the guidance and counselling programme. The researcher gave a list of possible materials that could be used and the respondents were requested to indicate if they have and use the given materials. The following range of sources was indicated in the questionnaire: book, old notes from previous courses done, handouts from the regional office and periodical journals. Respondents had to indicate if many, sufficient, few and none of these sources were available and used by them.

The research revealed that books were more available and used as a reference material by most of the respondents (43%) when guiding and counselling learners. However, it also revealed that 57% of the respondents did not have or had few books available (see table 7: P38). This was followed by old notes from courses previously done, with 40% of teachers using these to do their Life Skills duties. Meaning, a sufficient number- 60% of the teachers did not have or use old notes from courses done as a source of information for their current Life Skills duties.

Handouts from the regional office were used by only 23% of the respondents, leaving the other 77% of the respondents not benefiting from the facility. Periodical journals were used by only 10% of the respondents, revealing that the vast majority (90%) of the Life Skills teachers did not use periodical journals as a source of information in their guidance and counselling duties (see table 7: P38). The message that is communicated by these responses

is that respondents lacked written materials to use as sources of information to help Life Skills teachers guide and counsel learners effectively.

Table 7: The types and quantity of materials available to Life Skills teachers for use when guiding and counselling learners.

<i>Type of material used</i>	<i>Many/Sufficient</i>		<i>Few/None</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Books	17	43	23	57
Old notes from courses done	16	40	24	60
Hand outs from regional office	9	23	30	77
Periodical journals	4	10	36	90

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

4.5 The amount of value attached to the guidance and counselling programme and support received by Life Skills teachers from other educational stakeholders

The importance of guidance and counselling can be constructed from the value the Life Skills teachers feel that members of the school community attach to the Life Skills programme as well as the degree of support that those members of the school community give to the Life Skills teachers in carrying out their duties. With this in mind to account for the importance of the Life Skills programme in the Khomas region secondary schools, the Life Skills teachers were asked to indicate the degree of value other members of the school community attach to the programme and state the amount of support they felt they received from the others.

The respondents' responses on the value that other members of the school community attach to the Life Skills programme are presented in Table 8. In these responses, the "no and little value" responses were regarded as negative answers. Meaning, those groups of people do not value and appreciate the program at all. While in Table 9 the Life Skills teachers were asked to state the amount of support that they received from the same group of people. They had to

choose from the opinions of no support, little support, sufficient support and much support as answers.

4.5.1. The amount of value attached to the Life Skills programme

According to table 8, 75% of the teachers felt that regional school counsellor's attached much or sufficient value to the Life Skills programme. However, 25% indicated that this group did not value the Life Skills programme. This is followed by 73% of the teachers who reported that their school principals attached much or sufficient value to the Life Skills programme in the schools. That left 27% of the respondents indicating that their school principals do not value the Life Skills programme in schools.

Only 45% of the respondents felt that their heads of departments and teachers respectively attached much or sufficient value to the Life Skills programme. It should also be noted that the majority (55%) of teachers felt that fellow teachers and Heads of department do not value the Life Skills programme. From the learners' side, 43% of the teachers viewed girls valuing the programme. However, 57% of the teachers indicated that girls do not value the Life Skills programme.

For the rest of the groups: school board members, parents, boys and learners' representative councils, the teachers responded negatively. According to the respondents, those groups do not value and appreciate the programme (see table 8: P40). 75% of the teachers felt that school board members attached no value or little value to the Life Skills programme. However, 25% indicated that school board members value the Life Skills programme. An overwhelming number of the teachers (82%) reported that the parents do not value the Life Skills programme, while 18% of the teachers felt that there were parents who attached

sufficient value to the programme. 62% of the teachers indicated those learners representative councils and boys attached no or little value to the Life Skills programmes. On the other hand, 38% of the teachers felt there were also learners' representative council members and boys who attached sufficient or more value on the programme (see table 8: P40).

Table 8: Amount of value attached to the Life Skills programme by the various school community members

<i>School community members</i>	<i>Sufficient / much value</i>		<i>No value / little value</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Regional school Counsellor,	30	75	10	25
School principals	29	73	11	27
Heads of departments	18	45	22	55
Other teachers	18	45	22	55
School board members	10	25	30	75
Parents	7	18	33	82
Learners representative counselor	15	38	23	57
Learners	15	38	25	62
Girls in general	17	43	23	57
Boys in general	15	38	25	62

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

4.5.2. Support that Life Skills teachers receives from various members of the school community.

From the responses 65% of the teachers felt that the regional school counselors gave them much or sufficient support in carrying out their Life Skills duties. Nevertheless, 35% of this group indicated that they received no or little support from the regional school counsellors. The majority (68%) of the teachers felt they received sufficient or much support from their principals as heads of the schools. 32% reported that they were not receiving support or received very little support from their principals as shown in table 9 on page 42.

