

THE ROLE OF THE NAMIBIA NATIONAL TEACHERS' UNION IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE STAFFING NORMS POLICY IN NAMIBIA

By

ROSCO MISIKA LUKUBWE

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SUPERVISOR: PROF J N VAN WYK

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Student number: 3447-513-3

I declare that THE ROLE OF THE NAMIBIA NATIONAL TEACHERS' UNION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STAFFING NORMS POLICY IN NAMIBIA is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

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MR RM LUKUBWE

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DATE

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ABSTRACT

21 March 1990 marked the turning point in the Ministry of Education's policy processes in Namibia when a culture of open debate in policy making commenced. Against this background, this study focused on the role of stakeholders in the policy process with particular reference to the role played by the Namibia National Teachers' Union (NANTU) in the formulation of the staffing norms policy in Namibia. The topic was investigated by means of a literature study and an empirical investigation using a qualitative approach. Data was collected by semi-structured interviews from a small sample of Union and Ministry officials. Findings supported the role of NANTU in what was traditionally perceived a management area of jurisdiction. The role of the teachers' union in policy making is more widely accepted due to professionalism. Findings stressed the significance of stakeholder involvement in policy processes and provided a better understanding of the complex nature of policy.

KEY WORDS

Role, Namibia National Teachers' Union (NANTU), teachers' unions, stakeholders, Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education), Namibia, policy process, policy making, trade unions, policy analysis, inform policy, participation, involvement, education policy, education circular.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

EMT	Executive Management Team
GRN	Government Republic of Namibia
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
MoE	Ministry of Education
MPCC	Management Policy Coordinating Committee
NANTU	Namibia National Teachers' Union
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
TUN	Teachers' Union of Namibia

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CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM, PROBLEM FORMULATION, AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Namibian education sector, as any other sector in the country prior to 21 March 1990, was characterised by policies that purported the ideologies of colonial apartheid. The current ruling party: the South West Africa People's Organisation' (SWAPO) election manifesto (SWAPO 1989:15) states that:

...one of the most glaring inequalities perpetuated in Namibia by the colonialists has been the gross neglect of the education of the indigenous population as a deliberate policy designed to subjugate the masses of our people through the perpetuation of ignorance and illiteracy. The colonialists understood that knowledge is power, and they were not preparing to share the power with the black majority. The objective of the system of Bantu education imposed in Namibia was simply to provide an inferior education to produce barely literate Namibians who would then be useful tools for the colonial administration in carrying out its dictates.

It can also be argued that the formulation of such colonial policies did not accord stakeholders the opportunity to contribute to the policy making process. The period following the independence of the country has witnessed policy changes being made by the governmental line ministries and departments with the view of redressing the colonial imbalances that were in existence prior to the independence of the country.

Part of the changes in the policy making process has been in the area of the involvement of stakeholders such as individuals, trade unions, non-governmental organisation et cetera, in the policy making process. This is supported in the local literature by Harlech-Jones (1992:2) who states that:

...one of the main instruments selected by the ministry to effect democratic participation by stakeholders has been the dissemination of a number of working

papers on educational reform, which have formed the basis for discussions and commentaries at regional levels. The frequency of the appearance of these working papers during the first years of independence testifies to the degree of transparency with which the ministry has gone about its business of educational reform. This is a diametrically opposed approach to that employed during the colonial period, when planning documents, educational statistics and reports were notoriously difficult to find.

What the preceding quotation unravels is that the culture of open debate and consultation by stakeholders during the colonial dispensation was something alien to Namibians. The current involvement of such stakeholders in the policy process has marked a change from policy imposition to policy participation in the policy making process. Founded on democratic principles, the Namibian government has legitimised the involvement of some stakeholders, for example, by signing a recognition agreement and a collective bargaining agreement with the Namibia National Teachers' Union (NANTU) as attempts are made to reform the Namibian education system.

In this research study, an exploration of the role of one of the educational stakeholders: NANTU, in the staffing norm policy process is undertaken. In order to establish the role of this teachers' union in the staffing norm policy process, an overview of the policy process is presented and the opportunities stakeholders have in informing government about their views is explored. A context to the study is provided by examining the education policy making process in Namibia.

1.2 THE POLICY AND POLICY PROCESS

1.2.1 An overview of the concept 'policy'

Although a plethora of definitions of policy exists, (discussed in chapter 2), "the term policy remains 'elusive' (Harman 1984:13; Malen & Knapp 1997:419). Parsons (1995:13) remarks that policy is not a precise and self-evident term. It is used by many in different ways, both in practice and in the literature (Harman 1984:13). Even the manner in which policy is conceptualised changes as policy "is rearticulated as it is recontextualised across the policy

cycle” (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry 1997:35). This makes it difficult to give a concise definition of policy. Thus, the tendency exists to rather provide multifold definitions of policy.

From the many definitions introduced by the social science literature and the other disciplines, Heckroodt (2002:20) claims that a widely accepted definition of a policy is that it is a plan or general course of action to be adopted by government, party or person. Reimers and McGinn (1997:29) are of the understanding that policy is a statement of the actions to be preferred in the pursuit of one or more objectives of the organisation. The emphasis in policy is that it is directed at the attainment of goals and/ or objectives (Harman 1984:13; Reimers & McGinn 1997:29).

For the purpose of this study, although there are other conceptual definitions, policy is understood as a plan pursued by policy makers to achieve educational goals.

1.2.2 An overview of the concept ‘policy process’

As it seems to be the case for policy definition, there is no single definition of policy process. For example, Harman (1984:16) distinguishes between policy-making and the policy process by assigning concept policy-making to decision making and the policy process to chronological steps that are followed during the policy formulation process. Harman (1984:16), in this case, is of the view that the policy process has the “notion that the handling of policy by any department or agency generally involves a series of sequential stages or phases, covering a span from when a particular programme has run its course and is terminated, or it takes on some new form”.

Taylor et al (1997:25) see policy as “complex, interactive and multi-layered”. They (1997:25) argue that the perception of the policy process as following chronological steps is too technistic and thus an ‘oversimplification’ of policy and policy process. In addition, Taylor et al (1997:25) emphasise the political nature of the policy, which entails the struggles and compromises that are made during all stages of the policy process by the competing groups. There are conflicting views among authors on the policy process, as can be deduced from Harman (1984:13-16) and Taylor et al (1997:25). The presence of these conflicting views can be attributed to the approach to policy the author takes which then determines the policy process model that policy formulation will follow (discussed in Chapter 2).

A rational approach to policy brings to the fore that the policy process follows a series of steps and as such Taylor et al (1997:25) identifies a seven stage model: 1. problem definition; 2. clarification of goals, values and objectives; 3. identification of options to achieve goals; 4. cost/benefit analysis; 5. selection of the course of action; 6. evaluation of the course of action and 7. the modification to the programme. Reimers and McGinn (1995:22) quote Haddad's eight steps, which are as follows: 1. analysis of the existing situation; 2. generation of policy options; 3. evaluation of policy options; 4. making the policy decisions; 5. planning for policy implementation; 6. policy implementation; 7. policy impact assessment and 8. subsequent policy cycle. Harman (1984:17) identifies a four stage model and this includes: 1. issue emergency and problem identification; 2. policy formulation and authorisation; 3. implementation and 4. termination or change. Harman's (1984:17) model of policy is expounded in chapter 2.

What is evident from the analysis of the policy process by authors is that, as Heckrodt (2002:3) puts it, there is a twofold trend identifiable in policy process: the first is the understanding of the policy process as involving a number of sequential steps. The other trend sees the policy process as occurring in multiple streams or forms. The difference is that those who see the policy process as following steps assume chronological steps can be identified in policy making (Harman 1984:16); while those who describe the policy process as happening in multiple streams assume that policy is non-linear, a mosaic of deliberations by interest groups, shifting and overlapping, moving people, issues, ideas and activities vigorously around the system (Heckrodt 2002:4). An explication of these trends is included in chapter 2.

Fowler (2000:205) attributes problems associated with written policies to the different interpretations of policy text by the audience. In this case educational stakeholders such as the management representatives of NANTU in the technical committees of the Ministry of Education (MoE) may understand policy text in different ways when policy drafts are given to them during the consultation process. In light of the different interpretations by stakeholders, Heckrodt (2002:4) concludes that policy is "best secured, not only through the medium of written administrative texts, but through communities of people with and across schools who

create policies, talk about them, process them, inquire into them and reformulate them, considering the circumstances they know best”.

1.3 STAKEHOLDERS IN THE POLICY PROCESS

Although an exposition on stakeholders in the policy process is made in Chapter 2, a brief reference is made here. Reimers and McGinn (1997:60) term stakeholders as persons or groups with joint interests in a particular activity, its outcome and those who are affected by it. Dunn (1994:70) casts a further meaning on stakeholders in education as to encompass individuals or groups who have a stake in policies because they affect and are affected by state decisions. Central to the definition of stakeholders, as deduced from Reimers and McGinn (1997) and Dunn (1994), is that stakeholders have common interests in an issue because they either affect the issue or they are affected by the issue.

Heckrodt (2002:5) enumerates these stakeholders as “parents, learners, unions and others.” The enumeration made by the author in this respect evidences that stakeholders can be likened to a community. In this community one can identify stakeholders as individuals and those that stand as alliances in issues that they affect or are affected by.

Because of the desire by educational stakeholders to participate in the policy process, Reimers and McGinn (1997:60) state that stakeholders wish to express their views on policy formulation related to the provision of education. Heckrodt (2002:5) writes that the involvement of stakeholders in the decision making process is widely accepted and has been found to be instrumental in giving information and this stimulates commitment to decisions made.

1.4 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHERS’ UNIONS IN THE POLICY PROCESS

Traditionally, policy making has been perceived as the jurisdiction of management who has, according to Harman (1984:18), “the legally-based responsibilities” of formulating policies. This implies that the other educational stakeholders, such as individuals, teachers’ unions and non-governmental organisations, do not have the legitimate duty of formulating policies. It can then be argued that policies formulated by bureaucrats, that exclude some stakeholders, are imposed on those that are excluded from the process.

On the contrary, research studies of Kerchner and Mitchel (1988:23) on labour relations discern that teachers' unions are making inroads into what has been perceived as a management only area. Gaziell and Taub (1992:74) attribute the entry of the teachers' unions into the policy-making arena to a twofold justification: democracy and professionalism (explicated in chapter 2.) Poole (1999:699) further advances that "teachers unions have successfully argued that certain policy areas have significant impact on teacher's work and, therefore, fall within the legitimate scope of teachers' collective bargaining rights".

Although teachers' unions have entered the policy making arena, their entry has been met with criticism from some union critics. Lieberman (1997:1-264), a union critic, believes that teachers' unions sabotage education reforms and hold students, parents, teachers and taxpayers hostage. Further criticisms have been levelled at teachers' unions. For example, Poole (1999:699) elucidates such criticism by citing union critics arguing that the influence from teachers' unions is an intrusion, meddling and poking their noses into the affairs of management. Weiner (1996:85) states that "teachers' unions are assailed by conservative critics as 'dinosaurs' whose presence impede the libratory path of free market". These statements on the teachers' unions involvement in the policy making arena indicate the contested views on the teachers' union participation in the policy making process.

Poole (1999:699) and Moe (2001:41-45) succinctly state that the role of teachers' unions refers to the repertoire of techniques employed by the teachers' unions employed to influence the policy making process. The repertoire of techniques referred to include, among others, lobbying, endorsing political candidates, educational research, promoting social justice, politics of blocking and collective bargaining. This repertoire of techniques is expounded in Chapter 2.

1.5 EDUCATION POLICY MAKING IN NAMIBIA

1.5.1 Post-independence education reforms.

The Ministry responsible for education in Namibia has had many titles since independence. In this study the Ministry of Education will be used although at the time of the formulation of the

policy under investigation the Ministry was called the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC).

The Namibian education system has emerged from the hard realities of colonial apartheid. Following the attainment of independence in 1990, education reform became an imperative task of the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education). The Ministry of Education has committed itself to the four major goals: access, equity, quality and democracy as outlined in its main policy document *Toward Education for All - A Development Brief for Education, Culture, and Training* (MEC 1993:32-42). This policy document, according to MEC (1993: i) translates the Namibian philosophy on education and training into concrete and implementable government policies.

In pursuit of the four major education goals, as set out in the main policy document, a number of different policies and plans have been passed and adopted, among others, the Education Act, Act 16 of 2001, the Namibia Sports Act, Act 12 of 2003, the National Policy Options for the Educationally Marginalized Children, Strategic Plan and Institutional Development of the Education System on Decentralisation and the Staffing Norm Formal Education Circular 13/2001.

One noticeable aspect in the above listed policies and plans is that some policies are Statutes or Acts of Parliament, which the education law literature terms as original legislation; other policies are subordinate legislation made in terms of the original legislation by those who are vested with rule-making powers (Bray 2000:57-58). In light of this understanding and considering the complexity of the state, Ministry of Education bureaucrats heading various directorates and/or departments of this ministry are empowered to make policies to enforce the original legislation. The policies developed by these bureaucrats are issued as formal education circulars and not as Acts of Parliaments. Their formulation sequence follows different stages compared to the usual legislative stages as is presented in Chapter 2.

It then follows that the policy referred to in this study is not an Act of Parliament but an administrative, procedural or regulatory policy (commonly called a circular) developed by the

bureaucrats of the Directorate of Planning and Development of the Ministry of Education that replaced the pre-independence Public Service Circular no.16 of 1987.

1.5.2 Steps in the Namibian education policy formulation

As outlined above, in Namibia the policy formulation sequence depends on the type of policy that the ministry is contemplating. Acts of Parliament follow the required legislative process in terms of the 1990 Constitution of the Government Republic of Namibia and the Standing Rules and Orders of the National Assembly and the National Council (Hubbard 1996:8). Because of the legal jargon of terms used in the two documents, Hubbard (1996:8-16) presents the Namibian legislative process into seven basic and distinct steps. These are:

(i) The Bill

The preparation of a Bill is the first step of the Namibian legislative process. As a Bill it is basically a proposal for a law. In practice, a Bill is prepared by a Minister who sees the need for a new law. The Minister concerned has to first approach the Attorney General's office for legal advice in order to make sure the Bill is in line with the Constitution. At this stage the Bill may be circulated for public comments or public meeting may be held in order to gain inputs on the Bill.

(ii) The Cabinet

When the draft Bill is ready, it is then sent to the Cabinet Committee on Legislation (CCL) for approval. It is also required that the whole cabinet approves the Bill in principle. No Bill goes to the parliament without the approval of the CCL. After the approval of the Bill by the CCL, the Bill is then sent to the Ministry of Justice for legal drafters to finalise the Bill. Once the legal drafters have finalised the Bill, the Bill is then sent back to the sponsoring Ministry, the CCL and the Attorney General' Office.

(iii) The National Assembly

At this stage, the approved draft Bill is tabled in parliament. It goes through three readings:

- *First reading*: The title of the Bill is read for the first time in parliament.

- *Second reading*: Involves the approval of the main ideas. During the second reading the Bill can go to the committee stage if the majority of the members of the National Assembly are in favour of the Bill. If the majority members of the National Assembly are not in favour of the Bill, the Bill has to stand and can only be re-introduced after 30 days. During the committee stage, an opportunity is again given to individuals, the public, interested parties and organisations to suggest changes to the Bill.
- *Third reading*: Involves the passing of the bill by parliament.

(iv) The National Council

Bills which have been passed by the National Assembly are then sent to the National Council whose members have up to three months to study the bill. Three readings like those of the National Assembly are done by the National Council. The National Council can take one of the followings three actions:

- *Action one*: Confirmation of the Bill. This means the Bill goes to the President for signature.
- *Action two*: The National Council makes proposals to the Bill and sends it back to the National Assembly.
- *Action three*: The National Council can object to the principle of the Bill and sends it to the National Assembly for reconsideration. However, if the National Assembly votes on the objected Bill by the National Council and gets a two-third majority, the Bill can go forward to the President for signature.

(v) The President

In order for a Bill to become a law, the President should sign it. If the President refuses to do so, the National Assembly must vote again and it must obtain a majority vote for the Bill to be signed by the President. Once a majority vote is obtained the President cannot stop the Bill from becoming law.

(vi) The Courts (in some cases)

The High Court or the Supreme Court may be asked to decide whether a Bill is in line with the Constitution. If any one of the requested courts decides that the Bill contradicts the Constitution, the Bill cannot become a law.

(vii) The Government Gazette

A law comes into effect on the day it is published in the Government Gazette or at a day announced in the Gazette. It is allocated an Act Number and becomes the law of the land of the Government Republic of Namibia (GRN).

1.5.3 Teachers' unions in Namibia

There are only two teachers' unions in Namibia, namely: the Namibia National Teachers' Union (NANTU) and the Teachers' Union of Namibia (TUN). In terms of the Labour Act, Act 6 of 1992 a union that represents the majority of employees may apply for the "recognition of registered trade unions as exclusive bargaining agent" (Namibia 1992, sec 58). NANTU in this case is the official recognised exclusive bargaining agent for teachers with the Government Republic of Namibia. Although the Teachers' Union of Namibia is not recognised in terms of the Namibian Labour Statute, it generally remains active and vocal on education-related issues in the country.

In an effort to reform the Namibian education system, "it is expected that Teachers' Unions will play a broader role beyond collective bargaining"(MEC 1995:2). However, the Ministry of Education has thus far not specified what this broader role should entail.

1.5.4 The new staffing norms policy: Formal Education Circular 13/2001 in perspective

The new staffing norms policy is one of those education reform policies that the Ministry of Education has adopted to replace the pre-independence Public Service Circular no. 16 of 1987. The policy aims to allocate teachers equitably per determined number of learners taking cognisance of the pre-independence situation in which some previously disadvantaged schools had a teacher-learner ratio of as high as 1:60 while some schools especially some former advantaged schools had a ratio of as little as 1:20 (MBEC 1998a:1).

Although a reform policy, it was contested by NANTU as illustrated by this assertive statement:

NANTU insists that the issue of the staffing norms must form part of the agenda for collective bargaining, and the union continues to criticise the Ministry of

Basic Education, Sport and Culture for attempting to implement the proposed norms before any such negotiations have taken place. NANTU is determined to raise this issue at the bargaining table and does not rule out the possibility of industrial action if no compromise is reached regarding the Ministry's staffing norms (NANTU 2000:31).

The staffing norms policy process received media attention. For example, *The Namibian* (1997:3) carried an article titled "Nantu 'cries foul'". In this article the NANTU president, Elias Manga, called on the Ministry of Education to stop the unilateral implementation of the staffing norms and described "the Ministry's action as negotiating in bad faith and is not consistent with the letter and spirit of the recognition agreement that promotes sound labour relations and practices."

1.6 PROBLEM FORMULATION

The educational reforms being contemplated by the Ministry of Education are driven by educational reform policies. However, the formulation of such policies have been contested by educational stakeholders, in particular the teachers' unions. Such contestation has made the education reform policy formulation process intricate. It therefore remains the Ministry of Education's responsibility to ensure that the views of the educational stakeholders are heard before reform policies are adopted. Although the role NANTU played in the staffing norms policy has been concluded, the principles raised during the process are important and can serve as guidelines in future policy discussions. Against this background, a need exists to investigate the role of NANTU in the staffing norms policy in Namibia with the view of addressing the role, participation and involvement of educational stakeholders in the Namibian education policy making process. The subsequent questions facilitate the demarcation of the research problem:

- What are the prevailing theories on policy and the policy process?
- What role do teachers' unions play in the policy process?
- What are the procedures followed in the education policy making process in Namibia?
- What role did NANTU play in the development of the staffing norms policy in Namibia?

- How can this information assist the government and teachers' unions and the other stakeholders in improving the role of stakeholders in education policy making in Namibia?

1.7 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

In light of the above research problem, the ensuing objectives of the study may be identified:

- The research aims to investigate the prevailing theories on policy and policy process.
- The research study aims at providing a thorough and comprehensive role of stakeholders in the education policy making arena by examining the various models and theories of teachers' union role in the policy making process.
- The research study aims to investigate procedures that are followed in Namibia in the education policy making process.
- The research aims to investigate the role played by NANTU in the staffing norms policy process in Namibia.
- The study seeks to provide guidelines to help policy makers in improving the participation of the stakeholders in the education policy making process.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.8.1 Literature overview

In order to determine the role of NANTU in the staffing norms policy making process, a literature study encompassing both local and international was done. The literature consists of relevant journals, statutes, circulars, monographs, minutes of meetings, publications, newspapers and official documents pertaining to the Namibian education system.

1.8.2 The use of a qualitative research methodology

A **qualitative approach** to research is employed in this study to determine the perceptions and experiences of role players of the role played by NANTU in the staffing norms policy process in Namibia. Data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews and/or semi-structured interviews were used to investigate the role played by NANTU in the development of the staffing norms policy. The data analysis techniques include reading and re-reading the data

gathered, self-immersion in the study, discounting and discarding less credible information. All these techniques are within the parameters of the qualitative research literature.

Although a detailed and comprehensive exposition of the research methodology, the rationale for the option of the research methodology and the research design are presented in Chapter 3, a preliminary summary is presented here. This research study on the role of NANTU in the development of the staffing norms policy in Namibia employs the qualitative approach as the main form of investigation.

Fouché and Delport (2002:79) define “qualitative research paradigm in its broadest sense to research that elicits participant account of meaning, experience or perceptions”. In line with this definition, a qualitative researcher is concerned with giving meaning to a phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:395). It thus entails an analytical study that identifies the participants’ beliefs, thoughts, perceptions and values that underpin a situation. Fouché and Delport (2002:79) are of the understanding that the qualitative researcher is concerned with understanding (*verstehen*) and does not involve the use of controlled measurements unique to quantitative research. The results of qualitative research are presented as a narrative description of words of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:395; Fouché & Delport 2002:79).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:395) note that qualitative research is important to education research because it aids in generating theories, policy development, education practice improvement, illumination of social issues and action stimulus.

In this study, six participants were included: three governmental officials and three representatives from NANTU who were part of the technical team at the time of the staffing norms policy formulation. The selection of these participants was purposefully made because they were key participants and therefore information rich on the issue under study. The in-depth interviews and/or semi-structured interviews with six participants were conducted to collect data. Most of the participants were interviewed twice. These interviews were taped and later

transcribed. The data was analysed according to procedures typical of qualitative research. The interviews were conducted over a period of two months.

1.9 MOTIVATION OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Although the staffing norm policy process is completed, there are lessons to be learnt which could be helpful in designing similar policies that need to be adopted in future. The study is useful to the Ministry of Education's Management Policy Coordinating Committee (MPCC) and Executive Management Team (EMT) especially in the wake of the recently published Report of the Presidential Commission on Education and Training, whose recommendations are being implemented through the adoption of policies to effect such recommendations.

The study is also beneficial to the educational stakeholders, especially the teachers' unions in understanding their role in the policy process as attempts continue to reform the Namibian education system. The research study is further beneficial, taking into account possible limitations, to the academic research fraternity to conduct further research on the same or a similar policy process. In this way, the study may serve to lay a foundation for further research on the role of stakeholders in the Namibian education policy process.

1.10 DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

1.10.1 Teachers' unions and trade unions

The concept teachers' union is defined in the context of trade unionism, according to which Squelch (1999:78) defines a trade union as "an association of employees whose main purpose is to regulate relations between employees and employers, including employers' organisation". In the context of this definition, teachers' unions are trade unions which are organisations of teachers who seek to regulate employment relations with the government as the employer. In this study, unless otherwise specified, a teachers' union refers to the recognised teachers' trade union in terms of the Namibia Labour Act (1992,sec 58). In this case, the teachers' union referred to is NANTU: the official bargaining agent in terms of the 02 October 1995 Recognition and the 18 July 1997 Collective Agreements signed between the Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN) and the NANTU.

1.10.2 Role/participation/ involvement

The concepts role, participation and involvement of NANTU in the staffing norm policy are used interchangeably, but may also be used as defined below:

- The concept *role* in terms of the teachers' unions is used to refer to an array of activities that the teachers' unions use to influence the policy making process (cf 1.3).
- Teachers' union *participation* refers to the engagement and endeavours to influence the decisions of the government on the policy process. According to Heckrodt (2002:5), participation refers to the involvement of leaders of lawful organisations which represent the different interest of the community.
- Teachers' unions' *involvement* appears to carry the notion of defining the type of issues that teachers' unions are engaged in. For example, Bascia (1998:211) states that it is the legal responsibility of the teachers' unions to represent its members in issues that affect them. It is clear from the author that the involvement of teachers' unions in certain issues is influenced by the predisposition and attitudes of union members

1.10.3 Staffing norms

The concept *staffing norms* refer to the "ratios that determine the number of learners per teacher" (The Namibian 1997:3). In this study, the staffing norms refer to the new staffing norms (Formal Education Circular 13/2001) of the Ministry of Education which replaced the pre-independence Public Service Circular No.16 of 1987.

1.11 CHAPTER DIVISION

The research study is presented into four separate chapters:

Chapter 2 presents a detailed literature review. It includes a discussion of the prevailing theories on policy and policy processes and the role of stakeholders (teachers' unions, in particular) in the policy making process. It also includes an overview of the Namibian education system, the way in which the policies are formulated and adopted, and the role afforded to teachers' unions in the process.

Chapter 3 presents an extension of the discussion of the research methodology employed to investigate the role of NANTU in the staffing norm policy process. Within the ambit of the research literature, attention is paid to technical and epistemological aspects, the rationale of the choice of qualitative research, the data collection strategies and the analysis of data.

In chapter 4, the results of the qualitative study on the role played by NANTU in the staffing norm policy in Namibia is presented.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter of this study and includes a synopsis of the findings, recommendations for further research and an acknowledgement of the limitations of this investigation.

1.12 SUMMARY

1990 marked a turning point in the Namibian education system in terms of policy formulation. A twofold change in education policy making is observed: firstly, education policies were focussed on education reform and secondly, the participation of educational stakeholders in the policy process was implemented. The latter ended the colonial policy imposition of policies and resulted in stakeholder participation in the policy process.

Although research shows that the participation of stakeholders is currently widely accepted (Heckroodt 2002:5), Poole (1999:699) and Weiner (1996:85) in earlier studies write that the participation of stakeholders, teachers' unions in particular, have been met with criticism. In this study the role of NANTU, as one of the Namibian educational stakeholders, in the contested staffing norm policy is undertaken with the view of addressing aspects of stakeholders' participation in the policy process.

CHAPTER 2 THE POLICY PROCESS AND CHANGES TO THE NAMIBIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an exposition of the various theories that inform policy. It encapsulates aspects such as the definitions of policy, analysis of policy, development of policy, informing policy and the role of stakeholders (teachers' unions in particular). These aspects on policy theories are presented in the form of a technical analysis in order to facilitate the understanding of policy and policy processes.

The chapter further describes the Namibian education system by looking at some of the educational reforms and educational structures. The chapter also explores the role of NANTU in the development of the staffing norms and the implications that the development of the policy has on educational stakeholders.