The Life Skills teachers reported a lack of support from fellow teachers, with 65% of the respondents indicating that they received no support or little support from other teachers. On the other hand, 35% of the respondents felt they received sufficient or much support on the Life Skills programme from fellow teachers. 55% of the teachers felt they received no or little support from heads of departments, while 54% of the teachers felt that they received sufficient or much support from their heads of departments.

According to table 9, Life Skills teachers did not receive the needed support from the outside school community. An overwhelming number (87%) of the teachers felt that they received no support or very little support from the parents of the learners, leaving the rest (13%) claiming that they received the much-needed support from the learners' parents. A vast majority (75%) of the teachers revealed that they received no support or little support from school board members. However, 25% of the teachers felt they receive sufficient support or much support from school board members.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the Life Skills teachers reported, as seen on table 9, that there is an increase in the support they received from learners compared to the amount of value the learners attached to the programme. 58% of the Life Skills teachers alluded to the fact that they received no support or very little support from the learners' representative council as well as from boys. The other 42% of the teachers stressed that they received sufficient or much support from those groups of learners. According to their responses, 52% of teachers recorded that they received no support or little support from girls, leaving the 48% of the teachers reporting that they received sufficient or much support from girls (see table 9: P 42).

Table 9: Support that Life Skills teachers receive from various members of the school community

<i>School community members</i>	<i>Sufficient / much support</i>		<i>No support/ little support</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Regional school Counsellor,	26	65	14	35
School principals	27	68	13	32
Heads of departments	18	45	22	55
Other teachers	14	35	26	65
School board members	10	25	30	75
Parents	5	13	35	87
Learners representative counselor	16	42	23	58
Learners	18	45	22	55
Girls in general	19	48	21	52
Boys in general	12	43	23	57

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

4.6 Additional comments on the effectiveness of Life Skills programmes

The data solicited through the questionnaire were supplemented and enriched by the data obtained through open-ended questions. The open-ended questions gave the respondents the opportunity to raise their views on what enhanced or hindered the effectiveness of programmes in terms of facilities and training.

When respondents were asked to list what they considered being the main problems they faced at their schools and which made it impossible for them to give good guidance and counselling services, the study found the factors listed below to be more prevalent.

- ❖ Lack of well equipped counselling room
- ❖ To little counselling time
- ❖ Lack of training opportunities

- ❖ Lack of support from other stakeholders within the education system
- ❖ Lack of materials
- ❖ Lack of learners interest

Whereas the vast majority (70%-95%) of the Life Skills teachers mentioned the lack of a well-equipped counselling room as a very critical issue that hinders the effectiveness of the whole guidance and counselling programme at their schools, 70% of them gave lack of specific time allocated for guidance and counselling on the school timetable also as a main concern. Others (60%) said a lack of frequent in-service training for teachers was a problem and this left them with low levels of knowledge and competency to carry out their duties. 60% of the respondents strongly said that they received very little support, if any, from various stakeholders within the education system (Regional office, school management, other teachers, parents and learners) and this cut their hands off to deliver effective guidance and counselling. Lack of current reference materials, was also a problem in many schools. Teachers also indicated that learners themselves were not interested in the programme, leading them to failure to turn up for guidance and counselling sessions as per timetable or for information gathering. As a complementary question on problems that hinder effective guidance and counselling, Life Skills teachers were asked to propose suggestions and strategies that could be used to improve the situation. The responses to this question are presented in Table10.

Table 10: Suggestions on improving the current Life Skills programme at schools

<i>Suggestion</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Provide more training to Life Skills teachers	16	40
Appointment of professional school counsellor at each school	12	30
Life Skills teachers should only be responsible for teaching Life Skills and not any other promotional subjects	9	23
More support from all stakeholders in education	6	15
More cluster meeting for information sharing	2	5

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

In order to solve the problems of Life Skills programmes in schools most respondents suggested that the problems mentioned in the above question should first be addressed with serious concern, for instance provision of well equipped counselling rooms, provision of reference materials –like books, journals and allocation of more periods to Life Skills as a subject. 40% of the respondents reported that Life Skills teachers should be provided with more professional training in school guidance and counselling which will enrich their knowledge in the subject and lead to effective information sharing with learners through guidance and counselling. To improve on the current situation the Life Skills teachers suggested that they should receive training in the following areas to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that will enable them to counsel and guide learners effectively:

- Career guidance
- Counselling learners affected and infected with HIV/AIDS.
- Bereavement counselling

- Substance abuse counselling
- Counselling for abused learners (sexually, emotionally and living with abusive parents)
- Personal and educational development counselling
- Administering of psychometric tests

However, a few of the Life Skills teachers (30%) also suggested that a professional school counsellor should be appointed and paid by the government at each school. According to them this will enhance the programme more since professional school counselors are well trained in the area and this put them in a far better position of professional information sharing and running of all the required tests.

Six of the respondents indicated that the need and role of Life Skills as a subject should be communicated to all stakeholders in education, in order to increase the stakeholders' support and interest in the programme. Stakeholders should include everybody starting from parents, learners themselves, all teachers and school management at school and parties in the regional office. Lastly, a few of the respondents requested that cluster schools should meet regularly for information sharing and mapping out the way forward in addressing specific problems they encounter at their schools.

4.7 Chi-Square Tests

The chi-square tests were used in this research to test the probability of a relationship between variables. With the main aim to enable the researcher to find out whether the value for the variables were independent or associated. It was based on a comparison of the observed values in the tables with what might be expected if the two distributions were

entirely independent. In most of the cases no sufficient statistical value was found. Nevertheless for a few sufficient statistical value was found and these cases are presented in table 11, 12 and 13 below.

Table 11: Amount of support from regional school counselor by experience

<i>Experience</i>	<i>No support</i>	<i>Little support</i>	<i>Sufficient support</i>	<i>Much support</i>	<i>Total</i>
0-5 year	4	8	6	5	23
6-10 years	2	0	8	1	11
11 or more years	0	0	3	3	6
Total	6	8	17	9	40

Source: Ngatjiisiue (2009)

$$X^2 (6, N=40) = 13.779, P=0.05$$

Since the calculated value (13.779) is greater than the critical value (12.592) the conclusion reached is that there is evidence at the **5%** level of significance to say the degree of support the teachers receive from the regional school counselor depend on experience. More inexperienced teachers felt they received little or no support as opposed to more experienced teachers.

Table 12: Extent of mastering skills of supplying learners with important

information by qualification

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Not mastered</i>	<i>Slightly mastered</i>	<i>Mastered</i>	<i>Well mastered</i>	<i>Total</i>
Diploma	1	5	5	8	19
Bachelors and higher qualification	0	1	15	5	21
Total	1	6	20	13	40

Source: Ngatjisiue (2009)

$$X^2 (3, N=40) = 9.282, P=0.05$$

Since the calculated value (9.282) is greater than the critical value (7.815), the conclusion reached is that there is evidence at the **5%** level of significance to say the extent of mastering skills of helping learners with important information depend on the level of education attained. Teachers with bachelor's degrees and higher qualifications felt they had mastered or well mastered the skills of passing on important information to learners.

Table 13: Importance for teachers to help learners to know themselves by training in guidance and counseling

<i>Training in school guidance & counseling</i>	<i>Important</i>	<i>Very important</i>	<i>Total</i>
Yes	0	34	34
No	2	4	6
Total	2	38	40

Source: Ngatjisiue (2009)

$$X^2 (1, N=40) = 11.930, P=0.05$$

Since the calculated value (11.930) is greater than the critical value (3.841), the null hypothesis is rejected. The conclusion reached is that the teachers' perceptions on the importance for teachers to help learners to know themselves depend on training in guidance and counselling. A vast majority of the teachers who had training in guidance

and counseling felt it was very important for them to help learners to know themselves opposed to those who did not have such training.

4.8 Summary of results

This chapter provided a descriptive summary and analysis of the results of the study conducted in order to determine how important the Life Skills teachers view their roles and responsibilities towards learners' development; the support they get from various stakeholders in the education community, the value attached by stakeholders to Life Skills as a programme in schools. Additional comments from Life Skills teachers on problems that hinder them to provide effective guidance and counseling were also outlined. As alluded to previously, a vast majority (95- 100%) of the teachers regarded the suggested roles and responsibilities of helping learners in their personal, social, vocational and educational development as being very important or important.

With regard to teachers' views on their competence to fulfill their roles and responsibilities, most (63- 85%) indicated they had mastered the skills in helping learners. However, 15 – 30% of the respondents revealed they had only slightly or not at all mastered the skills.