2.2 POLICY PHENOMENON

A theoretical framework on the concepts policy and policy process is imperative in comprehending the different aspects of this chapter. A diverse literature on policy and policy process exists. However, McCool (1995:6-7) argues that policy studies is 'devoid' of a theory. This is because of two reasons, argues McCool. Firstly, "it may be inappropriate to attempt to construct a universal theory of policy; the subject is simply too diverse, the number of variables too immense, and the relationship too complex to be explained by a single theoretical approach". Secondly, there are few efforts to discover commonalities and combinations among the various theoretical contributions because of the propensity of policy scholars to isolate themselves in a single theoretical or substantive specialty.

In the ensuing paragraphs, a theoretical literature review on policy is presented. It begins by encapsulating the multiple definitions of policy ushered by various researchers which reveal the complexities associated with underpinning a single definition of policy. The different definitions of policy are due to the fact that different authors view these concepts in different perspectives.

2.3 DEFINING POLICY

There is a plethora of definitions of policy in the social science, political science and public administration literature (cf 1.2.1). Parsons (1995:3) and Heckroodt (2002:19) trace the origin of the concept policy to the Latin word *polis* which refers in particular to a city or people. In Spanish, the concept policy is used to refer to politics (*política*) (Reimers & McGinn 1997:29). In other words, the concept policy is linked to the notion of politics. However, the recent trend in defining policy is that it refers to what organisations do (Reimers & McGinn 1997:29). This implies that policy carries or specifies the actions that an institution intends to carry out.

Harman (1984:13) articulates twofold definitions of policy. Firstly, “policy is the implicit or explicit specifications of courses of purposive action being followed in dealing with a recognised problem or matter of concern, and is directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired goals”. Secondly, policy is “a position or stance developed, in response to a problem or an issue of conflict directed towards a particular objective”. Harman’s definitions carry the notion that policy is a tool, formula or solution to address an identified problem that surfaced in a society. With this understanding of policy, policy is therefore developed for a purpose. Harman’s definition gives a functional perspective of policy. In other words, the definition only takes into account the operation of policy.

Parsons (1995:13), commenting on the definition of policy by Wilson (1987) who said that the modern definition of the English notion, policy, is that of a course of action or plan, a set of political purpose as opposed to administration, remarks that policy is not a precise or self-evident term. In this case the author defines policy as an endeavour to define and structure a rational basis for actions or no actions. This definition ties aptly with Taylor (1990:1) who refers to policy as the link between ideals or objectives on the one hand, and practices, on the other. Thus, Taylor sees policy as a strategy or plan for achieving educational objectives.

Prunty (1985:136) refers to policy as the “authoritative allocation of values”. In this case, the definition takes cognisance of the fact that policies are value laden. In other words, policies embody the values of policy makers. If policies carry the values of policy makers, Ball (1990:3) argues that “we need to ask whose values are validated in policy, and whose are not. Thus,

authoritative allocation of values draws attention to the centrality of power and control in the concept of policy.” Taylor et al (1997:27) also advance the same argument as Ball (1990) that the issues of power (authority) and control are central to policy. Policy is stressed as a process. Ozga (2000:2) affirms this by stressing that policy is a process “involving negotiation, contestation or struggle between different groups who may lie outside the formal machinery of official policy making.” The question is why is policy a process? According to Taylor et al (1997:24), the answer lies in the political nature of policy. In view of the political nature, Ozga (2000:1) appears to have the correct perspective by stating that policy is a process of “contested terrain.” Ozga (2000:2) argues that policy is struggled over, not delivered, in a tablets of stones, to a grateful or quiescent population. The bottom line to the arguments advanced on policy is the fact that policy is ongoing and dynamic and as such makes it very difficult to pin it to a single definition.

Birkland (2001:132) understands policy as a statement by government of what it intends to do or not to do, such as a law, regulations, ruling, decisions, or order or a combination of these. This definition agrees with the definition of Dye (1992:2) who refers to policy as “whatever government chooses to do or not to do”. The notion in these two definitions is that the government is responsible for policy formulation and, as such, policy simply embodies the decisions of government.

Indeed, as stated earlier by Parson (1995:13), policy is not a precise term to define. It remains an unfinished and a mammoth task to include all the definitions of policy from the existing social science literature and other disciplines in this chapter. Since there is no agreed meaning of policy, perhaps it is prudent to look for some common elements of the definition of policy. Ramenshur (1996:21) states that policy includes the notion of government, prescriptiveness, power or authority, purposefulness of policy and routinisation of particular behaviour of individuals that will lead to the attainment of particular goals and values.

2.4 ANALYSING POLICY

When researchers, authors and students of education policy studies embark on education policy studies they are, in one way or the other, doing policy analysis. Various authors cast light on

what policy analysis is all about. For example, Taylor et al (1997:35) refer to policy analysis as “the study of what governments do, why and with what effects”. This definition is constructed on Dye’s (1992:2) definition of policy which sees policy as whatever the government chooses to or not to do. The point is that researchers investigate acts of government that are driven by policies because these policies carry the decisions of the government. Parsons (1995:54) understands policy analysis as including a number of activities relating to the spectrum of knowledge in the policy process; knowledge for the policy process; and the knowledge about the policy process. The knowledge *for* and the knowledge *about* policy are key phrases in this definition as they illuminate the why and how policy analysis is done, as explained later in subparagraph 2.4.1 and 2.4.2. Parsons (1995:54) further states that policy analysis has the intention to influence the policy making process. This is done through research and arguments which advocate an analysis of both the problem being investigated and the finding of alternatives or solutions to the problem.

Succinctly, based on Taylor et al (1997:36-53) and Parsons (1995:54-57), policy analysis is the breaking down and synthesising of studies carried out by students, researchers and consultants on education policies of governments. In this case, in accordance with the earlier definition of Parsons (1995:54), policy analysis is primarily twofold: analysis of policy and analysis for policy. This is expounded in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.4.1 Analysis of policy

This form of policy analysis is similar to academic policy analysis and it is aimed at understanding and explaining and occasionally to make predictions (Van Wyk 2003:7). Hence it is done by students pursuing studies in policy across various academic disciplines. Parsons (1995:55) shades the understanding of the analysis of policy by stating that analysis of policy varies from analysis of policy determination to analysis of policy content. According to the writer, policy determination has reference to how policy is made, why, when and for whom policy is made; analysis of policy content is concerned with describing a particular policy and how it is developed in relation to the other policies.

2.4.2 Analysis for policy

The analysis for policy analysis is also termed applied policy analysis (Van Wyk 2003:7). It is a study that is done to inform policy or to provide information to policy makers in order to make decisions. This type of the analysis precedes the policy formulation process so as to enable policy makers to make reasoned judgements during the policy process. According to Parsons (1995:55), analysis for policy involves two aspects, namely: policy advocacy and information for policy. The writer refers to policy advocacy as to involving research and arguments which are aimed at influencing the policy agenda while information for policy is a study which is aimed at injecting information and views into the policy making activities.

What is evident in the preceding paragraphs on policy analysis is that it is presented in a technician manner. Although it is acknowledged that there is nothing wrong with this way of analysing policy, Taylor et al (1997:37) reject such an absolute distinction between the analysis of policy and the analysis for policy because such a distinction is artificial. However, such a purely technical analysis of policy is sometimes found to be conceptually beneficial (Taylor et al 1997:37).

2.4.3 Approaches to policy analysis

De Clercq (1997:120) identifies two approaches to policy analysis: the functional approach and the conflict approach. Taylor et al (1997:24) make a distinction between the two approaches by assigning the former to assume that the society is underpinned by value of consensus. In a society underpinned by value of consensus it is assumed that there is a general agreement that policies are generated and implemented in a straightforward and unproblematic way. The authors further assume that knowledge is value-neutral and is anchored in essential facts of observation that are distinct from the values. Policy analysis in this case is done to establish the best course of action to adopt and guide implementers in translating policy decisions into action to attain the intended goals (Heckroodt 2002:33). This approach to policy is also termed the 'positivist approach'.

When following the traditional (functional) view of policy analysis, De Clercq (2000:9) cites key questions that are applicable to this analysis. They are:

- What problem is to be addressed?
- What is the suitable policy response?
- What implementation issues and steps need to be developed at each level of implementation series?
- What are the best controlling and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the goals of the policy are achieved?

The above key questions assume that the policy process follows a linear, operational or functional, non-complex way of developing policy.

The later approach, the conflict approach, assumes that society consists of competing groups with different values and access to power (Taylor et al 1997:24). Thus, in a society composed of different and competing groups, policies cannot be generated and implemented in a straightforward way. This is because policy problems are complex and cannot be solved in a simple technicist way.

The critical view rejects the positivism assumptions (Taylor et al 1997:17-20). Thus, the critical view of policy perceives policy as value laden and argues that values are inseparable with policy analysis. Values in this case have a link with the approach undertaken by the policy analyst. Taylor et al (1997:17-20) argue that in critical policy analysis both the technical issues of planning, political decisions and adjustments are done.

Taylor et al (1997:17-20) appear to advocate critical policy analysis for the following reasons. Firstly, critical policy analysis helps to anticipate political pressure and put in place counter prevailing support. Secondly, it helps to expose how agendas are set, in whose favour the agendas are set and who is heard during the policy process. Lastly, the issue of the struggle of power becomes evident in critical policy analysis.

De Clercq (2000:9) states that the following key questions need to be paid attention in critical policy analysis:

- What are the issues that constitute the focus of policy?

- How does the policy come about and who is involved?
- Whose interests are being served?
- What is the policy content, its gaps and tensions?
- What is the implementation context and its process?
- Which and whose interests are privileged?
- What are the planned and unplanned results?
- How do they contribute to the goals, which include the justice goal?

In brief, the critical policy view assumes that policy analysis contributes to a greater understanding of what is taking place (Heckroodt 2002:34).

2.5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY

Although Fowler (2000:11) writes that policies are developed proximal to the helm of the political system by ministers and presidents, Heckroodt (2002:37) argues that much of the policy gestation lies within the bureaucracy. This is attributed to the fact that states are large and complex. As a result of such state intricacies, not all policies are developed and follow the same legislative procedure. Taylor et al (1997:7) argue that both politicians and bureaucrats formulate and administer policies.

As pointed out in the overview of the policy process, there are two trends identifiable when developing policy (cf 1.2.2). In the subsequent paragraphs an exposition of these two trends is given. This explication helps to further understand the complexities surrounding the theory of policy process as gathered from various researchers.

2.5.1 The step by step approach to policy process

Malen and Knapp (1997:423) argue that the step by step policy process is seen through rational lenses. Just like Taylor et al (1997:24), the authors argue that the step by step approach to policy process assume policy development follow a chronological or linear order. In other words policy is generated and implemented in a straight forward and non-problematic way. The linear approach to policy process over-simplifies policy. The rational (functional) approach to policy, like that of Harman (1984:13), informs this understanding of policy formulation as following

steps. Because there are various models of policy development, (cf 1.2.2), Harman's (1984:17) basic steps of policy development are described here to illustrate this understanding of policy process following steps.

(i) *Issue emergency and problem identification*

This is the beginning stage. It involves the diagnosis of the cause of the problem (Malen & Knapp 1997:423). In simple context, this stage entails antecedents and pressures that lead to the gestation of a specific policy (Taylor et al 1997:45). The highlight of this stage is the 'how' of the problem or issue that is gaining a place on the agenda. It entails examining the events that led to surfacing of the problem. The identification of the problem manifests the values to be encapsulated so as it is put on the policy agenda.

(ii) *Policy formulation and authorisation*

This is a tangible production stage. In reality, as Taylor et al (1997:47) clearly state it, this is the stage where policy documents are produced as green (discussion) paper and white (policy) papers. The coverage of policy formulation is actual content of policy. The content of policy, would thus, include the values of policy formulators and the information on policy options. The authorisation of policy entails the date of effecting such policy, directives issued and the communications made by officials responsible for the implementation of the policy.

(iii) *Implementation*

This stage involves the implementation of policy choices (Malen & Knapp 1997:423). It thus entails interpretation and the actual implementation of policy to particular cases as well as the development of programs to be followed when implementing the policy. This is the stage where some policies could become 'white elephants' because the concerned implementers are not implementing the policy. Rameshur (1996:31) expresses the sentiment that there is a fundamental flaw in the rational model by assuming that policy implementation will fall a natural, pre-planned manner to the realisation of policy goals, as envisaged in the course of policy formulation. However, the successful implementation of policies is determined by factors such as training, financial resources, commitment and willingness of participants to implement policy and the understanding such implementers have about the policy.

(iv) Termination or change

This encompasses the evaluation or the assessment of outcomes of policy. It is done by conducting evaluative research on the policy in question. The outcomes of the research become the basis for the decision to either terminate the policy because the desired results have or have not been attained or to make changes to the policy in order to reach the objectives of policy.

A close analysis of the above four steps of development reveals that there is a deficiency or complete absence of the issue of power in the policy process. Such a deficiency of power in the policy process is in fact not true as compared to the reality of the policy process.

2.5.2 The multiple streams approach to policy process

Taylor et al (1997:25) observe that policy is complex, interactive and multi-layered. This observation supports policy process as taking multiple streams. Malen and Knapp (1997:420) shed more understanding on the multiple streams of policy as being based on a non-linear and interactive model in which all stakeholders participate. Parsons (1995: xvii) remarks that “in reality, of course, phases and stages tend to blur, overlap and intermingle”. Parsons’ remark helps explain that policy process is never straightforward but involves the backward and forward movements of discussions by stakeholders during the policy process (Heckroodt 2002:4).

Kingdom (1984:151-174) uses metaphors: such as ‘primeval soup’ or ‘launch window in a space flight mission’ that helps to explain the multiplicity of the policy process. Parsons (1995:193-194) briefly comments on Kingdom’s metaphors of ‘primeval soup’ that notions float around, confront each other and combine. The soup changes as a result of a natural selection, survival, demise and recombination. The environment in which the soup moves about is constituted by policy communities, some of whom are specialists, tightly knit and closed.

The above metaphor basically means that the policy process is never straight forward because of the interactions that happen among the policy actors during discussions. These discussions and arguments by participants happen in an observable format of what Heckroodt (2002:4) termed as a “mosaic of deliberations”. Malen and Knapp (1997:420) state the policy process involves the interactions through which policy evolves, how policy is initiated, formulated, enacted,

implemented, evaluated and revised. In other words, the development of policy in reality takes a more disjointed, less rational and more political fashion (Taylor et al 1997:25).

Although Parsons (1995:193-194) employs the concept political stream in lieu of the multiple stream, there are a number of elements that constitute the multiple stream, namely:

- national mood: includes public opinion, climate of opinion,
- organised political force: involves parties, legislative politics, pressure groups,
- government: this entails change in personal and jurisdiction and
- consensus building: encompasses bargaining, bandwagons.

It is argued that policy is never linear for the following reasons. Firstly, as Taylor et al (1997:24) put it, the society has different values and access to power and as such the policy process become a contested arena of those whose values will receive priority on the policy agenda. Secondly, the fact that policy process is dynamic and ongoing, (Taylor et al 1997), implies the ever changing directions that policy process will take which at times may be referred back to the initial stages of formulation. Thirdly, policy document as a product of policy process implies a representation of struggles, compromises and trade offs and settlement of the participants in the policy process (Taylor et al 1997:26). Finally, the fact that interactions among stakeholders in the policy process are diverse and unpredictable makes the policy process to occur in non-linear fashion (Heckroodt 2002:41).

2.6 INFORMING EDUCATION POLICY

Information needs to be fed into the policy cycle to assist policy makers in making informed decisions. Likewise, it is important to understand how stakeholders in the policy process can maximise the utilisation of education information so that meaningful or informed decisions could be made by those that are involved in the development of policies of governments.

Having pointed out the importance of informing policy, it is argued by some scholars that in order to make an informed decision pertaining to education policies, information from research should be a precondition to such decisions (Heckroodt 2002:62). It is with this understanding

that Reimers and McGinn (1997:6-19) proactively argue that decision makers are to increase the use of information from research in making decisions for three reasons, namely:

- education could be more effective and efficient than it is today,
- the current status quo is that research information utilisation is scarce and
- the advent of globalisation has brought along continual world changes. As new problems arise, they require new understanding of how to solve problems.

In order to use information to inform the policy process, Reimers and McGinn (1995:7-9) argue that there are a number of factors that must be addressed. Among other factors, the authors stress the following: firstly, is the importance of identifying the multiple groups (stakeholders) that shape the way education policy decisions are made and implemented. In this respect it is of great importance that these multiple groups are addressed as part of the process of research. This is so because it has been found that addressing the multiple groups involved in education policy decisions is a fruitful strategy that maximises information utilisation (Reimers & McGinn 1995:7).

Secondly, the latent conflict between the State and research institutions and universities should be addressed. The conflict between the two is due to the fact that researchers and decision-makers often live in direct opposition to each other. Therefore, if information from researchers is to be used by decision-makers a way should be found to bridge the gap between knowledge producers (researchers) and knowledge consumers (decision-makers). This may be attained by working on a strategy that entails training the knowledge consumers to become knowledge producers.

Finally, the importance of information dissemination from research to ensure maximum utilisation of information is stressed. Reimers and McGinn (1995:28-33) identify two approaches that could be used to increase the impact of research as a product of policy decisions. These two approaches are dealt in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.6.1 Approaches that ensure maximum education information research utilisation.

(i) Diffusion methods

The diffusion method involves widespread dissemination of research results in the media to reach the potential stakeholders affected by the results. The research results are disseminated through specialised services such as the Education Research Information Catalogue (ERIC). In order to ensure the successful dissemination of the research results through this method, the client should first be identified (Reimers & McGinn 1995:28). This should include determining why the client uses or needs such information. In addition, it is of great importance in timing the dissemination of information so that it becomes useful when developing policies or when making decisions.

One useful diffusion method that is increasingly been used to disseminate the research results is that of a policy dialogue (Reimers & McGinn 1995:29). The method itself is more of market research than the actual dialogue. The policy dialogue has the intention to convince policy makers to act as researchers would have them act (Reimers & McGinn 1995:30).

(ii) Participation methods

The participation method focuses on the process by which the research is conducted. The focal point of this method is on when and how policy makers are likely to use research. In practice, participation occurs when decision-makers commission a specific study in which dialogue is established between the client and researchers in the initial stages of the conceptualisation of the study (Reimers & McGinn 1995:30).

2.6.2 Research for policy-making.

In an attempt to address the issue of informing policy, various researchers advance different kind of researches that may be used by policy makers or decision makers to make an informed decision in policy making. For example, Walker (1993:16) identifies two main types of education policy researches, namely: policy controlled research and self-controlled research. Reimers and McGinn (1995:21) identify four types of research that may be used to support education decisions. They include academic, planning, instrumentation and action research. What distinguishes these types of research from each other is the purpose for which each

research is conducted (Reimers & McGinn 1995:21). In the paragraphs below, a description of these four types of research is presented.

(i) Academic research

As self implied, academic research is concerned with whether the systems of explanation (such as theories, models and conceptual framework) are correct. According to Van Wyk (2003:7), it is mostly carried out by academic researchers and students. It involves testing the hypothesis drawn from conceptual framework.

(ii) Planning research

Planning research is synonymous to policy analysis. It involves the evaluation of government policies to provide policy makers with practical recommendations (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:20). In other words it is an investigative inquiry that enlightens policy choices (Reimers & McGinn 1995:37). Thus, it is a kind of research that investigates factors or variables, which may include past and present, that produce the desired results one is seeking. This implies that the researcher seeks to find out those situations that influence the intended results which are being sought. It thus involves the statistical analysis to produce patterns of relationship among variables.

(iii) Instrumental research

The instrumental research is a kind of research that seeks to construct or organise the factors necessary to get the desired outcome (Van Wyk 2003:7)). It appears to carry the characteristics of applied research whereby it is used to solve problems (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:19). Instrumental research uses repeated trial and error methods. This is mostly used in the development of new curriculum.

(iv) Action research

Action research is an evaluative research (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:20). It seeks to find ways of doing things better (Haggerson & Bowman 1992:1). In other words it is used to assess educational practice to bring about better performance. The research itself is not concerned with the knowledge of how to achieve the desired outcomes. It is rather concerned with the outcomes

as the products of research. In other words, what is important are the results and not the process used to produce the outcome.

Based on the above described types of researches, it can be concluded that each step of the policy process may need a different kind of research to inform such a stage of policy (Reimers & McGinn 1995:22).

2.7 STAKEHOLDERS IN THE POLICY PROCESS

Stakeholders are persons or groups with shared interest in a specific activity, its results and those who are impacted by it. These stakeholders are actors in the policy process. In education these stakeholders are diverse. They include parents, learners, taxpayers, teachers' unions, public servants, public contractors, employers, professional organisations, non-governmental organisations and others (Reimers & McGinn 1997:60).

From a rational perspective, stakeholders are seen as "unitary policy actors" (Malen & Knapp 1997:424). In this case unitary actors may be a single individual, or more typically a group of individuals, or agencies that act in concert of as one rational individual. They are termed policy actors as they have an interest in setting the educational agenda and shaping the organisations, which are established to participate in the process of educational provision.

Furthermore, when stakeholders are referred to as policy actors, they are given a title that has reference to significant agents in the policy making process (Taylor et al 1997:28). These actors constitute a community in the policy process. When Harman (1984:18) examines this community of policy actors, it is found that within the community there are divergent and often conflicting views about where real power lies in terms of education policy decisions. In this respect, Harman (1984:18) argues that, at one extreme, the role of the government is essentially passive and the evolution of policy depends on the interplay of pressure from teachers' unions, parents' associations, employers and the other interests. At the other extreme, there may be the view that education policy depends essentially on the personal whim of the Prime Minister, Minister of Education or the other powerful official. Both these views are exaggerations, though they have

some element of truth. The reality is that a wide range of actors share in policy formulation and that even the formal powers of authorisation are shared between a numbers of participants.

2.8 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHERS' UNIONS IN THE POLICY PROCESS.

Like any other stakeholder in education, teachers' unions are important policy actors in the policy process. Although Harman (1984:20) regards teachers' unions as informal actors in the policy process, their participation may become formalised when a union is recognised through legislative acts to represent their members in educational issues which include policy development. Unions are also important in the policy process because teachers' unions are capable of exerting pressure on government officials such as the Prime Minister, other ministers and bureaucrats (Harman 1984:21).

In the ensuing paragraphs, the role of the teachers' unions in the policy process is expounded.

2.8.1 Industrial and political actions of unions

The role of teachers' unions in the policy process is informed by the theory of the teacher labour relations or industrial labour relations literature (Kerchner & Mitchell 1988:23; Gaziel & Taub 1992:73). Within this conceptual framework, two categories of unions are identifiable: economic unions and political unions (Gaziel & Taub 1992:73-75). The writers state, on one hand, that the distinction between the two unions is that economic unions are formed with the purpose to bargain over the working conditions and salaries of their representatives. Political unions, on the other hand, are created to fight for working conditions and try to manipulate bureaucratic structures and policies in order to impart ideologies, beliefs and values to the education system, as a way enhancing their interest.

Based on these distinctions, Gaziel and Taub (1992:73), state that, judging teachers' unions on the basis of structures, strategies, tactics, leadership and the relationship to party politics, teachers' unions tend to fall in between economic unions and political unions. This implies that teachers' unions possess the characteristics of both types of unions and therefore can be observed bargaining over the working conditions as well as demanding participation in education-related issues which includes policy formulation.

2.8.2 Dual interests of teacher's union

As teachers' unions enter the policy making arena, they find themselves confronted by two dilemmas of interest: teachers' self-interest and the public education interest (Poole 1997:480). Hence they are faced with these twofold problems, how can teachers' unions simultaneously represent the two interests? Even among researchers a difference of opinion exists concerning the unions' interests. For example, Poole (2000:94) argues that teachers unions act to achieve their interests such as generous fringe benefits, better working conditions and job security; Moe (2001:43) argues that unions are aimed at improving the quality of education. Of the two interests Bascia (1998:211) argues that acting in teachers' interest is primary to that of public interest.

There are some researchers who advocate professionalism of teachers' unions in the educational arena. For example, Kerchner, Koppich, King and Weers (1990:17); Streshly and DeMitchell (1994:69) and Kerchner and Cauffman (1993:13) argue that teachers' unions need to strike a balance between their own interests and the public education interest. Kerchner et al (1990:17) stress such a balance by arguing that "accepting a union as a voice for the public good creates an expectation that the union will moderate its interest-serving behaviour as it pursues the public interest".

2.8.3 Teachers' unions bargaining models

Teachers unions may employ two models when bargaining with bureaucrats on educational issues. These models are the industrial and collaborative bargaining models. Various researchers cast different assumptions on the two models which highlight the pros and cons of each of these models. Kerchner and Mitchell (1988:233-236) argue that the industrial bargaining model carries the notion of teaching as "work or labour" and not as a professional service rendered to its clients. DeMitchell (1998:257) assumes that the negotiation process under this model is adversarial in nature. This is explained by Peace (1994:365-366) as follows:

...negotiators come to the table assuming that the resources are limited and that each party's task is to maximise its shares. The parties necessarily view

themselves as competitors engaged in a zero-sum game. That is, to the degree that one side wins, the other side loses.

In brief, what is evident in this bargaining model is that working conditions and salaries feature strongly in the recognition and collective agreements of teachers' unions activities. It is therefore not a suitable model to be used by teachers' unions in issues of educational reform. This is because the negotiation process is all about winning and losing and therefore a strategy for teachers' unions to use in the policy process. It should then follow that a different model of bargaining that allows the participation of teachers unions in the policy process should be put in place. Kerchner and Mitchell (1988:243) in their earlier studies on unions proposed changes to the ideological framework so as to enable teachers' unions to participate in educational issues. These changes are the change in the scope of collective bargaining, change in the nature of negotiated agreements and the determination of members in the teachers' bargaining unit.

Thus, the proposed changes gave birth to what they termed as the Educational Policy Trust Agreement. This then set the notion of the new model of bargaining known as the collaborative bargaining model. In the wake of unions continually making inroads into education-related facets, Urbanski (1998:187) and Poole (1999:699) seem to agree that the scope of collective agreements must be expanded to encompass educational policy making. In essence, it appears that, based on Peace (1994:365); Kerchner et al (1998:22-24) and Poole (2000:94-98), change from the old, traditional and adversarial model of industrial bargaining model to a new and principled model of collaborative bargaining is advocated.

Peace (1994:365) describes this model as principled, interest based or integrative and states that it is based on the assumption that:

- negotiators come to the table of negotiation assuming that resources are not necessarily as limited as it appears and that it is possible to satisfy all parties,
- negotiators do not perceive bargaining as a zero-sum game whereby one party loses while the other gains,
- there are no losers and winners in this model and,

- there are no unilateral proposals developed but rather the strategy chosen is that of joint problem solving.

This later bargaining model appears to be the appropriate model or technique of involving teachers unions in the policy process. The parties in the negotiation process become collaborators instead of competitors. They become focussed on the problem affecting education and in this way they are able to strike a balance between teachers' self-interest and public education.

2.8.4 The roles played by teachers' unions in the policy process.

It is argued that teachers' unions are increasingly demanding a place in education reform related issues (Gaziel & Taub 1992:73-74). This implies that teachers' unions want to be involved in overhauling education systems. Such demands to participate in educational reforms are justifiable. Gaziel and Taub (1992:73-74) identify two reasons as to why teachers' unions should be involved. Firstly, is the democratic basis: this focuses on the representation of union members in negotiating with the government on all educationally related aspects including education policy. Secondly, is the professional basis which carries the notion of the desire and propensity by teachers' unions to express professionalism through the participation in the decision-making process.

In a nutshell, teachers' unions as stakeholders have a stake in education because in reality they affect and are being affected by educational policies and as such it is justifiable that their voice be heard during the policy process (cf 1.4).

Having pointed as to why teachers' unions are increasingly demanding a place of the policy agenda, it is now appropriate to look at some of the techniques that they use to influence the policy process. These are explained in the following paragraphs.

(i) *Collective bargaining*

Collective bargaining is said to be a "process in terms of which employers and employee collectives seek to reconcile their conflict goals through a process of mutual accommodation" (Grogan 1999:242). It is argued by researchers such as Poole (1999:699) and Moe (2001:41-43)

that collective bargaining is the sole or at least the legal means, by which teachers' unions influence policy making and therefore it is the core function and the base for both economic and political power. Squelch (1999:87) argues that collective bargaining is a useful tool for negotiations because it is all about demands and concessions with an agreement as an objective.

In light of the described models of collective bargaining in paragraph 2.8.3, researchers are calling out teachers' unions to move away from the adversarial bargaining model and embrace the new principled bargaining model of collective bargaining (Poole 1997:480-482; Urbanski 1998:186-190; Harrington-Lueker 1997:34-36). If teachers' unions are to participate in the policy process, researchers appear to agree unanimously that the scope of collective bargaining must be expanded to encompass policy making (cf.2.8.3).

(ii) *The politics of blocking*

Moe (2001:45) states that the politics of blocking is relatively easy and a powerful tool employed by the teachers' unions to stop reforms that are a threat to the teachers' unions' interest. This strategy, argues Moe, is not about obtaining policies wanted by teachers' unions but it is about blocking policies that teachers' unions do not want. It is noted by Moe (2001:45) that during widespread improvement in public education, blocking is a way the teachers' unions put their power to the most effective use and thereby preventing change.

(iii) *Consultation*

Consultation is a strategy used to gain inputs in form of views and suggestions from the audience (Poole 1999:708). The author argues that a positive relationship and cooperation by the consulting parties is a prerequisite for consultation. In practice, consultation happens when the audience is asked of their views and suggestions prior to the development of policy or the alteration of policy (Poole 1999:706-708). In line with this understanding of consultation, teachers' unions receive proposals from bureaucrats and are requested to study them and respond to these proposals before the enactment of such policies.

Authors, such as Meyer and Cloete (2000:105), argue that consultation is a weak and ineffective strategy of participation in decision making. They cite two reasons:

- there is no commitment on the side of the decision maker that the views of the audience will be taken into account and,
- there is no guarantee that the decision maker will adhere to the views expressed by the audience.

However, consultation renders an opportunity to the consulted audience to influence decisions through persuasion, bargaining and/ or the threat of using force (Meyer & Cloete 2000:105).

(iv) Educational research

Poole (1999:722) cites the case of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (NSTU) of what seems to be a new active role of this teachers' union to influence education reform, that of educational research. This role involves financing evaluative studies and collaborating with researchers from universities. In this case the formation of partnership between institutions of higher learning and unions is created. It is argued by Poole (1999:722) that this new role of the teachers' unions of sponsoring research projects or actual research by teachers' union researchers could positively impact the claim of teachers' unions as monitoring education. However, Poole (1999:722) warns that, if policy makers make little consideration of the research results released by teachers' unions, they are likely to abdicate the active research role in favour of the other influential techniques. Such an abdication of the research role by the teachers' unions would be an unfortunate one.

(iv) Political lobbying

Political lobbying is understood to refer to a way of persuasion that accords the unions greater control than depending on the good will of management (Poole 1999:722). The political lobbying strategy is regarded as aggressive and it is a strategy that unions do consider using (Poole 1999:722). The author notes that teachers' unions are unlikely to stop this strategy even if relationship improves between policy makers and the teachers' unions.

2.9 THE NAMIBIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE.

This section of this chapter seeks to present reform initiatives to the Namibian education following the independence of the country. The presentation of these reform initiatives begins with an exposition of the Namibian context which serves as a background for the discussion.

This is preceded by an exposition of the education reform after independence. The Namibian education structure is followed by a description of the development of policies in Namibia that are not Acts of Parliament. This helps to explain how the staffing norm policy was developed (cf 1.5.1).

2.9.1 The Namibian context

Over a number of years, Namibia was under the administrative authorities of countries such as Great Britain, Germany and South Africa. In 1921, the League of Nations conferred mandatory powers over Namibia to the former apartheid South African Government (Gottschalk 1988:496). These mandatory powers were revoked by the United Nations in 1966. However, the South African Government continued administering the country until the 21st March 1990 when the country attained independence. For Namibia as a mandatory territory, the years of the South African administration meant the imposition of all the apartheid structures applicable in South Africa, hence the introduction of ‘Bantustanisation’ and ‘Bantu education’, as well as the hegemony of Afrikaans as the *lingua franca* and as the language of professional and social advancement (Gretschel 2001:111-112).

According to the latest estimated population by UNAIDS, Namibia has a small population of 2 044 147 (UNAIDS 2006:1). This small population is distributed across the thirteen political regions of the country, namely: Caprivi, Kavango, Omusati, Otjizondjupa, Oshana, Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Khomas, Karas, Erongo, Kunene and the Hardpap (National Planning Commission (NPC) 2006:1). Based on as yet unpublished Ministry of Education’s 2005 15th Days School Statistics there were 571 389 learners and 18 768 teachers across the country. The given figures translate into a teacher-learner ration of 1:30. After the attainment of the independence of the country, education was brought under the governance of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

2.9.2 Post independence educational reforms

The overhauling of the Namibian education began in 1990 when the country attained independence on the 21st March 1990. This was preceded by the 1989 general elections under the United Nations Resolution 435 which was won by the South West Africa Peoples’ Organisation

(SWAPO). The actual education reforms began in 1991. The years 1990 and 1991 were characterised by the development of policies and policy directives or working papers that set parameters and gave thrust to the envisaged education reforms in the country. Included in the working papers or policies are the National Integrated Education System for an Emergent Namibia: Draft proposal for Educational Reform and Renewal (January 1990); Change with Continuity: Nurturing our future (July 1990); Change with Continuity: Education Reform Directive (November 1990); Pedagogy in Transition: The imperatives of Educational Development (May 1991) and the Education and Culture in Namibia: The Way Forward to 1996 (November 1991).

Many other policies were developed and issued for implementation at the beginning of the education reforms. In 2001, although long over due, an Education Act, hereafter referred to as the Education Act 16 of 2001, was passed by the National Assembly to give a legislative framework to regulate the provision of education in the country.

In the initial period of educational reforms target areas were identified by the responsible Ministry of Education. These, among others, included the dismantling of the ethnic directorates. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MECYS) (1990:9), the restructuring and rationalisation of educational services became a priority for the government following the attainment of independence in 1990. Thus, priorities were set for education that were aimed to dismantle any existing apartheid structures in schooling, and put in place a Namibian education system no longer geared to South Africa's political, economic and social conditions, and one which would not create and maintain inequalities by way of schooling, nor correspond primarily with the expectations of a privileged minority (Gretschel 2001:114).

In 1991 all the 11 separate ethnic Directorates of Education, namely: The Owambo Directorate of Education, The Kavango Directorate of Education, The Caprivi Directorate of Education, The Damara Directorate of Education, The Herero Directorate of Education, The Tswana Directorate of Education, The Nama Directorate of Education, The Coloured Directorate of Education, The Rehoboth Directorate of Education, The Whites Directorate of Education and The Directorate of

National Education were unified under one Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MECYS) with the Head Office in Windhoek and six regional offices (Cohen 1994:386-394).

The unification of education under one educational authority signalled the beginning of the realisation of 'Education for all' that was propagated during the liberation struggle and the first election campaign. Education in rural and urban areas was to be brought to the same level, thus fulfilling the ambitions and aspirations of the formerly excluded and underprivileged majority (Gretschel 2001:114).

2.9.3 The Namibian education management structure

The Ministry of Education has a complicated but decentralised management structure (see figure 2.1). The educational management structure can clearly be discernable at three levels, namely: national, regional and school level. In 1991, the single Ministry of Education had its Head Office in Windhoek and six Regional Offices, namely Windhoek, Keetmanshoop, Khorixas, Rundu, Ondangwa and Katima Mulilo. In 1995 Ondangwa split into Ondangwa East and Ondangwa West. In 2003, following the decentralisation policy of government services, the later two regions split into Oshana, Ohangwena, Oshikoto and Omusati. Currently there is one Head Office and thirteen regional educational directorates which match the thirteen political regions. At the helm of education is the Minister of Education, who is a member of cabinet, with a Deputy Minister. The Permanent Secretary is the accounting officer of the Ministry and has a deputy. There are two undersecretaries: Formal Education and Cultural and Life-long learning. Below these undersecretaries are directors at the Head Office heading various directorates of the Ministry. The overall management responsibility rests with the Executive Management Team (EMT), which comprises of the Permanent Secretary, Director of Planning and Development, the two Undersecretaries and the Director of General Services. Each Regional Directorate is headed by a Director of Education assisted by one deputy. The task of the Regional Directors is mainly confined to the coordination of educational matters within each region and they report to the Permanent Secretary.

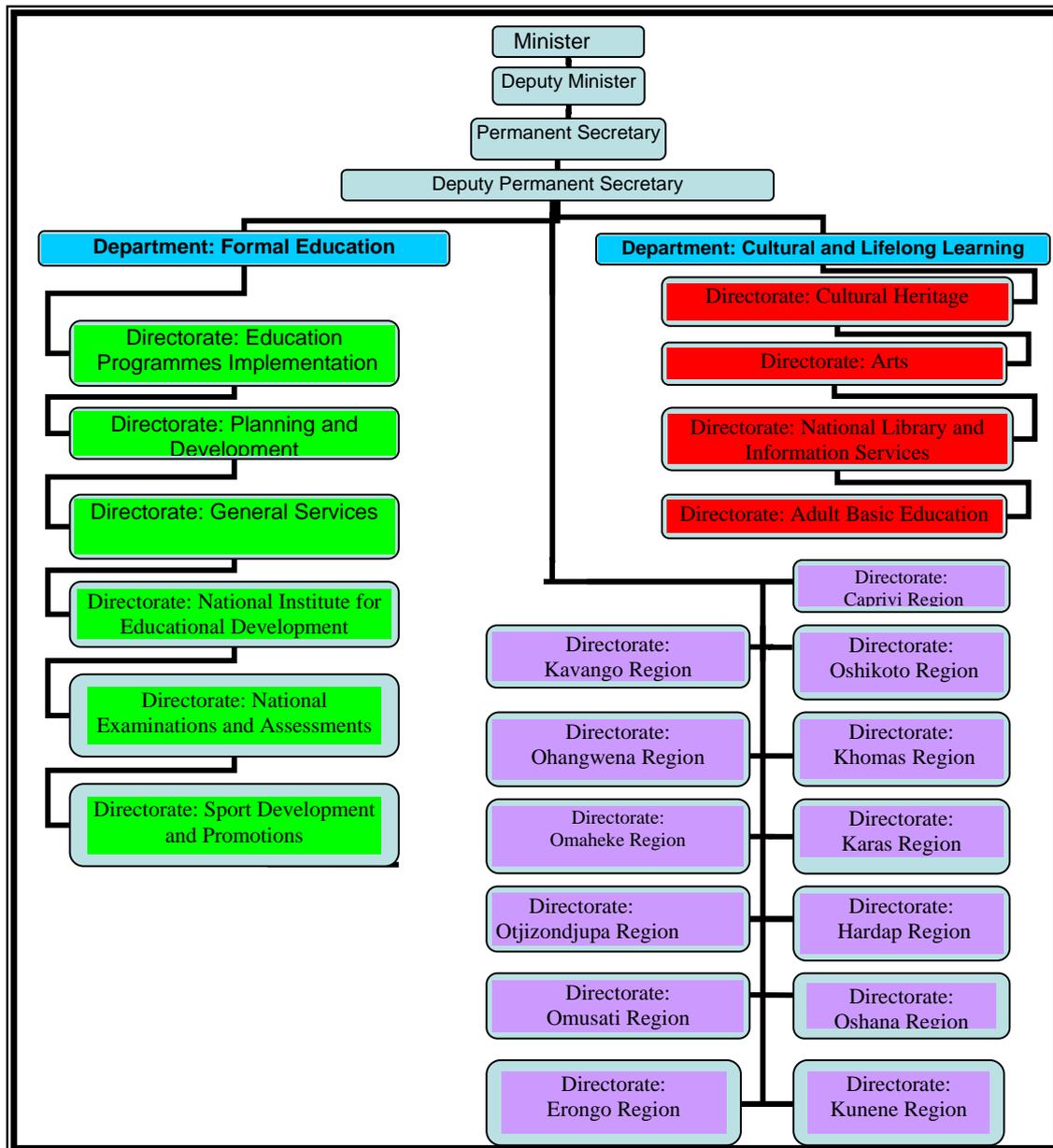


Figure: 2.1 Ministry of Education’s summary of operational structure

Adapted from MBESC (2004:2)

At school level, the management of the school is vested in the Principal who is assisted by subject Heads of Departments. The School Board is the governing body in terms of the provision made in the Education Act 16 of 2001.

2.9.4 Policy development in the Ministry of Education

As argued earlier that due to complexities of the State or the Ministry, not all the development of policies will follow the usual legislative process (cf 1.2.2; 2.5). The next stages of policy development present some unique stages of policy development in which some policies of the Ministry of Education, such as the staffing norm policy under discussion, may be developed.

(i) Problem identification. (Setting the agenda)

An education policy receives a place on the ministerial policy agenda following an identified problem in a particular directorate. In most cases, problems are those that are linked to the pre-independence policies which require change or total repeal in order to have policies that address educational reform in the post-independence era.

(ii) Policy drafting (Policy formulation)

A policy draft is developed by administrators in the particular directorate in which the problem surfaced. As a draft, it is basically a proposal of what the policy intends to address.

(iii) Soliciting inputs from stakeholders (Policy formulation)

When the envisaged policy is still in a draft format, it is circulated to different directorates of the ministry, the thirteen Regional Educational Offices, unions and interested parties. The circulation of the draft is purposed to gain inputs in form of comments and suggestions to the policy draft.

(iv) Final decision by the Executive Management Team on the policy (Policy formulation)

Once the inputs have been received from the stakeholders, the Executive Management Team makes a final decision as to what inputs are to be incorporated from the stakeholders. The final decision of the Executive Management Team is preceded by the input from the Minister of Ministry of Education and the endorsement by the Public Service Commission of Namibia which is accountable to Cabinet.

(v) ***Passing and the adoption of the policy (Policy authorisation and implementation)***

After the final decision has been made by the Executive Management Team (EMT), the policy is given a final title and a number followed by the year in which it was made and it is then passed to administrators for implementation in form of a circular or directives.

2.10 TEACHERS' UNIONS IN NAMIBIA

As pointed out in Chapter 1, there are only two teachers' unions in Namibia: TUN and NANTU (cf 1.5.4). Although both remain active unions in the country, the later union is the officially recognised union (cf 1.5.4). In the subsequent paragraphs, an exposition is presented on NANTU by giving an overview on the historical background, the structure and the role it plays in education.

2.10.1 Historical background.

The formation of NANTU has a close relationship to Namibia's political history (NANTU 2000:1). Prior to its formation, teachers belonged to ethnically divided organisations such as the Namibia Onderwyser Vereniging (NOV), the Owambo Teachers' Association and many other teachers' associations (NANTU 2000:1). Such ethnic division meant that teachers did not have a national union and, as such, their voice in educational matters was weak.

The already formed and vibrant students' organisation, the Namibia National Students' Organisation (NANSO), was a catalyst to the formation of NANTU in the initial stages (NANTU 2000:3); which was officially launched on 11 March 1989 (NANTU 2000:9).

Although the NANTU does not have an updated membership database, the Union officials speculate that there are approximately more than 13 000 Union members out of the more than 18 000 teachers who fall under the public service. NANTU thus has a membership base of more 70% which gives it a majority representation over TUN (Teachers' Union of Namibia).

2.10.2 NANTU's structure

NANTU has a decentralised structure with the National Congress as the highest decision making body (see figure 2.2).

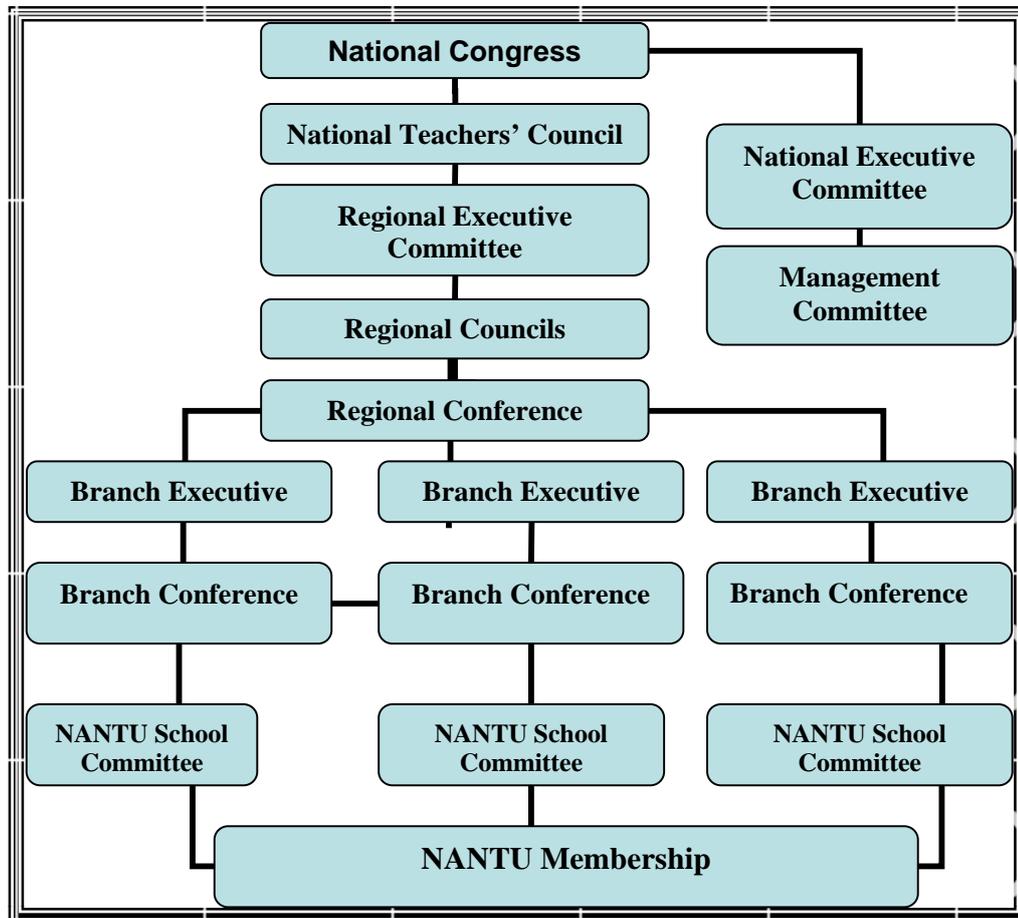


Figure 2.2 NANTU Structure

Adapted from NANTU (2000:viii)

There are structures at national, regional and school level. The National Congress is made up of delegates from the National Executive Committee (NEC), the National Teachers' Council (NTC) and the Regional Executive Committee (REC) (NANTU 1997a:9). Because of the decentralised structure, the management functions are carried out in terms of the constitutional stipulations.

The National Executive Committee consists of:

- The President
- Vice-President
- Secretary General
- Deputy Secretary General
- National Treasurer

- Vice-National Treasurer
- Director of Research, Information and Publicity
- National Secretary
- National Organiser
- Professional Development Co-ordinator
- Secretary for Gender Affairs
- Secretary for Sport
- Secretary for Culture, Community and Students Affairs
- Secretary for Marketing and Members' Benefits (NANTU 1997a:12-13).

2.10.3 The role of NANTU in the Namibian education system

Although the relationship between NANTU and the new government has not been without problems, (NANTU 2000:21), NANTU has been a partner in the reconstruction of an independent Namibia. At the eve of celebrating a decade of national independence, Angula (2000:17) reflected that:

Teachers' unions and students' organisation were staunch allies in the process of educational change and renewal. From the time to time we jointly met to map out the next step. In times of crisis we supported and encouraged each other. Their contribution to the reform process was invaluable.

NANTU on its part has always understood its overall role to be that of an agent of change and a critical partner of government in all attempts to improve education in the benefit of Namibia's disadvantaged majority (NANTU 2000:22).

As a partner in the reconstruction of the country, Johannes Kandombo, the former Director of Education for Ondangwa East, is quoted by (NANTU 2000:21) as saying:

After independence NANTU was assisting the education reform process. There was close co-operation between NANTU and the new Ministry of Education and Culture. NANTU had a vision and an agenda, and knew exactly which changes the new

government should put into place. NANTU kept the ministry informed of what was happening at grassroots level.

However, Thekwane (2002:13) felt that the union should be proactive and take a leading role in providing direction on issues of reform such as the Performance Management System and to provide training and support to its members to understand the overhauling of the education system. This challenge does not necessarily imply that NANTU has not been proactive but rather an encouragement to the union in the wake of new issues that are facing the education system. In answer to this, NANTU has been offering skills training programmes to supplement those that are offered by the Ministry (NANTU 2000:31) and has been instrumental in the fight against absenteeism, laziness, indiscipline and alcohol and drug abuse of some teachers (Ausiku 2002:2).

The education sector is one of the hardest hit sectors by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with an estimated HIV and AIDS of 230 000 infection (Global Health Reporting 2006:1). This is one of the most pressing challenges to be confronted by NANTU and the Ministry of Education. NANTU has begun to realise the impact the disease has on the teaching workforce and has begun to embark on some awareness programmes aimed at the prevention of the further spread of the disease.

2.10.4 The development of the staffing norms: Formal Education Circular 13/2001

(i) Background to the development of the staffing norms

The Ministry of Education, through its main policy document: Towards Education for All highlights that “achieving equity in results is far more complex and difficult than achieving equality of access. But we shall have failed if we aim at anything less” (MEC1993:34). In this respect, the government second commitment to education was to ensure equitable access to schooling and its benefits. In order to achieve equity and equal access the education system had to overcome the legacy of apartheid that was built in the schooling system that of discrimination and segregation.

Succinctly, the Ministry of Education has faced formidable problems of how to address the unfortunate heritage of the colonial past. The unequal distribution of the human resources across

the country in schools remains a challenge for the Ministry. A state existed in which some schools had a favourable teacher-learner ratio while others not (cf 1.5.3). This was a situation which was not financially, educationally and morally unacceptable. Thus, the development of the staffing norms was a response to the removal of the unequal distribution of the teaching and non-teaching personnel in schools across the 13 Regional Education Directorates.

The development of this policy by the Ministry of Education's Directorate of Planning and Development was not a smooth one. This was because "the budgetary provision for the year 1998/1999 financial year suggested that the anticipated increased enrolment would not match with the proportional increases in teaching staff (MBESC 1998b:1). This was likely to be the case in the subsequent year. The Directorate of Planning and Development had a challenge of addressing that year's situation by setting quotas of teachers to be employed while at the same time developing the new staffing norms to replace the 1987 staffing norms. However, NANTU interpreted these two exercises as only one single process, thus calling it a "premature" implementation of the staffing norm (NANTU 1997b:1).

(ii) The role of NANTU in the development of the staffing norms

The participation of NANTU in the staffing norm policy development process stems from one of its roles, functions and duties of workplace union representative which states that "the union shall be entitled to make representations to all committees by the Ministry which deal with conditions of service, educational issues or any other matter of interest to the union" (Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) 1997:2).

The role played by the union in the development of the policy has varied from time to time. For example, in the early stages of development of the policy, NANTU played a role by being part of discussions and the consultation process (MBEC 1997:1). Thus, the union members had the opportunity to prepare documents and study documents of the Ministry pertaining to the development of the staffing norms.

The discussion and consultation role changed to a collective bargaining role in early 1998 at which stage the Union demanded a "comprehensive negotiation" of the staffing norm with the

Ministry (MBEC 1998b:1; NANTU 1998:2). The change in the role was brought about and fuelled by two circulars that were issued by the Ministry at the time of developing the staffing norms, namely : the 13 January 1998 Implementation of Staffing Provisions for 1998 and the General Service Circular No. 1 of 1999: Arrangement for the appointment of teachers in 1999. The implementation of these two documents parallel to the ongoing development of the staffing norms was unacceptable to NANTU since they felt that Clause 8b of the Recognition Agreement between the Government Republic of Namibia (GRN) and NANTU had not been adhered to (NANTU 1999:1). At this stage of development, NANTU's appeal was for the Office of Prime Minister (OPM) to intervene and convince the Ministry of Education to refrain from partially implementing the proposed staffing norms for GRN schools and hostels until negotiations between the two parties (Ministry of Education and NANTU) had been concluded (NANTU 1999:1).

NANTU's concerns regarding the two earlier mentioned circulars were the retrenchment, the transfers of teachers and the employment of the Basic Education Teachers' Diploma (BETD) graduates whom were to be employed by the Ministry. It was felt that the employment of these graduates should not be done at the expense of the teachers already in the service (NANTU 1998:2). Despite such concerns by the Union, the Ministry indicated that it was "unable to be flexible to the extent that it adopts a position which it knows cannot be financed" (MBEC 1998b:2). The spirit of negotiations deteriorated and NANTU indicated that its members were to take the case to the negotiation table and that the union could not rule out the possibility of a strike (cf 1.5.3).

(iii) Ramifications for the stakeholders

Gwaranda (2002:3) accurately makes the following comment on the staffing norms:

The norms are an attempt to reduce class size. Unfortunately, the phasing in of these norms will involve considerable pain. Eventually, the benefits of the norms will be realised once the norms are fully implemented, i.e., when equity in distribution of material, financial and human resources are achieved throughout the country. However, to arrive at this stage, we need to do a number of things. Firstly, there will

be a need for redeployment of all resources, especially the human resources from the 'have' to the 'have not' regions.

Thus, equitable distribution of teaching and non-teaching personnel will require all stakeholders: the Ministry of Education, teachers' unions and teachers themselves, to make a concerted effort to realise the staffing norms. This would mean surplus teachers are to be transferred to schools that need them desperately. However, the transferring exercise will be a mammoth task compared to the actual development of the policy. This is because teachers are generally unwilling to be transferred to remote schools where working conditions are poor.