The research also revealed that most of the stakeholders in education do not value the Life Skills programme, leading to them giving less support to the programme in schools. However, some of the respondents claimed that regional school counsellors and school principals value and support the Life Skills programme. According to the research, teachers are faced with a number of problems that hinder effective guidance and counselling: lack of well equipped counselling rooms, limited counselling time, lack of training, overloaded with

the teaching of promotional subjects and lack of reading materials that they can use as source of information for guidance and counselling.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

An effort was made in the previous chapter to analyze and report on the results of the collected data. The objective of this chapter is to interpret the results of the study, to examine the possible implications as well as make recommendation based on these results. To do that, the following research questions that the study sought to address will have a bearing on the discussion of the results.

They were:

- ❖ Do Life Skills teachers in the Khomas region understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to the learners' development?
- ❖ Do they feel competent to fulfill these roles and responsibilities?
- ❖ What are the specific needs of Life Skills teachers in terms of knowledge, skills and support in order to improve the services?
- ❖ What problems do Life Skills teachers experience as they strive to meet the guidance and counselling needs of learners?

5.1 Discussion of the results related to the importance attached by Life Skills

teachers to their roles and responsibilities to promote learners development

The answers to this question were obtained from the Life Skills teachers' responses to a list of roles and responsibilities given by the researcher. For clarity and ease of understanding the roles and responsibilities were divided into the following categories: personal, social, educational and vocational development. The findings of this study have provided some evidence that the majority of the Life Skills teachers had seen it as very important or important to help learners and prepare them more effectively and efficiently through teaching learners life-coping skills that they can apply throughout their developmental stages from

infant to adulthood (see Table 2-5). The present data lends support to previous findings and data from literature.

Thompson (2002); Maluwa-Banda (1998) and Conger (1994) reported that Life Skills teachers have a primary obligation and duty towards the learners; this implies that Life Skills teachers should be concerned with the total needs (personal, social, educational and vocational) of learners and should encourage the maximum growth and development of each learner. It is thus clear that, the majority of the Life Skills teachers understands and view their guiding and counselling roles and responsibilities as very important in every learner's life throughout all their developmental stages.

However, a minority of Life Skills teachers viewed some of those roles as slightly important or not important, such as helping learners to make friends, accepting people from all walks of life (see Table 3) and to create and follow a study timetable (see Table 4). The message that could be communicated here is that some Life Skills teachers had viewed these roles as being trivial, and worthy overlooking for the learners to know and for them to carry out. However, Life Skills teachers should pay attention to those roles and responsibilities as well, because they are as important as the others mentioned above and learners also need assistance in them.

5.2 The discussions on Life Skills teachers' views regarding their abilities to perform their duties towards learners' development

The discussions of the results regarding Life Skills teachers' abilities to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively will be done under the following headings: personal development, social development, educational development and vocational development.

5.2.1 Personal development

The data confirmed that the majority (70 – 75%) of Life Skills teachers felt competent enough to help learners obtain personal development skills (see Table 6). However, it was found that between 25 – 27% of the Life Skills teachers felt that they were not competent to carry out some of the roles and responsibilities that would enhance total personal development in all learners.

The conclusion that could be made is that not all Life Skills teachers can help all learners to obtain effective personal development. Some learners will benefit more from the same Life Skills programme than others based on the differences in the competence of the individual teachers. It is strongly believed that if those teachers who are less competent are equipped with the necessary skills they will improve and be able to help learners in their personal development.

5.2.2 Social development

Of the respondents, 70-85% (see Table 6) felt well equipped for their roles and responsibilities in helping learners in social development. However, a substantial number of teachers (15 – 30%) revealed they felt incompetent to carry out those duties. The conclusion that would be made is that not all learners are assisted effectively to develop good social relationships and contact with others, which leads to social problems in schools and societies at large.

5.2.3 Educational development

The majority (68 – 90%) of the respondents confirmed that they felt they had mastered skills of helping learners in their current educational needs that will enhance their future educational levels. However 10 – 32% of the Life Skills teachers felt they had not mastered certain skills in helping learners in their educational development. The message that could be communicated is that most of the Life Skills teachers can help learners to obtain effective educational development, and the rest of the teachers should be trained in the field of educational development in order for them to help learners effectively also.

5.2.4 Vocational development

The results showed that the majority (63 – 83%) of the Life Skills teachers felt competent in preparing learners for their future vocations. However 17-37% (see Table 6) shared the opinion that they had slightly mastered or not mastered all the skills of helping learners for their future career. The conclusion that could be made is that not all Life Skills teachers can help and prepare all learners for the ever-changing job market. More workshops should be organized that will equip the Life Skills teachers with more current information on the job market, that they can transfer to their learners.