2.11 SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to expose various theories on policy and the policy process. It was argued that policy is devoid of a theory because the subject is too complex and as such constructing a universal theory is inappropriate (McCool 1995:6-7). This is evident in the attempts to define policy in which various authors use diverse definitions of policy which manifest their different understandings of policy (cf 2.3).

The involvement of stakeholders in the policy process (teachers' unions, in particular) is justified by professional and democratic reasons of participation (Gaziel & Taub 1992:74). It is further justified that some aspects of policy impact teachers' work and as such, it is legitimate that policy development should fall within the scope of collective bargaining (Poole 1999:699).

The Namibian education reform actually began in 1991 following the attainment of independence in 1990 under UN supervision. The years 1990 and 1991 were characterised by the development of policy working papers that gave thrust to education reform. The target area of reform was the dismantling of the ethnic directorates, their unification under one Ministry of Education and curriculum reform.

Although the Ministry of Education runs the educational affairs of the country, the Ministry has a complicated but decentralised educational structure with overall management responsibility vested in the Executive Management Team (EMT).

The development of the staffing norms came at a time when the Ministry of Education faced budget constraints. As such the development of the new staffing norms was paralleled by setting quotas of teachers to be employed in 1998 and 1999 (cf 2.10.6.1). These double exercises were perceived by NANTU as one endeavour. Therefore, NANTU termed it as a 'premature' implementation of the norms (NANTU 1997b:1). These attempts to address the 1998 and 1999 staffing situations in response to budget constraints while developing the new staffing norms varied the role of NANTU in the development process from consultation to collective bargaining which could not rule out the possibility of a strike.

CHAPTER 3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As pointed out in Chapter 1, this research study employs qualitative research as the primary form of investigating the role played by the Namibia National Teachers' Union in the development of the staffing norm policy in Namibia (cf 1.7.2). The chapter itself is thus an extension of paragraph 1.7.2 and presents a theoretical literature review on qualitative research methodologies and research design in order to facilitate an understanding of how the investigation was carried out.

The chapter is divided into three distinguishable parts. Firstly, qualitative research methodology, the research method used in this study, is introduced. This part includes an exposition on the rationale for the choice of qualitative research as the research methodology, ethical considerations in qualitative research and the primary characteristics of qualitative research. Secondly, the chapter expounds reliability and validity in qualitative research. Lastly, the design of the present study is presented. This part encompasses the choice of the participants, data gathering techniques and data analysis.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Before a particular qualitative research methodology used in this research study is pointed out, it is prudent to state that a research methodology is a way of thinking about and studying social reactions (Strauss & Corbin 1998:4). A research methodology is thus a decision making process that is predicated upon a set of background assumptions or paradigms (Birley & Moreland 1998:30). A paradigm in this case is defined as a theoretical model within which the research is conducted, and organises the researcher's view of reality (Birley & Moreland 1998:30). As a decision making process, the research methodology thus aims at helping to understand not only the product of scientific research but the process itself (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2000:45).

3.2.1 Rational for choosing qualitative research

Birley and Moreland (1998:38) argue that the choice of the research methodology hinges upon the subject of research and the related aspects of research design. Niemann, Niemann, Brazelle, van Staden, Heyns and de Wet (2000:283) similarly argue that the problem and purpose of the planned research are the main determinants of choosing the most suitable method of constructing knowledge. One can argue that researching the role of the Namibia National Teachers' Union in the development of the staffing norms can best be done by means of qualitative research as the objective is to understand this role as perceived and experienced by the role players. Moreover, Taylor et al (1997:4) argue that qualitative research is well suited to unravelling the complexities of the policy process, although these authors do not exclude the use of quantitative research in the investigation of the policy related issues.

The choice of qualitative research as the research methodology is based on the grounds that the researcher wants to understand the participants' views or perspectives in the development of the staffing norm policy. In order to do so the use of qualitative research is most suitable because the perspectives of the participants are expressed in words which are best captured by qualitative data gathering. The sum of the argument here is that the choice of a qualitative research best answers the research question.

It is also crucial to note the choice of the research methodology has an influence on the data gathering techniques. In this case, the study uses in-depth and semi-structured interviews as methods of collecting data. These data gathering techniques are typical of qualitative research. The epistemological presentation of in-depth and structured interviews is presented in later paragraphs (cf 3.2.5).

3.2.2 The role of the researcher in qualitative research.

The role that a researcher plays in a qualitative research requires the acceptance that the researcher is part of the study (Speziale & Carpenter 2003:18). During the research project the researcher may assume different roles at different phases of the research project. Strydom (2002:284) thus argues that the role the researcher takes may have to be negotiated and renegotiated as the research project proceeds. Hence, the researcher may assume different roles

and may be an observer, interviewer, or an interpreter of the various facets of the investigation (Speziale & Carpenter 2003:18).

Another issue of contention in the researcher's role is that of objectivity (Speziale & Carpenter 2003:18). The question here is whether objectivity is possible in qualitative research. Since there is no fixed recipe of qualitative research, as argued by Schulze (1999:41), the direct participation of the researcher in a qualitative inquiry subscribes to the principle of "disciplined subjectivity and reflexivity" (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:16). The authors state that the two principles involve self-examination of the researcher's role throughout the entire research process.

Although there is subjective bias in qualitative research, authors such as Speziale and Carpenter (2003:18) argue that the rigor of objectivity is mostly determined by the participants. Participants in this case are to question themselves as to whether they recognise that which the researcher has reported is a true reflection of their culture or experience.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations in research.

Before discussing the ethical issues of research, it is necessary to reflect on the question posed by Neuman (2000:90) namely: "Why be ethical?" Are there rewards in being ethical when conducting research and how important is it to be ethical? Although it is not the intention of this paper to explore this in detail, the explication is intended to serve as a term of reference as to why any research work needs to abide with ethical issues of research.

To begin with, social science researchers take human beings as the objects of study and this raises unique ethical issues that are not typical to pure, clinical laboratories of natural science (Strydom 2002:62). Thus, argue Birley and Moreland (1998:14), "any research involving human (or indeed, animals) subjects is bound to have important ethical implications." It is argued that the issue of ethics in research is complex and subtle and can frequently place the researcher in a moral predicament, which may appear irreconcilable (Cohen et al 2000:49). The issue is one of pursuing scientific interest while being observant not to harm the subject of the study in any way. In this case the research literature points out that it is thus important that researchers strike a

balance between the pursuit of scientific knowledge and the rights of those being studied (Neuman 2000:90).

The next paragraphs explicate some of the ethical principles that should be observed by researchers as they conduct their research investigations.

(i) *Informed consent*

The principle of informed consent emerges from the subject's right to freedom and self-determination (Cohen et al 2000:51). The authors argue that informed consent has two aspects. The first aspect is that it protects and respects the right to self-determination and places some responsibility on the participants should anything go wrong in the research. The second aspect is that the subject has the right to refuse to take part, or withdraw once the research has begun. In a nutshell, informed consent implies that the subjects have the choice about whether to participate in the research or not (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:197). Thus, informed consent means that the participants are informed of the research; are capable of comprehending the information; and have the power of free choice enabling them to consent voluntarily, to participate in the research or decline participation (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001:78).

(ii) *Confidentiality and anonymity*

The information on the subjects should be treated as confidential unless otherwise agreed through informed consent (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:195). Only the researcher should have access to the names of the participants and the data gathered. Therefore "a promise of confidentiality to participants is a guarantee that any information that participants provide will not be publicly reported or made accessible to other parties other than those involved in the research" (Polit et al 2001:138). Anonymity in research implies that the researcher cannot link a participant with data provided by that person (Polit et al 2001:82).

In order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity in this study, the data does not provide real names of the participants and the results of investigation are reported as group results and not as individual results.

(iii) Exposure of respondents to harm

In no way should the researcher act to expose the participants to any danger, be it physical or emotional in nature, in his or her research studies. It is the duty of the researcher to protect the subjects from any physical and mental discomfort, harm and danger (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:197). This implies, for the present study, that I was obliged to inform the participants of any risk that may be involved in the study. In this case, the fact that the participants' identities are protected serves to protect them from harm and repercussions resulting from their statement.

(iv) Violation of privacy/ anonymity/ confidentiality

In order to avoid the violation of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, it is judicial and appropriate to obtain prior permission to use recording devices such as tape recorders, video cameras, microphone and any other recording equipment from the participants when collecting data. Strydom (2002:69) argues that under no circumstances whatsoever should the use of concealed recording devices be used without the knowledge and consent of the respondents. Schulze (2002:18) advises that where the researcher uses recording media with permission, this permission should be in writing.

(v) Competence and skill of the researcher

Strydom (2002:69) argues that "researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation." In other words, the skill of conducting research should match the type of investigation the researcher is conducting. It is recommended that the researcher should be thoroughly prepared before embarking upon a research project and before requesting the participation of others (Schulze 2002:18).

(vi) Informing the subjects about the findings

Schulze (2002:19) states that informing the participants about the research results are to be done as a gesture of gratitude for their participation in the research project. Informing subjects about the research findings should be done objectively and it should in no way violate the confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of the participants.

3.2.4 Characteristics of qualitative research

Qualitative research is an umbrella term that refers to several research strategies that share certain characteristics (Patton 2001:4), which will, however not be apparent in all qualitative research. These characteristics help to elucidate the common strands that demonstrate why each research, in spite of the differences, fits the category of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:29). Furthermore, these characteristics affirm the rationale behind the choice of qualitative research as a research methodology for the current study.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:29-33) identify five features that typify qualitative research. The paragraphs below present an explication of these characteristics.

(i) Qualitative research has the natural setting, as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.

Typically, qualitative investigation occurs in the subject's natural environment. The qualitative researcher does the research where the event being studied happens. The argument being that the researcher enters and spends considerable time in places of investigations, such as schools or families, learning about issues of interest (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:29). Once the researcher enters the natural setting he or she becomes instrumental in collecting data. The context to the research study is regarded as important to the qualitative investigation (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:30). This is why Bogdan and Biklen (1992:29) argue that "to divorce the act, word or gesture from its context is, for a qualitative researcher, to lose sight of the significance."

(ii) Qualitative research is descriptive

Whatever type of qualitative approach is employed in a qualitative investigation, the qualitative researcher's report of the findings is made in a rich literal style (Speziale & Carpenter 2003:18). In this study the participants' perspectives are the findings of the study. These findings are reported in a narrative style in which verbatim quotations are used to support the arguments made in presenting the findings. Thus, the words of the participants are important in the presentation of the findings of this study.

(iii) Qualitative researchers are concerned with the process rather than simply with the outcomes or the product.

Qualitative researchers place emphasis on the process used in the investigation of the research study in order to comprehend the social phenomenon being studied. They become committed to the discovery through the use of multiple ways of understanding (Speziale & Carpenter 2003:17). The process of discovery will determine what kind of data collection method is employed to understand a single phenomenon (Speziale & Carpenter 2003:17).

(iv) Qualitative researchers tend to analyse data inductively.

Researchers in qualitative inquiry reach conclusions by observing cases and forming generalisations (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:13). This is due to the practice that qualitative researchers do not seek data or evidence to prove or disprove; rather abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:30). The argument being made is that the process of data analysis is like a funnel: Things are open at the beginning and more directed at the bottom (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:32).

(v) 'Meaning' is of essential concern to qualitative approach.

The interest of qualitative researchers is in understanding or making sense of the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:16). By learning the perspectives of the participants, qualitative research illuminates the inner dynamics of situations dynamics that are usually not visible to the outsider (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:32). In order to understand the participants' perspectives in this study an attempt is made to capture the data correctly by means of recording the interviews with the participants and later transcribe them. The interview transcription provides a complete record that can be used to verify the findings of the study.

3.2.5 Data collection method

This subtopic of qualitative research methodology explicates the primary method employed in this research study to collect the research data. The choice of the data collection method made in this case does not imply that this method is superior to other data collection strategies. The

purpose of the research and the research question influenced the data collection strategies chosen.

It is argued by some researchers that interviewing is the predominant or the primary mode of data gathering in qualitative research (Schulze 2002:60; Greef 2002:292). Hence, there are several types of interviews. This research study intends to use only the in-depth interview which is semi-structured. In the subsequent paragraphs, an exposition of this data gathering technique is presented.

In-depth interviews generally refer to one-to-one interviews and is said to be a conversation with a purpose (Greef 2002:298). The goal of this interview, argues Greef (2002:298), is not to find answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, nor evaluate but to understand the experiences of the other people and the meaning they attach to that experience. The in-depth interview as a data gathering method is thus used to determine an individual's perceptions, opinions, facts and forecasts, and their reactions to the initial findings and potential solutions (Greef 2002:298).

Although Schulze (2002:61) states that in the in-depth interview, there are no questions that are pre-formulated or themes that are identified prior to the interview, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:42) argue that the researcher may use a general interview guide or protocol during the interview. In this case the general interview schedule is used to enable the researcher to cover the same ground with each of the participant in order to obtain the information that is required.

When developing the general interview schedule, Greef (2002:29) argues that the questions to be used should be prepared and reviewed with an expert in the field. The questions used in the interview are threefold, namely: main questions, probes and follow up questions (Rubin & Rubin 1995:145). The main questions are used to start and guide the conversation (Greef 2002:299). The probing questions are used to elicit elaboration of details, further explanations and clarification of responses (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:448). Follow up questions are employed to pursue the implications of answers to the main questions (Greef 2002:299).

Since the one to one interview is focussed and discursive, the interviewer should limit his or her contribution to an absolute minimum (Schulze 2002:61). The interviewee in this case must do most of the talking while the interviewer listens attentively to the responses of the interviewee so as to enable him or her to probe and make follow up questions. Since the interviewee may, to a greater extent, be responsible for the shaping of the content of the interview, the interviewer should skilfully direct the interviewee so that the information required is attained.

The recording of data on an audio tape is done during the interview sessions. Tape recording the interviews ensures complete verbal interactions and provides material reliability checks (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:450). Ethical procedures of gaining permission to use recording devices should be obtained prior to the use of such devices in the interview (cf 3.2.3).

3.3 TRUSTWORTHINESS (RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY) IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The concepts validity and reliability have been suggested by some researchers to be typical of quantitative research view and as such are not appropriate for qualitative research (Schulze 2002:79). Because of such view Schulze (2002:79) employs the term trustworthiness in lieu of validity and reliability.

3.3.1 Reliability

Niemann et al (2000:284) state that reliability in qualitative research method is traditionally associated with accuracy, stability, consistency and repeatability of the research. The core meaning in reliability in this case is that of the absence of random errors (Niemann et al 2000:284).

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:48) define reliability as a fit between what researchers record and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being investigated. Reliability in this case has to do with the precision and comprehensiveness of what the study is investigating (Cohen et al 2000:119). The argument of these authors is that reliability is not about striving for uniformity. It is about the correctness and comprehensiveness of the findings of research.

In order to address the issues of reliability in qualitative research, Niemann et al (2000:284-285) suggest both internal and external reliability be addressed. The paragraphs below present such a distinction.

(i) Internal reliability

Internal reliability has reference to reliability during the research project (Niemann et al (2000:284). The writers argue that internal reliability can be ensured or achieved by applying measures such as the followings.

- *Triangulation*: This is a strategy for improving the trustworthiness of the research through the use of multiple methods, data sources and researchers (Mathison 1988:13).
- *Peer examination*: Is a method used to determine whether the causal misrepresentations got into the outcomes of the research. It is done by comparing one's findings of research to those of the other researchers by means of either oral or written work.
- *Consensus*: An agreed understanding is attained through open discussions with the participants.
- *Selection and training*: Competent research assistants, observers and interviewers can be found through selection and training.
- *Auditing*: Is the preservation of all the information of the research which also includes data, surveys and notes so that the findings of the research can be verified by an independent person.
- *Mechanisation*: Involves the use of audiotapes and video recordings to store the information and computers to process data.
- *Member checks*: Is a way that ensures that contradictions in the findings are referred back to the persons studied for an explanation.

(ii) External reliability

According to Niemann et al (2000:284), external reliability refers to the verification of the findings of the research, when independent researchers under the same situation using the same participants carry out the same research. The argument being that describing the status and role of the research can enhance external reliability subjects, relevant characteristics of the participants, concepts used, theoretical ideas and methods used.

3.3.2 Validity

Birley and Moreland (1998:41) state that validity entails ensuring that the data sets gathered or items used are pertinent or relevant to the research being conducted. One may then argue that the validity of the research is influenced by the techniques employed in collecting data during the research. For example, Cohen et al (2000:105) state that in qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of data attained, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher. Patton (2001:14) puts forward a similar argument stating that the credibility of qualitative research methods depends to a large degree on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing the fieldwork. This is because the researcher is an instrument in the collection of data

In an attempt to address the facet of validity in research, the next two paragraphs set to expose the two kinds of validity, namely: internal and external validity.

(i) Internal validity

Internal validity seeks to show that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data, which a piece of research provides, can actually be sustained by data (Cohen et al 2000:107). Other researchers, such as Birley and Moreland (1998:42), argue that internal validity concerns the techniques directly related to the intended outcomes and concerns of the research. Accordingly accuracy within the research is influenced by techniques used in collecting data which will ultimately influence the findings of the research. In order to ensure internal reliability, LeCompte and Preissle (1993:338) argue that internal validity can be addressed by using low-inference descriptors, multiple researchers, participant researchers, peer examination researchers and mechanical means to record, store and retrieve data.

(ii) External validity

The external validity has reference to the degree to which the results of the research can be generalised to wider population, cases or situations (Cohen et al 2000:109; McMillan & Schumacher 2001:167). Thus, external validity is seen as the applicability of the outcomes of the research to other situations or cases that may be studied. Eisenhart and Howe (1992:647) equate the generalisability or external validity to mean comparability and transferability of the research

findings. If the research findings are to be transferable or generalised, then qualitative research should provide a clear, detailed and in-depth description so that others can choose as to what extent the results of a research work are generalisable (Schofield 1993:200). Schofield (1993:209) argues that qualitative research can be generalised by studying the typical issues of transferability and performing multiple studies.

3.3.3 Ensuring trustworthiness using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four alternative canons

Although a sizeable explication has been presented on validity of the qualitative research, De Vos (2002:351-353) presents some alternative ways of ensuring the soundness of qualitative research using Lincoln and Guba's (1985:290) model to ensure the validity of the research outcomes. These are explained in the following four paragraphs

(i) Credibility

Credibility is the alternative to internal validity and seeks to show that the investigation was carried out in such a way that ensures that the subject was accurately identified and described (De Vos 2002:351). The writer states that once the subject is correctly identified, parameters are placed around the subject to ensure that the research study becomes valid. In other words, what the authors stress on credibility of qualitative research is that the subject of research should be correctly identified first on which the research study will revolve.

(ii) Transferability

Transferability is the alternative to external validity (De Vos 2002:352). It carries the notion that the qualitative research results can be tested against generalisation or applicability of the research results to another setting or context. The transferability of qualitative research results can prove to be difficult but can be counterchallenged by referring back to the original theoretical framework to show how the data collection and analysis will be guided by concepts and models (De Vos 2002:352).

(iii) Dependability

De Vos (2002:352) states that dependability is the alternative for reliability. The qualitative research outcomes are tested for reliability or replication of the same or similar outcomes if it is conducted with the same participants in the same context.

(iv) Confirmability

Confirmability entails the notion of objectivity (De Vos 2002:352). The research results are tested to gain assurance of the reflection of the subjects and the inquiry itself, rather than the creation of the researcher's biasness or prejudices (Schulze 2002:79). The research study's objectiveness can be established by a second study placed solely on data consideration (De Vos 2002:352). The author sets the criteria for objectivity by questioning, "do data help confirm the general findings and lead to implications?" By implication, if the data confirms the general findings one can then be assured that the research is free from the biasness and prejudices of the researcher. This then means that objectivity in research has been attained.

3.4 DESIGN OF PRESENT STUDY

This section of the chapter presents the actual research design or plan chosen to investigate the research topic. It is thus written against the background of the exposition that has been written earlier in this chapter. It is presented by examining aspects that pertain to the research design employed in this research study.

3.4.1 The option of the qualitative research methodology

As pointed out earlier, this research study employs qualitative research study as the primary form of investigation (cf 1.7.2; 3.2.1). The option of employing qualitative research as the primary form of investigation was influenced by the fact that the qualitative research methodology best answers the research question. In other words, the experiences of the key participants in the development of staffing norms could best be expressed in words and not in numbers. In this case the policy research methodology, as a qualitative research method, was used. As argued by Taylor et al (1997:41), policy research aims at unravelling the complexities of the policy process.

3.4.2 Statement of subjectivity

In this study, the researcher was the research instrument because of my direct involvement in the gathering of data during the interviews. My direct involvement may have influenced the research findings. However, I endeavoured throughout the study to be as objective as possible. In order to ensure that this study was objective as possible, in the report of the findings of the study the arguments raised are supported by verbatim quotations of the participants.

In addition to the attainment of objectivity in this study, researchers carry out critical self-examination of the role that they play in the whole study. This critical self-examination of my role as researcher reduced the influence of my own bias and prejudices.

3.4.3 Choice of the participants

The choice of the participants was pointed out in Chapter 1 (cf 1.7.2). The study included six participants who were key players in the development of the staffing norm policy. Three of these participants were from the Ministry of Education and the other three participants were from NANTU. The selection of these participants, as stated earlier in paragraph 1.7.2, was based on the argument that the participants were members of the technical team that was set up by the Ministry of Education during the development of the policy and as such these participants were purposefully selected because they had rich information on this topic.

Thus, this study aimed to understand the experiences and perceptions of these selected participants in the development of the policy concerned. This, in a way, provided a glimpse of the opportunities of educational stakeholders in the development of the Ministry of Education policies.

3.4.4 Data collection

This study used in-depth interviews which were semi-structured in order to elicit data from the six selected research participants. The in-depth interviews were semi-structured in the sense that a general interview schedule was drawn with the assistance of an expert in the field of education policy studies, see Appendix A and B. The interview schedule served as a guide during the interviews. It thus helped the interviewer to cover all the required aspects of the research study. It

did not, however, rigidly determine the course of the interviews and participants were free to elaborate on answer or raise issues not included in the schedule.

Two rounds of interviews were made with the participants. The first round of the interviews was intended to raise all the required facets of the study. The follow up interviews aimed to clarify unclear and contradictory statements that surfaced during the first round of the interviews. Thus, in total twelve interviews were conducted. Any inabilities to cover the intended interviews are explained in the limitation of the study (cf 3.4.7, 5.6).

(i) Interviews with the Ministry of Education officials

Three of the six participants were drawn from the technical team of the Ministry of Education at the time of the development of the staffing norms. In both the first and second round of the interviews with two of the three Ministry of Education officials, the interviews were carried at the Head Office in Windhoek and the third official was interviewed at home in Windhoek. An in-depth interview which is semi-structured was conducted with each of these three participants in order to cover all the required points in the study. During the interviews I granted the interviewees the liberty to discuss issues and aspects they feel are important. I probed the interviewees and encouraged them to talk more on areas of interest. The probing of the interviewees and encouragement in talking in areas of interest aids in eliciting more data. The follow up interviews were done three weeks later. Thus, six interviews were conducted with Ministry of Education officials.

These in-depth interviews were recorded on an audio tape upon gaining permission to do the recording. The recording of the interviews allows the interviewer to concentrate on the interviews session. The later transcription of the interviews provides a fuller record of the interviews.

(ii) Interviews with NANTU officials

As it is the case in the interviews with the Ministry of Education officials, another in-depth semi-structured interview was done with the three officials from NANTU. The interviews with these officials were carried out in three towns of Namibia: Windhoek, Swakopmund and Ondangwa

because at the time of writing, some of these participants had left their Union positions held at the time of development of the staffing norms. These officials were purposefully selected to be interviewed because they were members of the NANTU representatives at the time of the development of the staffing norms. They were also given the freedom to discuss issues they felt were important during the interviews. Thus, six interviews were planned with NANTU officials.

In order to avoid digression from the required aspects of the study, the interview schedule is used to keep the interview session within the parameters of data the researcher is looking for. The researcher encourages the interviewees to speak more on the areas of interest. The interviews are recorded and later transcribed for analysis. As it was the case of the interviews with the MBESC officials, follow up interviews with NANTU officials were conducted three weeks later.

3.4.5 Data analysis

Schulze (2002:63) argues, “There is no one correct method of data analysis.” It then follows that what is presented in this section of this chapter does not necessarily mean that it is the only correct way of carrying out qualitative data analysis. The presentation rather serves as a term of reference as to how this study was analysed. The essence of this subtopic is how a researcher leads the reader to the comprehension of the meaning of the experience or phenomenon being studied (De Vos 2002:339).

Before delving into other aspects of data analysis, it is argued that qualitative data analysis is not separate from data gathering (De Vos 2002:341). In other words data analysis is simultaneously done as data is being collected. The assumption underlying this argument is that the researcher as a data gathering instrument is capable of ongoing fine-tuning in order to generate the most fertile array of data (De Vos 2002:341). However, the same author states that in a traditional qualitative inquiry, data analysis involves the data analysis at the site of data gathering and the data analysis away from the site of data collection.

Having exposed the arguments that surround qualitative data analysis, it is now appropriate to look at what is meant by data analysis. De Vos (2002:339) defines data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the huge amount of data collected. The amount of data

derived from the interviews is massive and thus present a great task to the researcher. In light of the massive nature of data collected in qualitative research, Schulze (1999:60) argues that before starting with data collection individual researchers should have a clear plan of how they will manage their data. In the following paragraph, an explanation of how data can be managed is presented.

(i) Data management

Data management is seen as the first step in data analysis away from the site of data collection (De Vos 2002:343). It is a system of storage and retrieval of data during the research project (Schulze 1999:60). This storage system must be designed and put in place prior to the actual gathering of data. The research literature provides a number of ways of how data can be managed. For example, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:482) state that qualitative management can be handled by manual and computer techniques. For the sake of brevity, only the manual data management is listed in this study. This is because, to a greater extent, the study uses this data management technique almost throughout the entire project. These include the use of highlight pens, the use of cards and the colour coding of pages in the left margin (De Vos 1998:336).

In this research study, data management followed the basic technique of highlighting, underlining and colour coding key aspects that rose in the interviews. With the use of the computer, the transcribed interviews were word processed. This made it much easier in colour coding and highlighting when analysing interviews at the outside interviews sites.

(ii) Qualitative reasoning strategies

Although De Vos (1998:340) lists analysis, synthesis, inductive reasoning, bracketing and intuiting as qualitative reasoning strategies, McMillan and Schumacher (2001:461) argue that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying relationships among categories. The authors indicate that inductive analysis is often used in qualitative data analysis. Authors such as Schulze (1999:61) argue that when inductive reasoning is used as a way of analysing data, the researcher begins the research project without an explicit conceptual framework and merely uses general hypotheses to guide the research.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:462) explain that in inductive analysis categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed on data prior to data gathering.

Although it has been argued by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:461) that data analysis is primarily inductive, the same authors argue that a deductive mode of thinking is appropriate to be used at times. Deductive analysis is used to double check raw data and recast tentative analysis at each phase of building to more abstract levels of synthesis (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:462).

A combination of inductive and deductive reasoning is used in this study. The researcher's approach in analysing the interviews is that of identifying patterns and relationships in words of the participants. In this study, inductive reasoning was primarily used to approach issues in general without preconceived knowledge on issues raised and to sift them order to understand the perspectives of the participants. As perspectives became clearer, some inferences could be made from arguments advanced by participants. Although inferences were used, they were used with discretion. Verbatim quotations were used to make deductions or support the issue raised.

(iii) Presentation of data findings

It is required in the final analysis that the researcher presents the findings of the research undertaken. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:487) argue that "a hallmark of most qualitative research is the narrative presentation of data and the diversity of visual representation of data." Since it is a narrative presentation of data, the data is presented as participants' quotations sourced from the interview transcripts. It is argued that the narrative structure chosen is influenced by the complexities of the phenomenon, the purpose of the research and the reading audience (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:487). A number of narrative structures such as descriptive-analytical interpretations, realistic reporting, abstract theoretical discussions and rendering personal accounts can be used in qualitative research studies (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:488). However, McMillan and Schumacher (2001: 488) argue that the context and the language of the participants are important in the presentation of the data.

In this research study, data analysis was done simultaneously with data collection. I analysed data at both the sites of the interviews and off-site. I did this during the interviews by taking notes of key concepts, emphasis and repetitive arguments made by the interviewees. After the interviews I carried a post analysis of the transcribed interviews. The results of the study are then presented in a narrative form in Chapter 4.

3.4.6 Aspects of reliability and validity in the present study

In all research it is necessary to abide by the principles of academic research so that the disseminated research is reliable and valid. The next paragraphs are therefore intended at addressing issues of reliability and validity in the present study. In order to do so, three aspects are covered: reliability of the design, internal validity and triangulation.

(i) Reliability of design

As stated earlier in this chapter, the choice of the research design or plan, that of qualitative research design, is based solely on the consideration that the design used best answers the research question (cf 3.4.1). It is thus stated and emphasised here that the choice of qualitative design best investigates the role played by NANTU in the development of the staffing norms in Namibia. The design best enables the researcher and the reading audience to understand the life experiences of NANTU and Ministry of Education participants in their own words. In other words, both NANTU and Ministry of Education participants' experiences in the participation of the formulation of the staffing norms could be well understood by the reader in words and not in numbers.

(ii) Internal validity

The accuracy of this research study is influenced by the data gathering techniques employed by the researcher. An endeavour was made to ensure that such accuracy was attained by the recording of the interviews with the participants. The interviews were later transcribed. The transcribed interviews provided a complete record of data and these were used to double check or verify if the findings of the research reflected the participants' perspectives. In other words, the transcribed interviews served as a balance and check in the study. The researcher employed

low inference descriptors with quotations from the transcribed interviews to support the statements or findings of the research.

(iii) Triangulation

A system of cross validation among the data sources, data collection strategies, time periods and theoretical schemes is applied to the research study in order to ensure reliability and validity of the research design (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:478). In this research, the tactic employed was that of searching several types of sources that could provide new knowledge about some relationship in the research study. Furthermore, participants' views were contrasted. The contrasting of views enabled the identification of differences in the perspectives of the participants and the approach each participant had towards the development of the staffing norms.

3.4.7 Limitations of the present study

The nature of the study, a dissertation of limited scope, and the fact that only one union and one policy are investigated could be seen as a limitation. However, it could be argued that the principle uncovered could serve as a guideline in other similar instances. The concluding chapter, Chapter 5, provides further limitations of the research.

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have looked at qualitative research methodology and research design. The option to employ qualitative research as the research methodology was determined by the fact that the research methodology best investigates the research topic. This is because the life experiences of the participants in the development of the staffing norms could be presented in words and not in numbers.

The chapter further expounded the aspects of reliability and validity in qualitative research. The two concepts have been perceived as to be linked to quantitative research. However, researchers such as Birley and Moreland (1998:41), Schulze (2002:79) and Niemann et al (2000:284) seem to agree that the validity and reliability has to do with the trustworthiness of the research. The

techniques used in collecting the data influence the validity and reliability of the qualitative research findings.

The design of the present study is summed up in this chapter. Aspects covered included the option of the qualitative research methodology, the data gathering techniques: in-depth interviews which are semi-structured with six chosen participants, the management of the data and the presentation of the data findings.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS OF KEY THEMES

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an analysis of the findings of this study in terms of the perceptions of the six participants interviewed on the role of NANTU in the development of the staffing norms in Namibia. These findings are presented within the following framework: the relationship of NANTU with the Ministry of Education structures, the perceptions of the Ministry of Education policy making, the significance of the involvement of NANTU in the development of the staffing norms, an analysis of the staffing norms development process, perceptions of successes and failures during the policy process and the role that NANTU played during the development of the staffing norms.

The chapter begins by providing the participant characteristics and background information. This aspect intends to convey the background information of the participants which will in a way illuminate the approach employed by participants during the staffing norms development process. The lessons learnt and thoughts for future cooperation conclude the chapter.

4.2 PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

Although limited personal information was divulged by the participants during the interviews, the participants' biographical information aids the reader to understand their background further.

4.2.1 Biographical information of NANTU participants

The three participants from NANTU have a long and rich history of serving the Union. They have occupied significant and influential positions in the bureaucratic structure of the Union. Due to the demands of confidentiality and anonymity, the positions they occupied cannot be disclosed here. However, from the researcher's personal knowledge these three participants are proactive trade unionists in every sense of the word. Thus, the views expressed in this study by these participants may, to a greater extent, be influenced by trade unionism.

4.2.2 Biographical information of the Ministry of Education participants

Like the NANTU participants the three Ministry of Education participants occupied significant positions: management cadre positions in the Ministry of Education structure. One can thus infer that the views that were expressed by these participants, to some extent, were influenced by the positions that they held in the Ministry of Education structure.

4.2.3 Interviews with the participants

An initial personal semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the six participants. Some participants were interviewed at home. This was due to retirement and/or changed employment. Others were interviewed at their respective workplaces. These interviews ranged between 1½ to 2 hours. In addition, follow up interviews were arranged three weeks later with all the participants. However, not all the follow up interviews were recorded as planned since two of the participants preferred to give the researcher follow up answers by means of personal notes. The reason for this was that the participants cited work commitment and therefore limited or no time was available to accommodate the researcher (see limitations of this study). These interviews were recorded on audio tape and later transcribed for analysis. All interviews were conducted in English.

All recorded interviews were later transcribed. The transcripts (see appendix C and D for a sample) and the additional notes formed the data which were later analysed. The analysis of the interviews conducted took the form of on site and off site analysis. The recorded interviews in this case provide a complete record of reference for this study and thus can be employed to verify the findings that are presented later in this chapter. In the following sections, the findings of the research are discussed.

4.3 NANTU'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION STRUCTURE

Although NANTU is the recognised teachers' union in terms of the Recognition and Collective Agreement with the Ministry of Education, this Union is not represented on all the Ministry of Education's Management structures such as the Management Policy Coordinating Committee (MPCC) or the Executive Management Team (EMT). A Ministry of Education participant

commented that the reason for NANTU's non-representation was that NANTU and the Ministry of Education are separate entities whose functions and responsibilities are quite different from each other. However, there are other committees of the Ministry of Education in operation on which NANTU is represented such as the Teaching Service Committee. Through such committees the Union has the opportunity to voice grievances that the teaching fraternity experiences. Although this explanation is valid, one NANTU participant "*wondered why NANTU is not represented*" on such management structures. It appears that the representation of NANTU on non-management structures of the Ministry is felt insufficient to influence decisions that affect teachers.

4.4 PERCEPTIONS OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION POLICY MAKING.

The perceptions expressed by the research participants reflect a strong determinant of the behaviour of the decision makers. Perceptions determine how stakeholders cooperate during policy making. Generally, all research participants agreed that the involvement of stakeholders in the policy process was an indispensable ingredient to the process. The participants viewed the participation of stakeholders in the Ministry of Education policy process as attributable to the following factors, namely: compliance to certain government policy provisions, as a way of soliciting inputs or views from stakeholders, value addition to Ministry of Education policy process, supporting the implementation stage of policy process, making balanced decisions, and the right to be informed. These viewed factors are further explored in the next paragraphs.

4.4.1 Compliance to certain government policy provisions

Comparatively, the participation of stakeholders in the Ministry of Education policy process due to compliance to certain government policy provision was more strongly advanced by the Ministry of Education research participants than NANTU participants. The former attributed participation of stakeholders in the Ministry of Education policy process as stemming from the ministerial policy goals of "*equity, access, democracy, efficiency, life long learning and quality.*" One Ministry of Education participant was of the opinion that, among the ministerial goals, it was "*democracy that enticed that one had to involve stakeholders in educational matters.*" The participant emphasised that democracy was an ideal which could not be done away with in a society like Namibia. As an ideal it implied that policy process "*was not a one man's show*" but

a participatory process by all that affect and are being affected in the process. The Ministry of Education stakeholders appeared to be diverse and included “*communities, teachers and teacher’s unions such as NANTU*” listed by one participant.

From all the listed stakeholders, bureaucrats were of the view that the participation of stakeholders such as NANTU could not be omitted because by law they [NANTU] are entitled to be represented in the formulation of the policy. Such representation, as deduced from one participant, is based on the understanding that “*NANTU has the bargaining power with Government.*” NANTU’s possession of bargaining power meant that NANTU was the only Union, from the two in existence: NANTU and TUN, which could represent teachers on the bargaining table with the government. In other words, as explained by one participant, NANTU was the “*official spokesperson*” for teachers

From the Union’s perspective, participation in the Ministry of Education policy process is seen as an entitlement. One NANTU participant defined participation as a participatory entitlement because the Labour Act, Act No. 6 of 1992 and the Collective Agreement between the Government of Namibia and NANTU make provision for such participation. It is in the Union’s understanding that the policy provisions on participations remain powerful tools that warrant participation in educational activities which include the Ministry of Education policy process.

4.4.2 Soliciting inputs for the policy making

A general consensus existed among Ministry of Education and NANTU participants on the instrumentalism of policy participation. The inputs, in form of views expressed, obtained from educational stakeholders were thought to enrich policy making decisions. The Ministry of Education, being the input solicitor, provided NANTU the opportunity to contribute the policy process. The presentation of opportunity to NANTU to contribute to the policy process was supported by one Ministry of Education participant who remarked that we [Ministry] “*allowed them [NANTU] to make meaningful contribution through-out the process.*” A close look at phrases like “*make meaningful contribution*” and “*throughout the policy process*” registers the understanding that inputs from stakeholders were indispensable and thus cherished throughout the policy process.

For the Union, the solicitation of inputs did not only provide an opportunity to contribute to the policy process but also provided an assurance that some of the Union dreams would be realised. The Union felt that they had made valuable inputs on aspects such as “*conditions of services*” for the teachers that would be redeployed and “*the issue of a volunteer teacher being counted as part of the broader norms*” as well as the “*reduced teacher-learner ratio.*” Union participants considered the latter a precondition for the delivery of quality education. In the view of the Union, quality education would only be achievable when class sizes were small.

It appeared that, as deduced from the fears of one NANTU participant, that transportation or relocation expenses as well as finding accommodation were issues that were to be left to the redeployed teacher(s). It was felt important by the Union that addressing issues with possible effects on redeployment would be a step in the right direction and that would make the implementation stage of the policy much easier. Despite NANTU being vocal over issues that would affect teachers due to the new norms, NANTU’s contribution was not clear, if not mentioned at all.

4.4.3 Value addition to the Ministry of Education policy process

Both the Ministry of Education and NANTU viewed the involvement of stakeholders as a way of “*adding value*” to the Ministry of Education policy process. This perception had twofold notions.

Firstly, it enabled the policy practitioners [Ministry of Education bureaucrats] to make “*well rounded decisions.*” Well rounded decisions were understood only being made when each party involved in the decision making process would be allowed to make an input prior to making decisions. For example one participant explained this as follow: “*Each [party] have their own side of the story: you see, instead of looking at the Ministry’s side they come up with the teacher’s side of the story.*” This meant that those involved in decision making would have a number of points for consideration on which they are to base their decisions.

Secondly, as expressed by Union participants, it gave the Union “ownership over the policy process.” The fact that NANTU, being the majority representative of teachers in the country, participated in the development meant that stakeholders’ inputs were taken into consideration as decisions were made. Thus, the staffing norms policy was seen as a policy of educational stakeholders because of their participation in the development process. It appeared that NANTU’s technical committee members were satisfied with the deal signed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Value addition in this respect was seen in terms of the acceptance of the “ownership” over the policy. Therefore, one NANTU participant summed it up on value addition with emphasis by stating that “in the final analysis we stakeholders saw the policy as our own product: a product we own and not someone’s product but our product.” Thus, the signed agreement between NANTU and the Ministry was viewed as a testimony to such ownership.

4.4.4 Supporting the policy implementation stage

The Ministry of Education appreciated the link between the development stage and the implementation stage of its policies. In other words, the Ministry of Education viewed that the successful implementation of the staffing norms being developed would hinge upon the degree of participation of external stakeholders. One Ministry of Education participants explained as follows:

...if teachers understood the policy, they would contribute to make the development process better. They would even be able to support the implementation. They would coach their members and say colleagues this is how we should implement the policy.

This Ministry of Education view ties well with the value addition notion expressed earlier in paragraph 4.4.3. Thus, a participant explained that NANTU, as a teachers’ union, would be in a position to support the implementation of the policy if they were accorded the opportunity to participate in the development stage of the policy. In other words, teachers who are the implementing vehicles would only be in a good position to support the implementation of the policy if they participated, in one way or the other, in the actual preparation of the policy.

4.4.5 Stakeholders' right to be informed

Generally, policies have impact on stakeholders. Because of the impact nature of policies, those who would be affected by policies have *“the right to be informed.”* NANTU had argued that *“we are stakeholders”* and therefore deserve to be *“informed.”* Moreover teachers are the implementing agents and therefore *“need to understand what is happening in the education sector.”* Bureaucrats were also of the opinion that policies whose nature *“directly affects its members [NANTU members] and directly affects their [Union members] chances should have stakeholders in involved.”*

The perception of the stakeholders' right to be informed registers the understanding that stakeholders are affected by the policy. This is because stakeholders such as teachers are the means of implementing the Ministry of Education policies. It is thus imperative that they become involved in the development of such policies. The involvement in the development of policies would provide them with the opportunity to have their voice heard. NANTU participants felt that since *“individual voices are not that effective in influencing the policy process, a collective voice through structures such as NANTU would make sure that they are properly informed.”* In other words, individual stakeholder members are not in a position to articulate or influence Ministry of Education policies. The ability to influence Ministry of Education policies hinged on collective bargaining through union representation.

Discussion

Like any other institution, the Ministry of Education policy making is a web of decisions. In this institution there are multiple stakeholders that can be classified, in terms of Harman (1984:18), as official and non-official actors. The multiplicity of such stakeholders in policy making creates what Taylor et al (1997:24) and Ozga (2000:1) call as a contested arena or terrain of those whose values will receive priority on the agenda. In whose interest are decisions being made? This is an obvious and pertinent question that is always asked considering that stakeholders in education do not operate on equal footing.

For the Ministry of Education, the perceptions that stakeholders have of its policy making determine the behaviour and cooperation that may be accorded during the policy process.

Information utilisation by decision makers such as the Ministry of Education bureaucrats is imperative to make right policy decisions. In other words it is important that policy making should increasingly be informed (Reimers & McGinn 1995:7). This may be done by soliciting inputs from stakeholders in form of discussions and consultation. Drawing inputs from stakeholders demonstrates transparency on the operation of the Ministry and creates a culture of open debate (cf 1.1, Harlech-Jones 1992:2).

4.5 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NANTU AS A STAKEHOLDER IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STAFFING NORMS

The significance of NANTU as a stakeholder in the development of the staffing norms cannot be over-emphasised. It was perceived by both the Ministry of Education and NANTU participants that NANTU was an indispensable actor in the entire policy process. The significance of the Union was attributable to the following reasons:

Firstly, as emphasised by one participant, “*NANTU represented the majority of the teaching fraternity in the country.*” Because of the majority representation, “*NANTU also held the collective bargaining recognition with the government.*” The collective bargaining recognition gave NANTU the sole right to participate at the level of policy making. The implication for the Ministry of Education, as explained by one Ministry of Education participant, “*was that the development of the staffing norms was subject to the representation of teachers through their recognised teachers’ trade union.*” This meant that, although bureaucrats were in a position to develop the norms, the developed norms would not come into effect without reaching a common understanding with the Union. For the Ministry of Education the Union participation was significant because it would be inconsistent with the legal provision if the Union would not have participated since the issue of the norms affected teachers.

Secondly, the Union participants saw the participation of NANTU in the policy process as significant because they viewed NANTU as a “*professional union.*” The participant explained that “*as a professional union NANTU’s constituents were teachers in the profession.*” As a professional union when there are matters that affect the professionals, it is inevitable that those professionals become involved. Education policy making is an example of issues affecting

professional unions. However, some Ministry of Education participants felt that the “*Union lacked some professionalism*” in the process because “*some individuals did not act professionally*” during the policy process. This difference of opinion is important. Where as the Union saw itself as a professional, the Ministry of Education argued that some members lacked professionalism and therefore did not consider their contribution to the policy debate as significant.

Thirdly, NANTU’s significance on the participation in the staffing norms development process was linked to the historical imbalances that existed prior to independence and still continue after the independence of the country. With the development of the staffing norms NANTU realised that the staffing norms would be one of the appropriate tools to address the inequalities of the past. In light of this argument one NANTU participant remarked: “*the staffing norms are tools that are used in redressing the inequalities of the past*” and “*ensures equal distribution of resources.*” The resources that were to be equally distributed in this respect had reference to the equal distribution of human resources [teachers] across the thirteen education regions of the country. The Ministry of Education participants were of the opinion that NANTU would be an indispensable and critical partner in redressing the inequalities that existed in the education system. The Ministry of Education felt that the development of the staffing norms with the Union participation would be a “*step in the right direction.*”

Fourthly, NANTU’s participation in the staffing norms development exercise was seen as imperative because the staffing norms touched “*the condition of service of teachers*” and therefore NANTU was “*to see to it that their [teachers] conditions of service were not infringed upon.*” To illustrate this point of the condition of service one participant explained:

...for example, a teacher in primary school will teach 35 maximum number of learners and a teacher in secondary will teach a maximum of 30. That is what we agreed upon with NANTU as the staffing norms. But now if you add all learners involved, let us say learners in Khomas Region and you divide those learners by 35 of course for primary schools and by 30 for secondary schools then you will come back with a certain number: so you have a

certain quota or number. So it meant that some teachers would probably lose their jobs because they have become a surplus.

Although the staffing norms were perceived as having to do with the conditions of service, some of the Ministry of Education participant viewed it as dealing with the issue of “*bread and butter.*” In other words, the Ministry of Education saw the driving reason(s) of NANTU participation as mainly concerned with the possible loss of jobs of teachers in the process which would imply a loss of income for its members. On the contrary, in case of the NANTU, it was felt that “*its base was being threatened,*” as explained by a Union participant. Obviously the threat to NANTU’s base had reference to retrenchment of some teachers. Seemingly, the Ministry of Education had a point when it argued that the Union was concerned with the condition of service.

Given the above scenario, it was therefore the Union’s responsibility to represent the affected teachers so as “*to get a voice and a fair share*” of representation in the process. Taking cognisance of this view it appeared that the Union saw their role as ensuring that teachers do not lose employment because of the staffing norms.

Fifthly, it was also felt significant that NANTU should be involved in staffing norms policy process as a “*voice of the teaching fraternity,*” as one NANTU participant puts it. The Union participant elaborated that “*individual teachers were not in a position to articulate or influence the policy effectively.*” It was felt that it was only through “*bodies like NANTU that they were able to engage the government on these issues.*” This made NANTU the only structure that could participate in the development exercise of the staffing norms. Thus, through a collective body such as NANTU it was ensured that the individual teacher voices were heard by policy makers.

Lastly, some participants felt that it was important for NANTU to participate in the development of the staffing norms in order to avert the effects of the norms on teachers. One participant, in terms of the realisation, saw the averting argument that “*staffing norms were issues that invariably affected teachers.*” Therefore, as one NANTU participant explained, “*NANTU*

averted the original staffing norms proposals from being implemented,” maintained one NANTU participant. The Union emphasised the aversion argument by stating:

Shouldn't NANTU have been there, the government or the Ministry of Education would have proceeded with the implementation of this policy as they originally envisaged without the inputs of teachers let alone the teachers' organisation like NANTU.

Discussion

The participation of NANTU in the policy process came as no surprise. By definition, participation refers to the involvement of leaders of lawful organisations which represent the different interests of the community (Heckroodt 2002:5). Arguing from Harman's (1984:20) perspective, NANTU as a non-official policy actor was significant because it had the capacity to exert pressure on the Ministry of Education structure. NANTU was in a position to influence the policy considering the fact that it represented the majority of teachers in the country.

It is important to note that, as argued by Moe (2001:43) and Bascia (1998:211), teachers' trade unions such as NANTU would always act in the best interests of their members. It is therefore remains more significant to NANTU than the Ministry of Education that the participation in the policy process be well received. Despite confrontations that may possibly arise during the policy process, it is worth mentioning that union representation in the policy process is indispensable.

4.6 OPINIONS ON THE NEED FOR THE NEW STAFFING NORMS

Although there was the Public Service Circular 16 of 1987, which spelt out the staffing norms for the different pre-independence educational administration, *“the circular was never implemented because it was too costly,”* as stated by one Ministry of Education participant. The participant further stated, *“It was only the White Educational Administration that implemented the circular.”* The participant elaborated that with the dawn of independence in 1990 there was the expectations that in the newly independent country it would be possible to give everybody education in a way the Administration for Whites provided education for white children.

On the contrary, the Union had a different view, and felt that it was a *“deliberate act”* of not implementing the circular for the other educational administration. The fact that each ethnic

educational administration had its own norms was a deliberate exercise to sideline the education of the indigenous people. Thus, as gathered from the participants' views, the Union felt that the earlier norms expressed in the Public Service Circular 16 of 1987 were not fair.

Given the situation that prevailed during the pre-independence dispensation, all the participants in this study seemed to unanimously agree that the development of the new staffing norms was seen as *“tools that would be used in redressing the inequalities of the past and that the new staffing norms would ensure that there is equal distribution of resources.”*

The development of the staffing norms for both parties that were involved in the process was seen as a step in the right direction of educational reform. For the Ministry of Education it would result in the attainment of its set major goals and in particular the goal of equity. For NANTU as one of the stakeholders with great interest in education, it would result in the realisation of the dream of ensuring equal and fair distribution of the human resources across the educational regions of the country. A NANTU participant, who stated that, echoed this Union dream:

We wanted to have the teacher-learner ratio that is equal through out the country. So even if you are in primary or secondary schools in rural areas and urban areas and you are teaching Grade 1 you must have the same number of learners.

It can therefore be argued that the principal idea behind the development of the staffing norms was to address the inequalities of the colonial dispensation. As such, NANTU as a teachers' trade union, *“did not have a problem with its development,”* as explained by one Union participant.

Although the new staffing norms were imperative, their development would prove to be an insurmountable undertaking. It happened that at the time of the development of the staffing norms the Ministry of Education had experienced financial constraints. In view of this one NANTU participant stated:

It happened that the budget ceiling could not cater for our teachers' salaries, other personnel salaries and the other activities such as building classrooms, buying materials, text books et cetera. So we had to rationalise the resources at our disposal.

In spite of issue being raised, none of the Ministry of Education participants stated how they had to rationalise the resources.

From the Union's perspective the financial constraints experienced by the Ministry of Education was seen to have been brought by *"the implementation of the WASCOM's (Wages and Salaries Commission) recommendations as well as the fact that the improvement of the teachers' qualifications determined their salaries."* According to participants these two combined situational factors *"created a situation where 80% of the educational budget was devoted to salaries and very little was left for the other educational needs: the purchase of the stationery and the like."*

The financial constraints created the scenario in which the Ministry of Education had to compromise between addressing the inequalities of teacher distribution and cutting costs in order to work within the given financial parameters. For the Union the reduction of the educational costs was achieved mainly *"by retrenching some teachers."* Although the Union participants stated that *"the retrenchment was not done in a straight forward way; the non-renewal of teacher contracts was perceived as a way of retrenching teachers."* Having pointed out the financial scenario at the time of the development of the norms, NANTU viewed the exercise as aimed at saving costs. Therefore the Union termed the whole policy development process as *"financial driven"* and saw the Ministry of Education as *"being obsessed with saving costs."*

The other situational factor that prevailed at the time of the development of the norms was that some regions were overstaffed while the other regions were understaffed. This then implied that teachers had to be redeployed to areas where they were needed. Such redeployment of teachers meant that the Ministry of Education should provide the redeployed teacher's accommodation and transport. If accommodation and transport of teachers were not provided, it was regarded by the Union as *"subjecting teachers to untold hardship."*

Discussion

The Public Service Circular 16 of 1987, viewed in terms of the SWAPO election manifesto (SWAPO 1989:15), is one of those pre-independence policies that perpetuated the inequalities in education (cf 1.1). Although some participants argued that the circular was “*too costly*” to implement, the fact that only the White Educational Administration implemented the policy is a testimony to the unequal provision of the educational services across the different ethnic populations of the then South West Africa/ Namibia.

Despite the noble intentions of the development of the staffing norms, it is a sad reality that economic constraints were inescapable in this aspect of educational reform. Given such economic reality, the literature points it out that it is hard to think of any other major reform in education that is not accompanied by the injection of large amounts of money (Levin 1998:132). The development of the staffing norms as an educational reform strategy by the Ministry of Education was not immune to the economic constraints. The attempt by the Ministry of Education to kill two birds with one stone, i.e., cutting cost and redressing the inequalities of teacher distribution would prove to be an impractical and insurmountable undertaking.

The Ministry of Education appeared to have been faced with a paradox of two problems. In this case the policy developers [mainly the Ministry of Education], should have developed a focus on the policy, i.e., addressing the unequal teacher-learner and not to let the financial factors derail the intentions of the policy. Peace (1994:366) admonishes that collaborative bargainers should focus on interests and not on position because interests are one party’s concerns about an issue while positions are one party’s solutions to an issue. The Ministry of Education and NANTU should be of the view, as Rosen (1993:37) puts it, “We’re going to sink or swim together” given that the resources placed limitations on the policy that was being developed.

4.7 STAGE OF POLICY MAKING AT WHICH STAKEHOLDERS WERE INCLUDED

Most research participants were of the view that stakeholders were involved early in the development of the staffing norms. One of the participants recalled that they [NANTU] were

“involved early in the process.” However, research participants differed on the precise stage at which stakeholders became involved in the formulation of the staffing norms.