5.3 Discussions of the results on the quantity and availability of materials Life Skills teachers use when guiding and counselling learners

Generally, there is lack of materials in schools. Most of the Life Skills teachers reported having few or none of the suggested written materials. According to the results, books and old notes from courses done were available to some extent and mostly used by respondents.

Less available and used are handouts from the regional office and periodical journals (see table 7).

It is thus clear that the majority of Life Skills teachers lack written materials which they can consult when guiding or counselling learners. The conclusion that could be made is that learners at different schools are receiving different kinds of guidance and counselling skills due to the differences in availability of information to the Life Skills teachers.

5.4 Discussions of the results related to the amount of value attached to the programme and support received by the Life Skills teachers from various stakeholders in education

The data gathered revealed that the majority (65 – 75%) of the Life Skills teachers agreed that the following groups of individuals within the education system valued and supported the Life Skills programme (table 8 and 9): Regional school counsellor and school principals. However it should also be noted that the same tables had indicated that 25 – 35% of Life Skills teachers agreed that the same group of individuals gave very little or no support and attached no importance to the programme.

The results also revealed that 52 – 88% of Life Skills teachers reported that they got very little support and value attachment to the programme from learners in general and boys in particular, as well as from heads of department, teachers, school board members and parents. The above findings communicated the message that not all stakeholders in the education system value and support the programme. If the needed support is given this will enhance the programme and will lead to greater performance from the Life Skills teachers, hence, optimal benefit to the learners.

5.5 Discussions on the additional comments

In the last section of the questionnaire, Life Skills teachers were given an opportunity to raise their views on what hindered the effectiveness of the programme and how it could be improved. The data gathered for this section, revealed that the majority of Life Skills teachers concurred that they were faced with multiple obstacles such as: lack of well equipped counselling rooms, inadequate training received, too little time allocation for the subject, lack of materials and lack of support and value attached to the programme by various stakeholders (learners, fellow teachers, parents and school board members) within the education system.

In order to improve the current Life Skills programme at their schools, they recommended:

- ❖ The implementation of well-equipped counselling rooms.
- ❖ The provision of frequent training for Life Skills teachers.
- ❖ The provision of reference materials.
- ❖ The practice that teachers should only be tasked with teaching Life Skills and not any other promotional subject at the schools.
- ❖ That more support from relevant other stakeholders should be encouraged, such as learners, fellow teachers, parents and school board members within the education system.

5.6 Recommendations

The recommendations that follow emanate from the results reported earlier and their discussion.

5.6.1 It is important that Life Skills teachers give increased attention to all of their roles and responsibilities reflected in this study.

5.6.2 It is further recommended that the Life Skills teachers are trained in current guidance and counselling approaches so that they can appropriately respond to the needs of all learners.

5.6.3 It is recommended that Life Skills teachers should only be tasked and be responsible for teaching Life Skills alone, not with any other promotional subjects. This will give the Life Skills teachers more time to guide and counsel learners and organise required activities that will enhance the programme.

5.6.4 Parents, being educational stakeholders need to become more involved in the education of learners. They should be made aware of the importance of guidance and counselling for their children's current and future development and Life Skills teachers should ensure home- school involvement seriously if the programme has to be more successful.

5.6.5 It is recommended that the Ministry of Education should take note of the obstacles highlighted by this study, namely:

- ❖ The lack of adequate and well-equipped classrooms hampers effective guidance and counselling. The counselling environment should be conducive to effective guidance and counselling. Therefore the Ministry should look into the matter and come up with possible solutions to these obstacles.
- ❖ All schools should be provided with some kind of written materials, that are recommended to be used by all Life Skills teachers when guiding and counselling learners.
- ❖ Money should be put aside from the school development fund to buy periodical journals on guidance and counselling.

- ❖ The Ministry should develop handouts and make sure these handouts are distributed to all schools. Experienced Life Skills teachers, researchers and psychologist should be encouraged to become involved in text book writing.
- ❖ The school libraries should be provided with suitable books on guidance and counselling by the government and donors.

5.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, Life Skills is a subject, which is being regarded as a less important part of the curriculum. It should be elevated to the level where all so-called promotional subjects are. This is only possible if, and only if the teachers are fully equipped to effectively teach this subject. Equally important, resource materials should be availed in all schools for effective guidance and counselling practice. Furthermore, the attitude of stakeholders should improve for the better, so as to enhance the importance placed on the subject. Additionally, negative perceptions of the teachers should be totally dispelled to promote learners' personal, social, educational and vocational development.

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