One Ministry of Education participant recalled that twofold discussions took place. There were *“informal discussions”* and *“formal discussions.”* Informal discussions were inside (within the Ministry) and were aimed at identifying the need for the new staffing norms. The informal discussions triggered the realisation that the pre-independence staffing norms Circular 16 of the Public Service Commission had never been implemented in full. Formal discussions followed the informal discussions. The Union became involved during formal discussions when the policy was still in a draft stage.

One participant stated that *“obviously NANTU was not involved in the actual preparation or formulation of the policy but the level at which it [NANTU] was involved was when they finalised [the document] and then was submitted to NANTU for comments.”*

What was clear from all participants was that NANTU’s passive participation in the development of the staffing began when the policy was in draft form. Their participation, in this respect, was limited to comments as part of the consultation process. Comments and/or proposals to the policy document were aimed at fine tuning the policy document. The Union’ active participation was evident when it came to the negotiation table. This is deduced from one of Ministry of Education participant who stated that *“we [the Ministry] just involved them when it came to the negotiation time.”* An apparent position of authority in the policy process is evident here. The Ministry had the authority as to when to involve external policy actors.

An apparent concern for the Union on the timing of participation could be observed from Union participants. *“I think we would appreciate it if we became part and parcel of the negotiation right from the onset because if you are only informed at the later stage obviously you would not understand what is really happening and what is expected from you as the implementing agents.”* The preceding complaint conveys the perception, that although Union was involved in policy process, their participation in the actual development was limited to comments only.

Discussion

In democratic societies, stakeholders in education cannot be divorced from policy formulation or development. This is because, as stakeholders, they affect or are being affected by policy (Reimers & McGinn 1997:60, Dunn 1994:70, cf 1.3, 2.7). In line with Taylor (1990:1), all stakeholders that were involved with the development of the staffing norms should first articulate their needs and demands. The timing of when stakeholders should articulate their needs and demands during the policy process was crucial. It is my opinion that stakeholders are supposed to be consulted quite early in the policy process in the form of discussions. Early consultation would have created realisation by all those who would be affected to find ways of contributing to the policy process.

4.8 PERCEPTIONS OF THE SPIRIT OF DISCUSSIONS

Most research participants agreed that discussions took place in a friendly atmosphere. One participant remarked, *“The general held perception of confrontation wherever trade unions are was not uncommon. It is a worldwide perception.”* There was a perception *“that NANTU was a mature organisation”* and *“was not there [at the discussions] to only confront the Ministry but to also contribute to the development of the education system.”*

One Union participant felt that *“the good spirit of discussions perceived by the Ministry of Education was a realisation and an appreciation by the Ministry of Education that the issues raised by the Union were pertinent.”* For example, the participant cited the issue of the volunteer teacher, which the Ministry of Education wanted to be part of the norms. In this respect if the volunteer teacher would be counted as part of the broader norms it would imply that a Namibian teacher would lose a position to a volunteer teacher. Hence a volunteer teacher would take up the position and the Namibian teacher who needed to learn from the volunteer teacher would not be able to do so. Such a state of affairs would result in the defeat of the idea of knowledge empowerment of local teachers.

Although participants felt that there was a good spirit of negotiations on the side of the Union and as such the Ministry thanked the Union for that spirit, the participants had different views on the *“Thank you”* extended by the Ministry to the Union. At some point in time of the development process the Union petitioned the Minister of Education barely four months after the

Ministry had thanked NANTU for the spirit of negotiations in which they have entered. NANTU felt the thanks extended by the Ministry of Education were not genuine. On the contrary, the Ministry of Education maintained that it had been sincere.

From the Union's perspective the petition to the Minister of Education was intended, as argued by one Union participant, *"to express our grievances forcefully."* However, one participant cautioned that although there were quarrels, it did not mean that the two negotiating parties were enemies. The participant maintained and recapitulated, *"You quarrel because of the lack of understanding that is there."*

The petition that was launched in this respect had many aspects some of which were not related to the staffing norms such as the issues of salaries as per WASCOM recommendations. Aspects that were related to the staffing norms included, as listed by the NANTU participant: *"the illegal implementation of the staffing norms, downsizing of teachers, over crowdedness in classrooms, platoon system"*. Among these listed aspects the *"illegal implementation of the staffing norms and downsizing of teachers"* appear to be what ignited the launch of the petition. The Ministry on the other hand refuted the allegations that the Ministry was illegally implementing the new staffing norms or retrenching teachers. The Ministry maintained and argued what it was doing was according to its annual programmes and it was not doing something *"special."* In addition, the Ministry of Education argued that there were no norms to be implemented and thus the Ministry perceived the Union's allegation of illegal implementation of the staffing norms and retrenchment of teachers as a *"misinterpretation"* of what the Ministry was doing compared to the ongoing staffing norms development. However, the Union argued that it did not misinterpret the Ministry's action. A Union participant said that they felt insulted, adding, *"They were insulting our intelligence."* The Union felt insulted because, although the Ministry argued that they were doing their annual programmes, the Ministry was doing something similar to the ongoing staffing norms. As such, argued a Union participant, it was not a misinterpretation of what the Ministry was doing. The Union argued that the elements of the proposed norms, which seemingly were being implemented at the time before consensus was reached, were not supposed to be implemented.

Judging from the petition and the press releases one could argue that the relationship, publicly expressed by the Ministry to NANTU in form of a “*thank you letter*,” was deteriorating. However, one participant upheld the view that “*that is the nature of the relationship*.” The participant seemed to imply that the problems experienced during the development process of the norms were inevitable and that these would lead to the two parties reaching consensus.

Discussion

There is a general perception by many people that ‘when’ and ‘where’ there are trade unions in the discussions, confrontation is inevitable. For example, trade unions are perceived as dinosaurs whose presence impede a free path to democracy (Weiner 1996:85). It appeared that among the Ministry of Education technical team, some members had the same opinion about NANTU. They felt the Union was there to rock the boat at all costs. On the contrary, it seems as if NANTU proved to be a mature trade union whose presence in the development of the staffing norms was appreciated by the Ministry. The Ministry of Education’s letter dated 07th October 1997 is a testimony to this (cf 1.5.4, 2.10).

It is evident from the views expressed by the participants that the mood of discussions which prevailed was indispensable and a prerequisite for the smooth development of the policy. Although discussions could be seen as a weak method of influencing policy, (cf 2.8.2(iii)), the spirit of discussion can be a helpful in indicating to what extent the policy makers are willing to accommodate the views of stakeholders in the policy process.

Generally, petitioning office bearers is not uncommon to trade unions because it is one of the effective tools to gain an immediate audience with such office bearers. In most cases petitions are pre-indicators of lurking industrial actions and are thus aimed at expressing grievances of a worrying party involved in the process (cf 1.5.3).

NANTU’s petition to the Minister of Ministry of Education on the 25th February 1998 was a public expression of the dissatisfaction of the ongoing staffing norms development process. Contrary to the “*thank you*” that was expressed in MBESC (1997:1) on the good spirit of discussions, the petition presents a sharp twist of events taking place at the point of developing

the staffing norms. In this respect the petition provided a glimpse of a change in the good spirit observed during the discussions of the norms and suggested that industrial action was eminent (NANTU 2000:31).

Even though the policy process was characterised by a good spirit, differences of opinions existed among the technical committee members. Some participants felt that differences of opinions did not imply animosities or that parties were adversarial, but could be attributed to the misunderstanding of some aspects of the policy under discussion.

4.9 THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND NANTU POSITIONS DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STAFFING NORMS

Both the Ministry of Education and NANTU had different positions during the policy process. The positions or stances of the two parties illuminate the approach to policy process each party had during the development of staffing norms. On one side, the Ministry of Education's original proposed staffing norms were 1:40 for primary schools and 1:34 for secondary schools which were to be phased in during a period of three years. Such a high teacher-learner ratio was perceived by the Union as an impediment to the attainment of quality education. However, a Ministry of Education participant stated, "*cost and sustainability must always be considered when policy implementation or change is being contemplated. It would be totally unrealistic to propose a policy which was unaffordable.*" The participant further argued, "*The trick in developing policy is to get the best deal that is possible with the available resources.*"

Taking cognisance of the above view concerning getting the best deal from resources, the Ministry maintained that the Union felt that "*the norms submitted by the Ministry were not sufficiently generous in the allocation of staff.*" On the contrary, in the Union's opinion the issue of generosity, although not clearly expressed, was rather understood in the context of the ability to deliver quality education which could be achieved by reducing the teacher-learner ratio to a more favourable one.

Although the financial consideration was important to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Education argued, "*They were not proposing an order that will disadvantage the children.*" This

point remains arguable as to whether the original proposed norm of 1:40 and 1:34 for primary and secondary school respectively would or would not disadvantage learners and advantage the Ministry in terms of financial spending.

In essence, the Ministry of Education's position regarding the development of the staffing norms was that the new staffing norms were affordable. The affordability aspect of the norms had much influence on the approach and stance the Ministry had adopted during the development process of the staffing norms.

On the other side, NANTU argued that its position during the development of the staffing norms was that *“equity and quality education cannot be realised through quick fixes that are based on financial considerations only.”* In this case the Union's argument, as argued by a NANTU participant, was that the Ministry's approach to the development of the staffing norms was that of *“cost and sustainability”* and would not address the enhancement of equity and quality education. In order to ensure equity and quality education, there was still a need to recruit extra teachers. For example the Union argued, *“At the ratio [teacher-learner ratio] of 1:34 at secondary schools it meant that we needed plus-minus 2939 additional teachers to address the situation.”* In other words, at the given teacher-learner ratio of 1:34 in secondary schools a shortage of teachers was forecasted. In light of this, the Union argued that if some teachers would be retrenched, such a move would militate against the desired goals of equity and quality education. Hence, the reduction of teachers would result in an increase in the teachers' workload.

Thus, although the financial consideration was important to the Ministry, NANTU as a stakeholder in education, admittedly, was *“aware of the financial implications”* of the new staffing norms but had maintained its stance that the provision of education is a *“costly exercise and that the Ministry should be ready to make the resources available to the provision of education.”*

During the development process of the new staffing norms the Union felt that there were many ways to address the issue of resources to carry out the staffing norms exercise. Although the Union did not clearly state the various ways the Ministry of Education could use to find more

resources, one NANTU participant argued, *“The Ministry was under pressure to live within the confines of the resources that was allocated by the Ministry of Finance forgetting the issue of quality education.”* The Union in this case felt that the Ministry of Education was being controlled by the Ministry of Finance to such an extent that the Ministry of Education was not in a position to carry out its functions in a manner that effectively enabled it to realise the intended goals in education.

Therefore, during the process NANTU had some reservations about ongoing development process of staffing that were submitted to the Office of the Prime Minister. These objections to the norms were *“the issues of the volunteer teacher being part of the norms and the issue of the teachers being redeployed without transport and accommodation.”* The volunteer issue was objected to by the Union because it would mean that the volunteer teacher would take up the space that was supposed to be filled by a Namibian. Hence, the volunteer teacher was to be counted within the broader norms instead of being additional to the norms. These reservations, for a certain period of time, brought the whole process to a standstill until the Secretary to Cabinet intervened to bring the discussions back to the table.

Discussion

The Ministry of Education and NANTU positions were strong and they determined the pace of the policy process. In terms of Taylor et al (1997:37) the issue of positions reflect the values, interests and power of Ministry of Education and NANTU. Whose values will be heard in the policy process? Who has power to make decisions in the policy process? Where does real power lie in the policy process? These and other questions may help illuminate the politics of the staffing norms development process.

It can be observed that an industrial bargaining model to policy process was at work for both parties (cf 2.8.3). In other words, NANTU and Ministry of Education technical committee members viewed themselves as competitors. In line with Peace (1994:365-366), one can argue that the Ministry of Education worked on the assumption that financial resources were limited and thus financial resources became the primary consideration in developing the staffing norms. The focus of the policy or what needed to be addressed was missed. The union argued that it

wanted to ensure quality education. Thus, the government developed proposals and counter-proposals unilaterally and as a result the process became protracted and tedious.

4.10 RESOLVING OPPOSING OPINIONS

Although some of the participants perceived the policy process as to have taken “*long time*” and as being a “*very tedious process*”, in the final analysis a consensus was reached. In this respect, two parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding expressing an agreement as to what would constitute the new staffing norms.

A NANTU participant remarked that, as time went by during the development process of the staffing norms, the Ministry’s approach in the development process was seen to “*have moved away from financial sustainability towards the equal distribution or reconstruction*” which was an indication to the Union that an agreement was forthcoming. The Union perceived this change on the part of the Ministry as “*the realisation that NANTU was not just trying to be a radical union that was attempting to rock the boat at all cost,*” as explained by one Union participant. From the Union’s point of view the change in the manner in which the Ministry had approached the issue of the staffing norms was an appreciation of the issues raised by the Union so that if the Ministry did not address these issues, they would have adverse implications or consequences.

Participants firmly believed that consensus was reached through the process of “*give and take.*” Although seemingly difficult to define, a compromise had to be reached in which each of the parties had to compromise in order to accept what the other party had offered. To illustrate the negotiating process of “*give and take*” one has to go back to the original staffing norms proposals of the two parties. The Ministry’s original proposed staffing norms were 1:40 and 1:34 for primary and secondary respectively. The Union’s proposal was 1:34 and 1:28 for primary and secondary schools respectively. A compromise had to be reached by each party meeting the other part half way. In other words the Ministry had to reduce its proposed ratio while the Union had increase its proposed ratio and that resulted to in a compromised ratio of 1:35 and 1:30 for primary and secondary schools respectively. A win-win situation in this respect was attained at the end of the negotiation process.

Discussion

Negotiations are generally time-consuming exercises to both parties. In term of the collective bargaining, negotiation is an effective tool to the union because it is all about demands and concessions with an agreement as an objective (Squelch 1999:87). From NANTU's perspective it was evident that anything less than a compromise between it and the Ministry of Education would constitute and would be interpreted as unilateral development and implementation of the staffing norms.

NANTU as the sole bargaining agent, as provided for in OPM (1995:2) and OPM (1997:2), negotiated on behalf of the entire teaching fraternity. The outcomes of the negotiations carry the value: the desires and wishes of the educational community.

4.11 THE HANDLING OF PERSONAL CONFLICT DURING THE POLICY PROCESS

Despite of the prevailed good spirit during the policy process there were some personal conflicts among some technical committee members. One participant recalled that *"I had a bit of a problem with one of the NANTU team member."* The participant felt that the NANTU member *"wasn't always professional."* Although the participant seemed hesitant to explain what was meant, it was clear that Ministry of Education bureaucrats expected a certain level of approach, in terms of argument presentation which should reflect a mutual respect during the policy process from Union participants. A lack of respect in the Union approach is affirmed by one Union participant who stated that a letter from the Ministry of Education was submitted to the Union's technical committee leader expressing *"disappointment in the technical team of the Union for the way or the language that was made or used in the negotiation."* A radical approach was adopted by the Union, which the Ministry's technical team felt uncomfortable with. The approach expected by the Ministry of Education participants was that *"discussion would have taken place in a respectful way."* The Ministry of Education bureaucrats obviously regarded themselves as professionals. Professionalism is an aspect often seen in people who are employed because they are pursuing a career. In contrast, unionists are often seen, as expressed by one participant, as *"militants"* and *"radicals."*

The personal conflict alluded to in the above paragraph was also observed by some participants. For example, one NANTU participant remarked:

In 1998 the new leadership [NANTU leadership] that came into office were people who were radically minded, people who were militant in their approach, and people who felt that a tough line should be taken with the issue of the staffing norms.

Although the NANTU participant described the 1998 leadership as a radically minded leadership, it remains an individual perception because there were those who were not radical in their approach to the policy process. For example, the Ministry of Education, as argued by one participant, “*had no problems with the whole team and its [NANTU’s] leadership.*”

A sense of maturity was demonstrated by all parties involved in the policy process, in which if differences of opinions existed between the two technical teams, teams would request the adjournment of the meeting in order to consult on the aspects of differences. Although the adjournment appeared to be a polite way to the policy process one participant felt it delayed the policy process. Another participant felt that the adjournment of meetings created loopholes for members to miss the next meetings.

Discussion

Generally, personal conflicts are inevitable aspects of forums such as discussions as part of the policy process. From a conflict approach to policy process, competing groups may have different values and access to power during the policy process (Taylor et al 1997:24). Thus, among the representatives of the two technical teams in the policy process a spirit of competition existed as a way of exerting pressure or influencing the policy process.

If one was to consider the fact that teachers’ unions like NANTU are informal actors to the policy process, a radical approach of expressing views during the discussions and negotiations was a strategy that one would perceive as normal. On the contrary, for those policy actors that Harman (1984:18) calls official actors in the policy process (in this case the Ministry of

Education bureaucrats), the radical approach by some members of NANTU's technical team would be perceived as unprofessional conduct at the level of policy making.

All in all, even though personal conflicts existed, one would infer that the discussions and consultations of the policy process were handled in a mature, friendly and respectful way by both parties. The adjournment of meetings, in order to consult on aspects of the policy process, was an essential part of the policy process especially to NANTU as a way of soliciting inputs from its members (cf 4.7). The consultations that happened could be seen as enriching the whole policy process.

4.12 THE ROLES PLAYED BY NANTU DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STAFFING NORMS

The six research participants in this study had different perspectives on the roles that NANTU played during the development of the staffing norms. From the Union's perspectives, one of the research participants was of the view that NANTU played the role of "*a very critical partner.*" As a critical partner NANTU was critical in studying and commenting on documents that were presented by the Ministry of Education's technical team to NANTU's technical team. The participant stated that the Union "*tried to advocate effectively its position that at stages it was not also prepared to compromise.*" Being a critical partner, Union raised fundamental concerns that were more relevant to development of the norms. The raising of the fundamental concerns, in a way served as a constructive point that led to production of a consensus document that the majority of educational stakeholders agree to.

On the contrary, one Ministry of Education participant perceived that NANTU played the role of a "*militant union*", a view that most NANTU and Ministry of Education participants did not agree with. The participant argued that NANTU as an affiliate member of the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) was "*technically... a militant union.*" According to the participant the militant role played by the Union is due to the fact that by nature trade unions were "*only politically motivated for wages and salaries.*" This Union role carries a negative connotation. However, the militant role was closely connected to the individual's approach within the Unions' technical team. A NANTU participant remarked:

It could be true because you see NANTU is a diverse organisation with many elements and individuals and some individuals were militant in their approach as to how they wanted things to go. They had more radical positions as to how issues should be resolved.

This militancy on the part of certain individuals reinforced this view. Furthermore, the militant role of the Union is linked to the demonstrations that it carried out as a way of expressing its discontentment on issues not agreed with the Ministry.

The Union was reportedly to have played “*a research role.*” Despite the fact that this role was a good role, it was limited during the development of the norms. For example the Union, at that particular time, felt that they did not have resources to conduct research on the staffing norms and that “*NANTU never developed seriously that research capacity.*” It also appeared that the research done by the Union would be accepted by the Ministry with difficulty since the Ministry argued that the Union’s research was too “*universal and would not fit the Namibian situation.*”

The Union also played a *consultative role*. The participants were of the view that the consultation was twofold: on one hand the Ministry of Education consulted NANTU on the development of the staffing norms and NANTU, on the other hand, consulted its support base. In other words the consultation process at the development exercise was two directional. The consultation of NANTU by the Ministry of Education occurred in a manner of studying the documents released by the Ministry of Education in order to get comments from the Union. It was argued by some participants that although the consultation was an important aspect in policy formulation, it was quite a “*strenuous and long process*”. Studying documents and providing constructive and critical comments needed skilled people, time and financial resources. The consultation of the support base by NANTU was aimed at informing and gaining inputs from its members in order to enable the Union to prepare for discussions with the Ministry of Education’s technical team.

The Union further played the *negotiating role*. NANTU assumed this role when “*informal and formal discussions*” on the norms appeared to have made no progress. In other words, through discussions, NANTU would not be able to influence the policy process. One of the powerful

tools at the disposal of the Union to influence the policy process was negotiation. The negotiation in this case was aimed at reaching consensus as to the new staffing norms. It was pointed out earlier that the agreement of the new staffing norms was reached through the negotiation process described as “*give and take.*”

Discussion

The different views expressed by the research participants stemmed from the different backgrounds of such research participants. In addition, the perceived roles played by NANTU at the time of the development of the staffing norms were influenced by situational factors such as the time and spirit of discussions and/ or negotiations during the policy process (cf 4.6.2; 4.6.4). The various roles outlined above are an indication that the roles played by the Union varied from time to time (2.9.5 (ii)).

Generally perceived as “dinosaurs whose presence impedes libratory path of free market”, Weiner (1996:85), NANTU was seen as playing the role of a militant union in the eyes of some policy makers. Although perceived as a militant union NANTU was a critical and indispensable partner in the policy process in the sense that its inputs from the consultations and discussions enriched the entire policy process.

Although NANTU played what Poole (1999:722) calls the new role of the teachers’ unions to influence education reform, the research role, it is regrettable that the Union did not have the capacity to carry out research on the staffing norms. This is a function that the Union should develop to be in a position to influence Ministry of Education policy processes.

Of all the roles that NANTU played, the negotiating role, as provided for in Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Government of Namibia, was the only effective way to influence the policy process. It is deemed to have been the only effective because negotiations, through the Collective Agreement, is a legal means available to the Union to influence the policy process (Poole 1999:699; Moe 2001:41-43; cf 2.8.4).

4.13 PERCEPTIONS OF SUCCESSES AND/ OR FAILURES DURING THE POLICY PROCESS

Most of the participants held various opinions relating to the process of developing the staffing norms. This process was described as characterised by successes and failures. From NANTU's perspective, as argued by one participant, the first success of the policy was seen in terms of the ability of those who were involved to come up with a consensus document or policy that the majority of educational stakeholders can accept. The successful production of the staffing norms policy was perceived attributable to the fact that stakeholders, especially the Union, were involved in the policy process. The participation of NANTU was indispensable because the new staffing norms directly affected its members.

Another success, as perceived by the Union, lay in the fact that although the policy process was a protracted one there was "*no industrial action except a peaceful march*" that occurred during the development of the policy. Although there was a possibility of an industrial action, the perception that stakeholders owned the policy process by their involvement in the discussions, consultations and negotiations appeared to be what averted the industrial action.

From the Ministry of Education's perspective as the legitimate policy maker, the success of developing the staffing norms were seen in terms of being able to make "*well rounded decisions*" during the policy process. For many of the research participants, especially the Ministry of Education participants, the process provided "*a learning experience*" which was in fact "*enjoyable*" although at times, as remarked by one Ministry of Education participant, it was also "*frustrating.*"

In as much as participants saw success during the policy process, they were also of the opinion that the policy process had failures. The failures expressed by participants included, among others, time consumption and that the "*matter [staffing norms] were not treated with sufficient urgency on all sides.*"

Among the Union participants there was a feeling that the lack of the capacity to research on its side was a failure during the process. Such incapacity to carry out research to inform the staffing

norms development process placed the Union at the receiving end of the process and thus the Union developed a critical approach to the process.

The exclusion of the other teachers' union [TUN] from the policy process was a failure which, according to most research participants, deprived the policy process of inputs which would have enriched it. Although some participants said that there is “*no one to blame because of the lack of experience*”, there was a general feeling among participants that the other Union [TUN] should have been involved in the policy process.

Discussion

Generally, perceived successes and/or failures are part of the post process evaluations. The successes and/or failures perceived are thus personal reflections of the individual participants. For NANTU, as the sole bargaining agent for the teaching fraternity, the staffing norms were one of the Ministry of Education policies that the Union was determined to influence to such an extent that industrial action was inevitable (cf 1.5.3). The consensus reached by the Ministry of Education and NANTU on the new staffing norms, as reflected in the Memorandum of Understanding, is regarded as a success by the Union (cf 4.5.7).

Although NANTU regards the new staffing norms as a milestone in terms of influencing the staffing norms, the other stakeholders such as TUN who were not involved in the policy process may not perceive this view in the same way. Thus, the exclusion of the other stakeholders deprived the policy process of valuable inputs and as such one would attribute this failure to the inexperience of policy makers on how to involve all stakeholders in the policy process.

4.14 LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE STAFFING NORMS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Although the development of the staffing norms is completed, various lessons were learnt by the various parties involved in the process as expressed by the participants in this study. The lessons could in one or the other way help in improving future policy formulations in the Ministry of Education. For clarity a separate presentation of the lessons learned by each of the two parties respectively is presented in the ensuing sections.

4.14.1 Lessons learnt by the Ministry of Education

All research participants were of the view that a number of lessons learnt related to the Ministry of Education. These views come with the understanding that the Ministry of Education is the legitimate authority that develops policies and programmes that shape the educational provision in the country. Thus, the lessons are useful in future policy making. These will be explored in Chapter 5 when recommendations are made.

Most participants were of the opinion that there was a lesson learnt on the involvement of stakeholders: who and how stakeholders should be involved in the policy process. Although the Ministry of Education only involved NANTU in the discussions and negotiations of the staffing norms, some participants felt that the Ministry of Education should not have met only one union if there was more than one union in the country. The view expressed by the participants was that the other teachers' union, TUN, should have also been involved. NANTU, the recognised union, welcomed the notion of involving TUN in issues of policy formulation. This was echoed by a Union participant who said, "*TUN's involvement would have done no harm as I felt, firstly, as NANTU we do not have any monopoly over knowledge or may be any monopoly over real issues appropriate for the teaching fraternity.*" By implication TUN's involvement might have enriched the process.

Despite the well articulated argument for TUN's involvement in the policy process, its involvement raises a difficult question: how and at what level should the Ministry of Education involve TUN in matters of policy formulation. This question sets a debate whether TUN should or should not be involved on a par with NANTU as the recognised Union given the legalities in terms of the Collective Agreement between NANTU and GRN.

Another lesson learnt was that of time management. Some participants felt "*that one needed to set a timeframe for what one needed to achieve and it may be necessary to extend the timeframe but one needed to think energetically towards finishing by a certain date.*" Participants agreed that the development of the staffing norms was a lengthy process; hence no rigid timeframe was set at the outset. However, the other participants raised pertinent considerations that would influence the setting of a timeframe for policy development in future. This included the time

needed for research and to engage all stakeholders, which might constrain the process of policy development.

There was also a lesson learnt on the approach to the policy formulation process. For example, the Ministry of Education's principal idea of developing the staffing norms was aimed at addressing the unequal distribution of teachers across the thirteen educational regions. However, instead of focussing on the problem of the unequal distribution of teachers, the Ministry of Education developed an approach of saving funds through the staffing norms. This shifted the focus of the policy from addressing inequity to financial sustainability. The approach of employing resources as a primary consideration in educational matters, which also includes policy formulation, limits the progress of educational reform (see recommendations).

There was an existing need to consult. Consultation is seemingly an indispensable aspect of policy formulation. The object lesson was that *"we need each other,"* as expressed by one Ministry of Education participant. This meant that both the Ministry and the Union needed each other because they were all *"working for the good of the education of the learners in Namibia."* This remark emanated from the view that the successful implementation stage of the policy hinges upon the participation of the implementers during the development stage of the policy. This view was well expressed by a Ministry of Education participant who said, *"If the unions were involved and there was an amicable understanding or agreement within the development of the policy it would be assumed that the implementation would be better."* By implication the degree of participation of the implementing agents influences the successful implementation of that policy.

4.14.2 Lessons learnt by NANTU

Likewise, NANTU, as the main stakeholder involved in the development of the staffing norms could also learn lessons in the process of the staffing norms. Participants felt that these lessons could trigger and enhance the effective participation of the Union in any future policy development process.

One Ministry of Education participant argued that one of the lessons which is *“not only for NANTU but also for a lot of people in the Ministry, is the financial bottom line to whatever you do.”* The lesson is that financial resources firmly dictate what can and cannot be done. In simpler terms, the participant argued that one needs to *“understand what money is at the disposal of government and how they share it among the different portfolios.”* Although the staffing norms were primarily aimed at redressing the inequity of teacher distribution across the educational regions, the staffing norms had financial implications which could not be ignored.

Another lesson of importance to the Union was that the Union *“did not need to be only reactive”* but *“also needed to be proactive”* as one participant stated. The Union was perceived by some participants to be reactionary in the process in terms of the criticism of documents submitted by the Ministry of Education to NANTU. What NANTU needed to learn was that in educational aspects such as policy formulation, NANTU needed to *“develop a research capacity”* to become a proactive stakeholder in education. NANTU should be in a position to embark on research on educational issues in the country and to present its research findings and proposals to the Ministry of Education.

There was also a lesson on retaining experienced leadership in the Union, which would enrich the Union. Participants found that leaders who begun the negotiation process had left the Union by the time an agreement was reached. For example, cited a NANTU participant *“Most of the older leader who negotiated the WASCOM thing left the Union by the time the agreement was signed.”* A more similar situation repeated itself when the staffing norms were developed. This turnover of Union leadership slowed down the policy process, which consequently made the whole policy development process so lengthy.

Discussion

A well known dictum states *“We can not undo the past but we can shape the future.”* The development of the staffing norms ended in 2001. The rights and wrongs of the process cannot be undone. The lessons learnt provide a way forward on how to approach any future policy conceptualisation. The development of the staffing norms provided an opportunity for self-

examination and reflection for both the official and non-official policy actors. Lesson expressed above by the participants are pertinent to all policy makers and stakeholders.

Although this does not provide a formula for policy formulation, policy actors are to learn to employ, what Peace (1994:365) calls a principled interest based or integrative approach to the policy process (cf 2.8.3). Although it is true that resources dictate what can and can not be done, resources should not be used as a primary consideration in policy making.

If the Ministry of Education is to develop an integrative approach to policy process, much is needed to incorporate the views of all the educational stakeholders. The exclusion of the other stakeholders such as TUN from the policy process not only suppresses the views of the stakeholders but also deprives the policy process of vital inputs.

Although NANTU enjoyed the participation during the entire policy process, the reactionary nature of participation in the policy process was attributable to the lack of the research capacity. NANTU as a trade union could learn from the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union (NSTU) of the new role of carrying out educational research to influence policy process (Poole 1999:722; cf 2.8.4 (iv)). If NANTU is to move from a reactionary approach to policy process to that of a proactive approach, it has to begin developing research capacity.

4.15 THOUGHTS ON FUTURE COOPERATION

Most research participants underscored the need for cooperation from both sides: the Ministry of Education and NANTU during the policy process. One research participants remarked, "*We [NANTU and Ministry of Education] need each other*" and advocated the notion of working together as partners in education. Although partnership in education is a noble idea, participants were of the view that power held by the Ministry of Education impeded a functional partnership in education. The participants felt that power in Ministry of Education is inclined in one direction and trade unions, as constituted by teachers who are employees of the Ministry of Education, may not have the capacity and resources to participate fully at the level of policy making. For NANTU to be an effective and active partner in education policy process and in one way enhance cooperation in policy making, the Union was of the view that resources are to be made

available to all participants in the policy process to carry out research in order to inform the policy process. At one stage, recalled one participant, *“There was good cooperation in terms of studying documents of the Ministry of Education because there were resources that were availed to do so.* Participants felt that future cooperation would be ensured if all parties were committed to education and had access to resources.

The Ministry of Education as the legitimate policy maker would always require the cooperation of stakeholders in all aspects of education. The Ministry of Education regards the involvement of stakeholders as an indispensable element of the policy process because of the successes and/or failures of its educational programmes are determined by the stakeholders.

Discussion

Although the notion of partnership in the policy process may sound alien to many, it is an underlying principle to the collaborative bargaining to the policy process (cf 2.8.3). The expression: *“We [Ministry of Education and NANTU] need each other”* indicates that the Ministry of Education and NANTU will continually need each other to address educational matters. Future cooperation driven by the spirit of partnership and not the spirit of competition will be an indispensable element in any future policy making process.

4.16 SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter presented research findings on the role of NANTU in the development of the staffing norms in Namibia. The findings, based on the views of the six participants, are that NANTU does not have a place of the Ministry of Education’s management structures such as the EMT or the MPCC. However, NANTU is represented on Ministry of Education committees such as the Teaching Service Committee. Through committees such as the Teaching Service Committee NANTU can express grievances of the teaching fraternity.

It was also found that the involvement of stakeholders in the Ministry of Education policy process is important to the educational stakeholders and the Ministry itself. It was in the view of the participants that these educational stakeholders are important to the Ministry of Education. Hence, such stakeholders enabled the Ministry of Education to attain its major goals, democracy

in particular, and as a way of soliciting inputs. Stakeholders themselves view their involvement in the Ministry of Education policy making process as important because the policy process is seen as a forum or arena where the objectives are set and thus would like to make meaningful contribution to the policy process.

NANTU as one of the stakeholders with perceived great interest in education was involved in the development of the staffing norms because of collective bargaining rights. It also sees the staffing norms as tools that will redress the pre-independence imbalances that existed by ensuring that a more equal distribution of the teaching personnel. Hence, NANTU was greatly involved in the development of the staffing norms. The participants were of the view that NANTU played various roles: militancy, research, acting as a critical partner and negotiation.

A number of lessons from the ended staffing norms development process for both the Ministry of Education and NANTU exist. The involvement of stakeholders should not be limited to certain stakeholders, financial resources should not be the primary consideration in policy formulation and the Union should be proactive and not reactive in educational matters, which also include policy making.

CHAPTER 5 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH, SYNTHESIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This final chapter opens with an overview of the research in order to demonstrate that the aims expressed in 1.7 have been achieved. The theory underlying the involvement of the stakeholders in the policy process has been integrated with the experiences of the NANTU and the Ministry of Education officials who were involved in the development of the staffing norms policy. A synopsis of the research findings and the recommendations for the improvement of the role of stakeholders in the policy process are briefly set out. The identifications of areas for further research and the acknowledgement of the limitations of the investigations close the chapter.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Although the year 1990 marked a turning point in the Namibia education sector from policy imposition to policy participation (cf 1.1), what constitutes the role of teachers' union [NANTU] in the policy process is difficult to determine. However, it was established in the labour research literature presented in Chapter 1 and 2 that the roles of teachers' trade union refer to the repertoire of techniques employed by teachers' unions to influence policy process (cf 1.4, 2.8.4, Gaziell & Taub 1992:74, Poole 1999:699 & Moe 2001:41). Central to the success of the role of the teachers' unions in the policy process, legitimate policy makers, (cf 1.4 & 2.8.4), such as the Ministry of Education officials should provide avenues that will enable NANTU to increase its repertoire of techniques in positively influencing the Ministry of Education policy process. It would be beneficial to Ministry of Education and NANTU if passive techniques such as consultation and adversarial techniques such politics of blocking, collective bargaining, lobbying are avoided. Educational research (see recommendations) would be an appropriate and empowering tool to influence policy process for both parties.

5.2.1 The policy phenomenon

In order to understand the roles stakeholders, such as NANTU, play in the Ministry of Education policies process, a conceptual framework on policy and policy process was presented (cf 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 2.2). The two concepts, policy and policy process, although presented separately (cf 1.2.1,

2.2), are interrelated and interconnected. The concept policy revealed that it is an 'elusive' concept (cf 1.2.1); in other words, the concept is not a precise and self-evident term (cf 1.2.1, 2.3). The multi-fold definitions ushered by the political and social science literature testified the elusiveness of the concept (cf 2.3). Despite such numerous definitions, a rich dimension of different perspectives of different researchers, authors and scholars came to the fore. This in a way demonstrated the complexities associated with policy itself (cf 1.2.1, 2.3).

In this study, although there are other definitions, policy is defined as a plan pursued by policy makers to attain educational goals (cf 1.2.1). In context, policy makers such as the Ministry of Education bureaucrats develop policies such as the staffing norms to achieve a financially, educationally and morally acceptable teacher-learner ratio across the 13 Educational Regional Directorates (cf 1.5.3, 2.9.5).

The concept policy process, as it is the case of the policy, cannot be captured by a single definition (cf 1.2.2). The absence of a single definition is attributable to the fact that authors, researchers and scholars have different approaches to policy process (cf 1.2.2). Should one, for example look at the sequence of events in the policy process from the formulation to the ratification of the staffing norms, one could subscribe to the functional approach which argues policy is generated and implemented in a straightforward and non-problematic way (cf 1.2.2, 2.5.1). In other words, policy is thus seen as a sequence of events. However, if one looks at the power struggles between the competing groups and the contextual issues that are impacted on the policy process under discussion one could rather see merit in the conflict approach to policy process. In this case policy is complex and thus more 'messy' (cf 1.2.2, 2.5.2).

In this investigation the competing groups in the policy process were identified as stakeholders in the policy process (cf 1.3, 2.7). They are referred to as stakeholders because they have a stake or interest in the policy process. In terms of the staffing norms policy development NANTU and the Ministry of Education officials were the stakeholders who took part in the discussions although other stakeholders could also have been included as this will be argued later.

5.2.2 The research design

Chapters 2 and 4 of this research study provided a background study of the role of stakeholders, with special reference to the teachers' trade unions, in the development of the policy. In order to understand the role of NANTU in the development of the staffing norms, qualitative research design was chosen as the primary mode of investigation (cf 1.8.1, 3.2, 3.4.1). The choice of this research method was influenced by the fact that the research method best answers the research question. In other words, the subject under investigation entailed eliciting responses from the six participants in the form of the experiences and perceptions during the development of the staffing norms (cf 4.4).

The six research participants were purposefully selected from the Ministry of Education and NANTU. The participants were key players in the development process (cf 4.2.1, 4.2.2). Two in-depth interviews which were semi-structured were pursued with each of the six participants (See Appendix A and B for interview schedules). The interview schedules were not rigid and participants had the liberty to raise issues and elaborate on questions if they wanted to.

The interviews with all the six participants were recorded on audio cassette and later transcribed. This provided a fuller account or record of the investigation (3.4.4). In addition to the recording of the interviews the researcher took some notes during the interview sessions. The analysis of the investigation took both the form of the on site and off site analysis. In the final analysis the researcher presented the findings of the investigation in a narrative form, a style which is typical to qualitative research.

5.3 SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Important themes that emerged in this qualitative investigation are synthesised here and integrated with prior research and theoretical literature presented in Chapters 2 and 4.

5.3.1 Non-representation of NANTU on the Ministry of Education's management structures

The research study found out that NANTU, although it is the official teachers' trade union, has no place on the Ministry of Education's management structures such as the MPCC and/ or the

EMT (cf 4.3). NANTU and the Ministry of Education are two separate entities with clear cut functions and responsibilities. Thus a clear line exists between the Ministry of Education management or bureaucracy and that of NANTU's management. Such a clear line can lead to Ministry of Education management to exercising mandate in absolute isolation from the Union.

Recommendations

Although NANTU and the Ministry of Education are two separate entities, the two entities' functions or activities interact and are interdependent and thereby influence each other. Because of the interdependence and interaction of the two entities' functions and activities, a platform on which external stakeholders are represented, such as the Teaching Service Committee (cf 4.3) and other forums are imperative and indispensable to create a relational dialogue which would ensure that the two entities exchange information on educational policies, thus ensuring continual co-existence in pursuit of educational goals.

5.3.2 Significance of involving stakeholders in the Ministry of Education policy development process

It was generally perceived that the involvement of stakeholders in the policy process is an indispensable ingredient in the policy process for such reason such as compliance with certain government policy provisions and ways of soliciting inputs (cf 4.4). Taking into account of the preceding perception, one can thus infer that the Ministry of Education, responsible for providing basic education, has the legal obligation of not only providing education and developing policies that shape education provision but also an obligation to ensure that stakeholders in education effectively participate at all levels of education which also include policy making.

Recommendations

As correctly stated by Reimers and McGinn (1997:60), stakeholders are persons or groups with a joint interest in a particular activity and its outcome and they are affected by it. The stakeholders' involvement is the result or effect of the activity or policy. The participation in policy process should not be an inducement or compliance but it should be because stakeholders have a stake in the policy being developed. It is widely accepted or recommended that in the development of policies stakeholders are instrumental in providing information and therefore

stimulate commitment to decisions made (Heckroodt 2002:5). Therefore, policy makers should consider the instrumental aspect of soliciting inputs in involving stakeholders in the policy process.

5.3.3 NANTU as the only non-official actor in the development of the staffing norms

The sole participation of NANTU, as the only body external to the Ministry of Education, in the development of the staffing norms is attributable to the legal bargaining right provided for in the Collective Bargaining Recognition Agreement (cf 1.5.4, 4.5).

Recommendations

Although NANTU enjoys the collective bargaining right, the fact that some participants felt that the other union [TUN] was supposed to be involved in the development of the staffing norms indicates the deprivation of inputs of the policy process (cf 4.9). I maintain that the Ministry of Education should widen the number of stakeholders involved in the development of Ministry of Education policies. Widening the involvement of stakeholders would benefit the policy process in terms of providing inputs to the policy process. Although not all should participate at the negotiating table, it would be best to involve other stakeholders through consultation (cf 2.8.4 (iii)). Consultation is recommended as a good strategy of gaining inputs and views from the audience (Poole 1999:708), despite the view that it is a weak strategy (Meyer & Cloete 2000:105).

5.3.4 The long and tedious staffing norms development process

The development of the staffing norms was characterised by a paradox: financial constraints and understaffing in some regions (cf 4.5.2). In order to staff the understaffed regions, more money, an issue which the Ministry of Education had already experienced as a limitation, was necessary. Thus, the Ministry of Education had to address two issues simultaneously, an exercise that proved impractical. Ultimately, the staffing development process became “long and tedious” (cf 4.5.2)

Recommendations

The development of the staffing norms was in line with the educational goal of equity and equality of access to human resources, (MEC 1993:32-36), and as such a step in the right direction. However, to address issues of inequity and unequal access while at the same time cutting costs often proved impractical. Thus, a clear diversion from the aims, purposes and plans of policy is observed from ensuring equal distribution of teachers across the country to cost saving. However, this is not to say that costs aspect should not be taken into account

It is recommended firstly that the Ministry of Education should set up a timeframe for the development of policies (cf 4.10). Adjustments to the time frame should be done in terms of the amount of time needed for research and consultations with stakeholders in order to eliminate a lengthy development process.

Secondly; the Ministry of Education should develop an approach to policy process that focuses on the actual problem instead of employing approaches that use financial resources as the primary consideration. However, it is also important to understand the economic aspect of policy because policies have financial implications. It is recommended, in line with the views of Kerchner et al (1998:22-24), Poole (2000:94-98) and Peace (1994:365) that official and non-official actors in the policy process should adopt the collaborative bargaining model in dealing with educational issues (cf 2.8.3). Policy actors should develop and focus on the issues which the policy hopes to achieve.

5.3.5 The various roles played by NANTU during the development of the staffing norms

NANTU played roles varying from passive roles of discussions and consultations to extreme roles of collective bargaining and imminent industrial actions (cf 4.8). However, commendable roles, such as those of research and the collaborative role were less used or not at all.

Recommendations

Teachers' trade unions have always resorted to radical and adversarial techniques such as collective bargaining, which Poole (1999:699) and Moe (2001:41-43) call the politics of blocking or political lobbying (Poole 1999:722) in order to influence educational issues which

also include policy making. On the contrary, some trade unions such as the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union have discovered a new active role of influencing educational reform through educational research (Poole 1992:722, cf 2.8.4 (iv)).

It is my perspective that NANTU should emulate the research role, set by the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union. However, in order to be able to carry out research which is rigorous enough to influence policy making, NANTU will have to develop an internal research capacity. If the Union was able to carry out the research role, the Union could become proactive in educational reform and not only play a reactionary role, as it was observed in the discussions around the staffing norms policy.

5.3.6 Value addition to Ministry of Education policy process

The participants persisted in their view that value was indeed added to the staffing norms policy process. Value addition to Ministry of Education policy process was attributable to the perception that stakeholders were made part of the process. As part of the process, stakeholders' inputs were taken into account. Thus, inputs taken into account became one way of influencing the policy.

Recommendations

Taylor et al (1997:17-20) stress that policies are value laden. In other words, policies carry the wishes and aspirations of people. Thus, the participation in policy formulation remains an indispensable element of the whole process. It is commendable that government, through line Ministries [Ministry of Education] widens the scope of participation in public policy making. The scope of participation here refers to the breadth and depth of influence, power and authority (McCool 1995:28). It is to be understood by all bureaucrats and interest groups that all actors in the policy process are stakeholders who have values. It should not be "who rules," or "who has power in policy making decisions" but rather what values do all actors have in line with the policy. In this case values in policy surpass powers of policy actors.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.

The staffing norms development was quite long and some issues surfaced which could not be covered and may need further investigation. Possible areas of research could include the following:

- the perceptions of stakeholders that are not involved in the development of the education policies and the possible effects of this on policy implementation;
- investigation of the role of the unofficial stakeholders involved in the development of the Ministry of Education policies;
- the impact of stakeholders on the policy process

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The fact that this research comprises a dissertation of limited scope limited its scope. Moreover, qualitative research includes a small sample and as such cannot be said to be representative of all similar policy making processes. However, there is value to such research as it raises issues and concerns which could, in future, establish guidelines for policy making or raise questions which could be tested in large scale research.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the involvement of NANTU in the development of the staffing norms is a typical example of a culture of open debate in a post independent Namibia (cf 1.1). The participation of educational stakeholders in policy making is a clear reversal of the pre-independence practice of imposing policy on stakeholders without allowing any participation in the process (cf 1.1).

NANTU was the only teacher's trade union involved in the development process because of the official status that the union enjoys in terms of the existing Recognition Agreement and the Collective Bargaining Agreement with GRN (cf 1.5.4, 4.5). The participants held different views on the roles that NANTU played in the staffing norms development process from the less extreme, such as discussion, consultation, research and negotiations to the extreme role of militancy (cf 4.6). Of all these roles the negotiation role, through the concept of "give and take", was the one that led to the attainment of an agreement between NANTU and the Ministry of

Education to reach a 1:30 and 1: 35 staffing norm for secondary and primary schools respectively. Although there were some disagreements during the process, these taught both NANTU and Ministry of Education lessons on how, when and why it is important to consult, and what approach to policy formulation policy formulators should adopt during the process .

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NANTU PARTICIPANTS

1. How important is it for stakeholders such as NANTU to be involved in education policy-making?
2. How important was it for NANTU to be involved in the staffing norm policy process?
3. As a union, how and when were you informed about the development of the new staffing norm? At what stage of the policy-making process did you become involved?
4. What was your personal involvement?
5. Please explain the role played by NANTU during the whole policy-process.
6. In Oct 1997 the Ministry of Education publicly thanked NANTU for the spirit with which you entered the discussion. Would you say that this comment was a true reflection of the spirit in which negotiations took place?
7. In Feb 1998 a petition was given to the Ministry of Education. What was included in the petition? What prompted NANTU to petition the minister?
8. Judging by press releases, things between NANTU and the Ministry of Education deteriorated further. Could you comment on this?
9. You were initially opposed to a ratio of 1:34 for primary schools and 1:28 for secondary schools but in 2001 signed an understanding with the Ministry of Education agreeing with 1:35 and 1:30. What led NANTU to agree to this ratio?
10. Looking back on the involvement of NANTU in the Staffing norms. How would you describe the experience?
11. What would you consider positive and what was negative about NANTU's involvement in the staffing norms policy?
12. Do you think 'value is added' to the policy process when stakeholders such as NANTU become involved in the policy process?
13. What difference did your involvement in the staffing norm policy process make to the way in which teachers viewed this policy?
12. What lessons do you think both NANTU and the government have learnt which could be of value in future when policy- making

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR Ministry of Education PARTICIPANTS

1. How important is it for stakeholders such as NANTU to be involved in education policy-making?
2. How does NANTU fit in the Ministry of Education Management and Policy Coordinating Committee?
3. At what stage of the staffing norm policy was NANTU involved or allowed to become involved in the development of the staffing policy?
4. What was your personal involvement?
5. Please explain the role played by NANTU during the whole policy-process.
6. In Oct 1997 the Ministry of Education publicly thanked NANTU for the spirit with which you NANTU entered the discussion. Would you say that this comment was a true reflection of the spirit in which negotiations took place?
7. In 1998 a petition was given to the Ministry of Education in which NANTU accuses the government of “illegal implementation of the staffing norms” Do you think this was a well-founded accusation?
8. Looking back on the involvement of NANTU in the Staffing norm. How would you describe the experience?
9. What would you consider positive - what negative about NANTU’s involvement in the staffing norm policy?
10. Do you think ‘value is added’ to the policy process when stakeholders such as NANTU become involved in the policy process?
11. What difference did your involvement in the staffing norm policy process make to the way in which teachers viewed this policy?
12. What lessons do you think both NANTU and the government have learnt which could be of value in future for education policy- making

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOR Ministry of Education PARTICIPANT

Interviewer: Ok! I would like to start by saying by thanking you for your participation. It is just an academic paper. After the recording and putting together the paper, everything will be destroyed. It goes without names to my supervisor. I will begin by asking you the first question. How important is it for stakeholders like NANTU to be involved in the policy making of the Ministry?

Respondent: I think it is very important because an organisation like NANTU represents the greater part of the teaching force. In fact I think that all unions that are relevant should have been involved because the members of those unions have a great deal of insight into problems that can result in the improvement of policy.

Interviewer: Hmmm! I will skip No. 2. I have come to know that NANTU is not a member of the management.

Respondent: Yes, because NANTU and the Ministry are two separate entities.

Interviewer: As the policy was being formulated, at the development stage, did the union get involved: let us say that the Ministry said come and let you be part of the whole process?

Respondent: As far as I can recall, and my memory might be fault here, As far as I can recall they were involved very early in the process. As soon as we started with formal consultation about the staffing norms I believe they were involved. That obviously being so certainly there was an amount time of informal discussions in the Ministry. Before that obviously there has been some informal discussion with the Ministry that, because one has to identify the need in the Ministry, to look at the policy and that triggered for the realisation that the pre-independency staffing: Circular 16 of 1987 of the Public Service Commission was never implemented. This was because it was too costly. And also I think at the time of independence there was a sort of

expectation that in the newly independent country it would be possible to give everybody education in a way the Administration for Whites have given education. Obviously with an improved curriculum, but the standard would be much as it has been. I think it is only the Administration for Whites, before independence, that has been able to implement Circular 16 of 1987 fully with the guidance teachers, librarian and so on. The National Education that was posted in some schools has not been able to be implemented by the other administrations. The feeling was that, after independency as soon as things settle down, then everybody would do that. After few years it became apparent that it would be costly. For that reason and also the equity issue, some regions had far more teachers. This is to say that some regions had a more favourable teacher ratio than other regions. It would be necessary to look at the new approach of the staffing norms. So this is how it gradually developed in the Ministry. And then when it comes to sit down and develop something new- I think NANTU was involved from that stage.

Interviewer: My question is on discussions, that is, right from the beginning you mentioned about informal discussions and then it became more formal. I wanted to know how exactly NANTU also prepared some documents that they brought to the Ministry for discussions.

Respondent: As far as I can remember, after the formal discussions started, hmm! NANTU had some time to develop their position. But as far as I remember it wasn't prior to the discussions on this issue then NANTU was consulted. And I think they might have been preliminary meeting before they consulted with their members to some extent and discussions with NANTU. The formal discussions covered a period of a couple of years as far as I can recall. It was not a matter of say lets come together and by the end of the month we will have something fixed up at least. There was whole series of meeting. Part of the time I was on the study course overseas for four weeks period and I think Dr. Sibeya was the one who chaired the discussions by that time. And I mean when I came back I picked up again and we carried on. So, too, I think NANTU's position was also crystallised once the formal discussions have started and certainly the Ministry formal position crystallised during the discussions and not before the discussions.

Interviewer: As an individual, what was your involvement?

Respondent: I was the Director of Planning. I was assigned to chair the discussions. So, that was my involvement, initially, to the point where we discussed with the various positions-modified positions and eventually we came to the point where we didn't seem to be making further progress- where the Ministry reached a point where it felt it couldn't change anymore and NANTU felt it couldn't change anymore. We weren't together yet. And at that point the Ministry submitted its proposal to the Office of the Prime Minister making that NANTU had some reservations on some of the points and NANTU submitted their positions to the Office of the Prime Minister as well. So at that point, our process came to a halt because we were waiting for the Office of the Prime Minister. And what happened after that was that it was put down on the agenda for a series of discussions on a range of issues and never seemed to make it to the top of the agenda. I think it might have been a two year period when the matter was held in the balance until, it must have been the Secretary to Cabinet by that time who said we need to address this issue. I think after that there were three or four meetings which was chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet. And then more senior people in the Ministry came in as well, the Under-Secretary to formal education and the Permanent Secretary. At that stage I was just one of the members of the Ministry team.

Interviewer: You mentioned, as you recollect or remember, that NANTU had reservations. What were these reservations?

Respondent: NANTU must be able to give you their reservations. But basically, NANTU felt that the Ministry was not being sufficiently generously in the allocation of staff. And, hmm! NANTU's feeling was that too much financial side of it was driving the Ministry. It was now the question of what we can afford rather than what is best for the children. The Ministry on the other hand felt that financial considerations were important but we were not proposing the order that will disadvantage the children. I might say that even in the Ministry there wasn't a unanimous position. Different people held slightly different positions on it.

Interviewer: Alright! Question 5 is partly answered. Then we'll skip and go to No. 6. In 1997 the Ministry thanked NANTU for the spirit for which NANTU entered the discussions. Would you say that this was a true reflection of the spirit that prevailed at that particular point?

Respondent: I think so. Certainly the discussions had taken place in a friendly atmosphere. There were differences of opinion but one can disagree with one's friend's opinion on issues. It is the way in which the discussions take place that indicates whether there is animosity or not. And I think as we got to the end of that period of discussions there were perhaps a bit of feeling that I wish the other side would be willing to change their position and that would be the case from both sides that the discussions would have taken place in a respectful way but I think with the exception of one member of the NANTU team who I had a bit of a problem. I felt that he wasn't always professional. But NANTU team as a whole and the leadership of NANTU I had no problems with. I don't think anybody in the Ministry had a problem with. And so I think that statement at that stage we reached the point where we were making our submission to the Office of the Prime Minister. We hadn't reached an agreement but we were reflecting on the discussions that have taken place as a good spirit and that we had negotiated as far as we hoped was possible to do so in that sort of forum.

Interviewer: In 98 NANTU petitioned the Ministry and accused it of illegally implementing the staffing norms. What are your comments on this?

Respondent: My recollection is that the official staffing norms, at that stage, were Circular 16 of 1987, which were never implemented by the Ministry. The new staffing norms were in form of a proposal to the Office of the Prime Minister. There weren't any new staffing norms yet. That would be at that stage only the Office of the Prime Minister that could determine what the staffing norms were. So they were not yet staffing norms to implement nor had the Ministry been implementing Circular 16 or was able to implement Circular 16. But in order to fulfil its mandate to provide education as far as possible, it had to try to reduce the number of teachers in relatively well-staffed regions of the country in order to make more posts available in the understaffed regions of the country. NANTU interpreted this as an attempt to get us onto the new staffing norms. I think it was a misunderstanding.

Interviewer: That is what I wanted to ask you as to whether it was a misunderstanding because there were two circulars in place. There was one for 1998 and the other for 1999 from the Directorate of Planning and the other from the Directorate of General Services that were issued

to help set quotas of teachers that were going to be employed. So it seems it was a kind of misunderstanding.

Respondent: I think so! What we were trying to achieve was a more equitable distribution of teachers within the parameters of the budget.

Interviewer: If we look back at the involvement of NANTU, how would you describe the experience?

Respondent: For me, I can't really speak for the other people, but for me was a learning experience because I wouldn't be really been in a similar situation previously where one was negotiating a position with another team where the other team had a position. That was a learning experience. I think it was an enjoyable experience although at times one got a little frustrated. We had meetings in successive weeks but could find that we haven't made any progress since the last week. However, it was generally a good experience.

Interviewer: What would you consider as positive on the involvement of NANTU and what would consider as negative on the involvement of NANTU in the discussions of the staffing norms?

Interviewee: Positive! I think the importance of the union to be involved in policy issues of that nature which directly affects its members and directly affects their chance. So I think it is positive if we could have involved, hmmm! What was negative perhaps was the approach. But so I don't think anyone is to blame. Perhaps it was because of the lack of the experience that the whole process became too protracted, to drawn out. I think what we should have done is to have said that we got six weeks in which to come up with the position, common position and we meet weekly and more frequently if more necessary and that there are deadlines. We need to get there and then equally once the matters have been referred to the Office of the Prime Minister. I think we should have rapid movement towards a solution not just allowing it sinking down on the agenda and remaining down. So I think perhaps we could say that the matter was not treated with the sufficient urgency on all sides.

Interviewer: Hmm! Just the negative impact because it took too long, from 97 only until in February 2001, that is when you reached an agreement. Did it have any financial implications? That may be you'll be spending more money on things like venues and so on?

Respondent: No, the meetings were all internal. We could use the Office of the Prime Minister. There is always a cost attached to the meetings. So I think very few people would actually reflect on this. But if you had ten people sitting in the meeting for three hours that is a portion of their time, there is an opportunity cost- they could be doing something else. But I don't think that the discussions could necessarily be concluded in shortest space of time in terms of the numbers of the hours if you put in. It could have been shortened in terms of bringing in those meetings close together. I think there was a bit of the financial loss in that when you draw out something for long because each time you come to the meeting again you waste a bit of time. Getting into issues where as you meet for few four days, we can perhaps get straight but there was a bit of inefficiency there.

Interviewer: Do you think value is added when stakeholders are involved in policy formulation?

Respondent: I don't think that it is absolutely necessary that value is involved. But I think in this case value was added. And I think an idea of involving stakeholders one is looking value being added. One may be disappointed. I think is the rationale of having such discussions.

Interviewer: What do you think of stakeholders' involvement, in terms of having ownership over the product that came out? Do you think that is a good thing?

Respondent: Yes I think it is a good thing. I think in this case there hasn't been complete satisfaction at the end. NANTU had the feeling after the staffing norms were published that the Ministry had interpreted some of the things in the Memorandum of Understanding in a different way to NANTU's interpretation. So I don't think there was complete satisfaction that! I don't think it was a deliberate intention by either party to deceive the other party.

Interviewer: Just in form, like thinking on behalf of the others, what do you think is the involvement of the union, then because the union represents the teachers in schools and they don't have the time to participate during the development. What do you think in terms of perceptions that the ordinary teachers will think of their union hence they were not involved?

Respondent: I don't think I can do that. What I can say is that other teachers unions, TUN, criticised NANTU strongly for having made a bad deal. And I think the perception of TUN might have influenced some of the teachers that NANTU has not done such a good job. I don't know as to what extent NANTU wanted to defend its position with its members and convince them that it has done the best job. TUN has not been involved in the discussions because at that stage the Ministry was interpreting it as has the right to bargaining agent of the teachers hence the majority of the teachers' union. I perhaps, in retrospective, would be good if the other union should also have been involved, present, during the discussions. They were able afterwards to say, you know, we weren't part of that. You think those are good but we don't think those are good. We weren't part of it. So it is also, I think, union politics. I think it would have been better if they were involved.

Interviewer: Are there some lessons to be learnt by both sides: NANTU and the Ministry from what happened so that in future, whenever policy comes, in place then we will be able to improve on that?

Respondent: Yes! Well I think the lessons are that one needs to involve unions, probably not in every policy issue, some policy comes down from Cabinet level, and they are really not negotiated in the Ministry at all. But if it is something that involves members that affects members quite strongly, then it is good to involve the unions. I would say that one of the lessons is that one shouldn't meet only one of the unions if more than one union is involved. One should meet all of them. However, it gets into debate whether on equal terms or not and so on. That needs to be addressed and resolved. And the second lesson I would say is the – one needs to set time frame for what needs to be done to achieve it. It may be necessary to extend the time frame but one should at least think energetically towards finishing things by a certain date. I think probably more time should be taken on drafting a joint communiqué which is going to be

published afterwards. In my view the Memorandum of Understanding was rather a shady document. It did not look good either with the original copy, which was signed. It did not give the impression of really professional document. So a joint communiqué is really important as well.

Interviewer: From NANTU's side anything that may be a object lesson the process?

Respondent: I think perhaps the biggest lesson, not only for NANTU but also for a lot of people in the Ministry, is the financial bottom line to what ever you do. If you haven't got money you can't do it however much you wanted to do it. And I found out in many of the meetings of the Ministry an insufficient understanding of perhaps macro-economics. Most of others who come through the teaching profession have not been trained in economics that unless one understands what money is at the disposal of the government and how they need share it among the different portfolios – one can still disagree- one can still feel the more the money should have gone into education in relation to those in agriculture or defence or whatever. One is entitled to those opinions but in the end cabinet makes a decision. And if Cabinet says this is the resource envelope for education- then education has to live within resource envelope and it can look at its own activities and say we can trim this in order to spend more on teachers salaries, for example, and if it can't move out that the resource package. And I think that the unions, but also so many people in the Ministry there is insufficient understanding of the role that the finances have to play. One is not working with an ideal situation. So I would say that for many policy issues there is a financial bottom line and it is important for all the members in the negotiation to all try and have understanding of the financial aspect.

Interviewer: Just in conclusion, is there anything that you would like to add?

Respondent: I don't know. I think a change in policy like the staffing norms takes a great deal of disruptions even if it is a change for the better because it takes time to implement. The regions or the schools that are going to suffer, as a result of the staffing norms, depends on- a situation like the Namibian situation where there is still a good deal of inequity from what I have seen from the latest education statistics. I haven't seen the one for 2003 yet. Hmmm! Caprivi is still

better of the other region but it is not achieving the results that is reflecting the better position than staffing. But if we ignore Caprivi and go to regions like Erongo, Khomas and Hardap are better staffed than the regions like Ohangwena and which is still worst as far as I know Omusati, Oshikoto, Kavango and there is always this feeling that the understaffed regions could do better if we had more teachers. Ok the new norm comes in and this is aimed at making things equal. It takes time to implement. You cannot, overnight, shift from the better staffed regions to understaffed regions. One should not say that the Ministry – by this I mean the office in Windhoek – is not doing enough to implement the policy. What I am saying is that it is one thing to develop policy and publicise the policy but the implementation is also problematic and also I think it is important to all parties: the Ministry and the Union to have a good understanding of how the implementation is going to take place and keep the stakeholders, in case of the union members, in case of the Ministry, - schools be informed of the practical difficulties involved in getting the policy fully implemented.

Interviewer: I would like to thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOR A NANTU PARTICIPANT

Interviewer: I will start by thanking you for your participation. No names will be mentioned as I put the report on paper. You are free to give your views. I will later transcribe the interviews and analyse them. I will start with question No.1. How important is it for stakeholders like NANTU to be involved in the education policy making?

Respondent: I think it is important for NANTU since it is a Union that is representing the majority of the teachers in the country, which also has the collective bargaining recognition to take part in policy making. More important, policy making is where the objectives are set out and where the ways are grafted as to how these objectives can be achieved. That is why it is important for stakeholders to be involved in policy making. Furthermore, it is important because as a professional union it is important that the Union definitely becomes involved in policy making. That is an initiative.

Interviewer: I want to ask more on the professional part. What do you mean by that?

Respondent: Professional in the sense that as a trade union, their constituents are teachers who are in the profession. So, it is an organisation or a body that is representing those teachers who are in the teaching profession and that are what I am talking as professionals.

Interviewer: Just another follow up that I want to make. Our country is reforming the system and if you look at these reforms they are driven by policies. What would you comment on that in terms of NANTU's involvement in these reforms?

Respondent: May be before we go or come to the reform part. I think the question is as to why we are involved in the debate on reform and reconstruction. We are coming from the legacy of racially segregated, ethnically divided education system. In fact as an independent country, a nation that is moving towards reconciliation and driving towards reintegration we have to

address the inequalities of the past. NANTU as entity that is representing teachers and that is of interest of education it is very important for it to be involved in the staffing norms. This is so because the staffing norms are tools that are used in addressing the inequalities of the past. When we talk about equity or equal access, when we talk about equal distribution of resources, these can only be addressed in the concept of the staffing norms. You see, that is why you find it important when we talk of the staffing norms it is driven by the ideal objective. We have a vision and that vision can be realised by the ways in which we may be tackling these problem-that is the policy. That is why it is important that NANTU becomes involved in the staffing norms.

Interviewer: In fact you have answered No.2.in passing. Let us look at the development itself. At what stage was NANTU involved?

Respondent: Hmm! Ok. I must say when the debate on the staffing norms started. That should have been, a way back in 1996. I think during the fifth congress. The resolution was taken, to that effect, to look at the unequal distribution. So I think either in the initial stage NANTU was already involved in the negotiation aspects of the policy.

Interviewer: Now in terms of, NANTU as a recognised body, how was the NANTU informed about the policy?

Respondent: Let me put it this way. I was elected as a president at the 1997 Congress and at the 1997 Congress that is where the staffing norms were put to the Congress. By then, already, we had a technical committee that was invited by the Ministry of Basic Education to par sit with the technical committee of the Ministry of Basic Education to look as to how they will address the issue of the staffing norms. So coming back to, may be how and when we were informed about the development of the new staffing norms, I think it was at the technical level where may be the negotiation started.

Interviewer: Personally, what was your involvement?

Respondent: I was in fact with the negotiations. I was leading the negotiating team. We had two unions that were enjoying the collective bargaining for the public service and the professionals: that is NANTU and NAPWU. So I was the spokesperson for NANTU. That is how I was involved in the negotiations. But my involvement in the negotiations had more to do with the overall aspects that we had to negotiate on such things as conditions of service for the teaching profession. There was a time when I had to lead the technical committee that was discussing the staffing norms and my role was, as the Ministry had a chairperson that was leading the technical team in the person of the Permanent Secretary, I was also leading the technical committee in the negotiation to see to it that we are on par. In terms of status at that time, as the President, I was may be above them. In terms of what was on the table I felt appropriate to lead the team. That was the role I had to play in the negotiations.

Interviewer: In more narrative form could you describe the role that NANTU played during the development of the staffing norms?

Respondent: The role that NANTU played during the whole process. Let us look back, may be the positions of the Ministry visa versa the position of NANTU. The Ministry wanted to see that over a five-year period we should gradually phase in the staffing norms. This was not a bad thing though. But if we look at the approach the Ministry had it was based on financial sustainability. Based on enhancing the educational quality, equity among the regions I think it is a principle, which NANTU was to agree to. But looking at may be enhancing educational quality at that time with the ratio of 1:36 it meant that we needed plus minus 2939 additional teachers to address the situation. But listening to financially sustainability it could be projected already that some savings could be built into this exercise which had implications to the union which meant that taking the financially sustainability, looking at the backlog that we had and trying to address equity and quality then it won't work, it won't work. So financial sustainability meant that teachers would have to be reduced. I think that is where NANTU felt it is now may be threatening the base of the union. And if we want to address the quality issue and equity, yet we do not have enough teachers in the country and because some of the teachers in are not well qualified while we want to get rid of them—So what kind of scenario do we create. I think this is where we could get along the proposed staffing norms. The way in which the staffing norms

were to be phased in, so we had already realised in the technical committee that it might be feasible but it will also be costly. And we saw already the dilemma- we already foresaw that it could lead to the number and incidents like that of 1997 and 1998 February. Although, hmmm, some teachers already started to feel in rural areas... although the message one used to get in we are not going to be retrenched- but I think there already some examples in some regions. What may be difficult for the Ministry itself, and in some regions, some directors were proactive-by starting at may be the quality of teachers that are in their regions. Looking at may be enhancing quality so which was not. It was a policy that was made to address the situation but it was not an easy one that could not be put in place over a short period of time.

Interviewer: One thing that I wanted you to comment on is on how NANTU was involved in the development of the norms? For example, the Ministry had to prepare documents then NANTU would study the documents and discussions afterwards. Could you give comments on that? To what extent would you find suggestions in the discussions made that the other party would take them seriously?

Respondent: Ok! I think that again it is a matter of or being honest. It is also a matter of looking at the available resources. Hmmm! As much as we are talking about two technical teams that are negotiating, in terms of say research capabilities, in terms of finance so the Union could do but there were some shortcomings. So that is why in good spirit a document that was released with the resources from the Ministry was taken in good faith and studied. That is how we were doing it if the Ministry or the Technical team released a document. We were given to study and comment on the form. In studying the document, if we find that we disagree with some of the points it is where may be will come to the drawing table to look at that aspect. Yes it is true. It is quite a number of documents that were prepared but also as a partner in the negotiation process we were given a chance to show our position and that is how it worked.

Interviewer: In October 1997, the Ministry thanked NANTU for the spirit with which they entered the discussions. Would you say that this was a true reflection of what their communication was?

Respondent: Hmm! It depends on what the Ministry regarded as good spirit. It depends on whether the statement that was made at that particular point in time that it was in good spirit that NANTU was negotiating or discussing. So therefore, may be the compliment of thanking NANTU for the spirit in which the negotiations took place.

Interviewer: NANTU petitioned the Minister of Basic Education. Now I wanted to know, just an overview of what was contained in the petition and what prompted NANTU to petition the Minister?

Respondent: I think what happened there was that the negotiation process was on. There were positions on both sides. From the Ministry's side I think they also moved away from financial sustainability towards equal distribution-reconstruction. But I think, as I said earlier on, this came along with down sizing. This came along with that the office would be supplied with the information from some regions on may be, letters written by some directors as to how many teachers should by the end of this period, may not being qualified, may be retrenched although it was not blatantly put that way. We had this scenario where we could not agree on some of the ways in which the staffing norms would be phased in. Because we could not reach the consensus with on some of these things we decided to put the negotiations on hold. Once we had the negotiations on hold, there was this fear: fear from NANTU that the technical team from the Ministry may give the impression to the Public Service Commission that the proposed staffing norms is fine and we are still working on that one. It could also give a picture to the Ministry of Finance that it is ok in terms of budgeting if we are given the staffing norms. So all these withheld for that period one could see that, I mean, all these are all possibilities that one was working on. Looking at when the additional budget came in we had to meet and in November we started to question that we know definitely what this would mean for some colleagues: that they would be retrenched. These frustrations would have led to an outcry. What was contained in and I think that is where as a union may be we were "shambocked" by the public, the intentions we had even with the demonstrations we had by that time was to show our counterparts that, you see, sometimes as much as they had important issues to attend to, the postponement and this thing of negotiations and the technical level is delaying the process and it is frustrating. So I think with these things we are really going back to get another mandate. And by getting the

mandate from the masses, informing the masses about the outcome: there were these outcomes; there were these frustrations, an outcry for letters to show our unhappiness. Ok! I think within a collective agreement it is spelt out clearly that some issues that are still being negotiated on should not come on for demonstration. So, one could see that with the demonstrations there were things like salaries that are low et cetera et cetera which were in fact supposed to be included. Sometimes may be these were tactics that we could have used to sort of, get this support from everybody, although everybody could say that it was fair to sort of include some of the items that were still being negotiated on in our demonstrations. But I think that is one way of showing our unhappiness as to what was happening. I think on the Ministry, one cannot squarely put the blame on the Minister because sometimes what is happening in the region is that it is done at the discretion of the situation of each director but in the end the Minister had to be accountable and this is what happened.

Interviewer: It looks like they were two things that were being done at the same time. There were these setting of quotas of teachers to be employed. Would that not constitute like implementing the staffing norms before the final agreement is reached? This is because already there are some attempts to reduce, to address the staffing situation where there were some norms being developed but not yet finished.

Respondent: In fact that is what ignited the whole thing. We agreed on gradual phasing in of the staffing norms. And at one point we stopped at the position whereby, as a union we felt by 2002 we should have been talking about 1:28 in secondary and 1:34 in primary schools. If one takes the financial implications of this at the initial positions that were started of 1:36 and 1:32 then, what was happening on the ground in terms of some was that were given notification and I think this was an indication that the process has started already which was negotiated. And that has led the issue of this thing.

Interviewer: Judging from the press releases that came from the Ministry, the things between NANTU and the Ministry were going down. There was some deterioration on the relationship between the two parties. What is your comment on that?

Respondent: Hmmm! I must say that it was a pity that the press was not always present when we had technical discussions at the technical level. The press was invited when may be given a certain position, if NANTU gives as position. So the negative image that was portrayed was when the things, and I think we are partly responsible for that, if we take for example the match and we look at some of the policy or some of the information that were on the process. I think it is for the press if they want to sell their papers, this is what they have to capture. And that is what they did when and even covering the match for the press it was news. For NANTU it was something they have, the message was sold out loudly and had its implications in the sense that the average man didn't get what the outcry was about. The average man looks at the butch of teachers on the street that kids are left in the class. So the average person looks at only the purpose of education and the relationship between the Ministry and teaching force and learners was confined at condemning what was happening. But I think the intention was to improve and build on might be a quality education. Now to date people are complaining about young children who cannot read in Grade 8, not doing well, reading is a problem. And if we had started of or we had a good understanding or if we were patient with each other, may be the scenario would have been different. But I think the press for them was an opportunity: I mean it was newsworthy. And that is what they are there to do, providing exciting news. If you read papers it must be something that the public enjoys. But I think I remember when we went to the press review, then, it was the Honourable Prime Minister, then Hage Geingob, who had to give after the demonstration, the position of the Ministry and then from the Union side I had to give may be what could have led the situation, I mean that is a positive role that the press made despite the process.

Interviewer: I think somewhere in 1998 there was this ratio that was 1:34 and 1:28 but in the Memorandum of Understanding there came a raised ratio of 1:35 and 1:30. What led NANTU to agree on this ratio compared to the first one?

Respondent: Ok! NANTU initially by 2002 already indicated that a good ratio would be 1:28 for secondary and for the primary school would be 1:34. And the negotiation process went on. It is a process of give and take. So by 2002 it should be 1:40 and 1:36. By that time when we signed the Memorandum of Understanding the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture

was 1:35 and 1:30 is through the negotiation process. We had a position of 1:28 and 1:34, the Ministry had a position of 1:40 and 1:36 and the meeting point was 1:34 and 1:28. It is part of the negotiation process. So it was a process of not win/lose. It was a win-win situation.

Interviewer: This is more of a requisition. To day we are here and when we cast eyes backward, what would you describe as an experience for the Union?

Respondent: If one looks back at how we started and not forgetting the initial question of what role stakeholders should play in the policy making. So I think it was an experience for a newly independent country to show and to be involved in sharing the experiences at policy level. I think it is something that, say, it was good and should be built on and see as to how we can really realise the dream of bringing true quality, access, democracy and equity into the education. Ok! We really view all these process of give and take. We today we talk about access of more than 95% of Namibian children in our schools. Had we let this thing over only to the Ministry, what would have we said? I think, the Ministry alone to may have achieved all these things. And if the Ministry had done all these things alone would you have been proud? Would you have been saying of taking ownership? The mere fact that we are/ were part and parcel of the process makes us feel we are owners over and we are grafting our destination. That is why I say it was a good experience. What I really want to see is that, as a Union and as a Ministry, we work hand in hand. In terms of the capacity we may not be equal. Yes! I thought as a Union we are to be trained, and have exposure and experiences to give to our people. It is very important that we are pro-active in the education matter. We should be pro-active. For example, let us take the example of minimum qualifications. The Ministry has come up with the proposal and I think it emanated from the Presidential Commission to look at the minimum qualifications for primary school and the minimum qualifications for secondary school. I think they forwarded their proposal and the onus is on the Union to say that ok, the proposal has to do with the conditions of service for our members. Now if I receive this favour from my counterpart, I will go and look at it before maybe I can counter that argument. Let me look at the counter proposal, I could solicit from many be expertise. Then I look at the positions in terms of the minimum qualifications that I got from my expertise if it could be next to the proposal of my counterpart and say this is how we should look at it. We have a copy of how we see the minimum qualification and the copy from the

Ministry we put together. We look at where we can reach consensus so that on the two we build one solid thing. I think that is why negotiations, proactiveness is very important.

Interviewer: My second last question. What do you consider as positive that NANTU got involved in the process and what would you consider as negative for NANTU as being involved in the development of the staffing norms?

Respondent: What was very much positive about NANTU was the fact that the information that they gathered could be taken back to membership. Membership was informed as to what the developments are. I think when you talk about staffing norms and all those things – it was for every teacher to be on par with what is happening. As a union we owe to it to our membership to explain everything. What was positive is to try to involve the opinions of the membership. That was positive about NANTU. May be what was negative about the process was at times the spirit in which we would conclude our negotiations. I remember if you are a president you are not always present on the negotiation because you have people who are leading these things. I remember at one point in time, a member from the Ministry of Basic Education's technical team brought a letter to me in which he expressed his disappointment in the technical team of the Union for the way or the language that was made or used in the negotiation. May be, you see, as academician you argue from a certain paradigm. So if, let us say, in the paradigm you are arguing in now, for example as a structural functionalist, if we, I mean we had a paradigm within our negotiation was based on almost on the structural functionalist the Ministry and the Union was trying to reach consensus. All of the sudden if within the negotiation team we come with a radical approach, then the counterpart start to ask, so I think we are working on the basis of win-win situation. How come that my counterpart has come up with a radical approach? And this is where I'll say there were some negatives and positives that something came up. But I must say it was a learning process. It could have seen as something negative and I think it has been part of the process.

Interviewer: Do you think value is added when stakeholders like NANTU get involved in policy making? Is the anything good?

Respondent: Definitely! When we say value is added in policy formulation, participating or involving stakeholders in policy making you are touching on, you are touching on the, let us say the interest of the stakeholders. You are opening up to a giving the intentions that you have with the policy with the stakeholders. And the mere fact that you are part and parcel of the process the outcome is acceptable by anybody. So it may have been through a tough process with- but I think in the end a consensus has been reached then it is owned by the stakeholders. This is where value is added- ownership- to be a product we own: not somebody's product.

Interviewer: Is there any difference you see that NANTU made in the process of the development of the staffing norms?

Respondent: Yes! For example, the staffing norms did also compel some of the under qualified teachers and non-qualified teachers to study. NANTU, hence the staffing norms NANTU started to encourage many of our members to start improving themselves. NANTU approached some of the institutions that were offering courses to see as to whether the courses offered by these institutions cannot be recognised by the Ministry. There was an agreement reached by the Union and the Ministry on period in which the recognition of some of these will be a period that will be given grace period. So these are some of the indications of how NANTU played a role in the staffing norms.

Interviewer: Now the last one that may be unless there is something that would like to add on. Are there some lessons to learn for NANTU as a stakeholder and the Ministry when it comes to this particular policy especially at the development part of it?

Respondent: think there are lessons to be learnt by both parties. In the first place, there is a need to do a thorough research. This goes along with the financial implications. You must be prepared to put in money to such exercise. It may be costly but someone said – education is a costly process. A good education is a costly process. Education costs more. So with thorough study some of the problems that we are experiencing now, in terms of the norms for the hostel staff, the norms for the institutional staff. These things started and have come to a stand still which one will question – we don't know because of the staffing norms we have brought in things like the

information science teacher in the allocation of periods and some teaching periods and information science. The information science has to do with the library and one of the problems that we have among our youth is that they do not read as they used to. I think when we are negotiating the staffing norms and we looked at the number of teachers that should be in a school. So the information teacher so many people and this is the allocation already stands for the proper management of micro... Some institutions, some schools that has financial resources to get people in the place that could do the job and get additional teachers- to where do we end up again- inequity. It leads to inequity. That is for us. It is not only for the Ministry it is also for the Union that we should look into but continues to work hand in hand to try and address our educational challenges.

Interviewer: Is there anything that probably you would like to add as we conclude the interview?

Respondent: I think in conclusion, educational development or to provide education to the nation is a costly exercise. And I don't think we will never as a country; say we have satisfied the needs of our citizens. But it will grow in itself if we can provide basic things to our people in education. It is a costly exercise. If we can supply basic things that will address illiteracy that could relieve poverty then we should be on the right track. If we can get to that stage we will be on the right track. But it cannot be achieved in a short period of time. It is a pity that one thing with us Namibians is, you see, we forget that independence is a dynamic process and our independency coincides with the overall demand of globalisation. But we are hardly 15 years old and we have to compare ourselves to and to compete with the advanced countries that have had their independence long time ago. What makes some of the things difficult for us, I must say it counts in our favour, is the size of the population and the infrastructure that we have. If we can sustain it, if we can look after it, if schools that we are building, if we can as parents teach our children that it is ours and not government; don't destroy it, if we can teach our children these basics- this small nation we can build it to achieve the goals of equity which equity is very relative term and I think our aspirations can be realised. Some of our aspirations can be realised, it may not be 100% but to a taxing development norm.

Interviewer: Thank you! Thank you!

Respondent: It was a pleasure.