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A NARRATIVE STUDY OF TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH THE EYES OF NAMIBIAN TEACHERS

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A narrative study of teachers' professional identity through the eyes of Namibian teachers

The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of teacher professional identity through a cross-cultural perspective. The theoretical framework consists of two dimensions: teachers' professional identity and the Namibian educational culture through a cross-cultural aspect. The first part of the theoretical framework scrutinises narrative identity and teachers' professional development together with the main concept. The second part of the theoretical framework approaches the studied context by increasing information about it and by reflecting the significance of cross-cultural research and researcher’s position in the study.

The aim of this study is to discover from which essential incidents the professional teacher identity of these Namibian subject teachers’ is constructed in the different phases of their career. Since identity is approached as a phenomenon, qualitative inquiry is applicable for researching the topic. Narrative approach is utilised in this study, since narrativity is linked to the construction of teacher identity in Sfard & Prusak’s (2005), Kaasila’s (2008) and Soreide’s (2006) definitions. The data was collected by using the semi-structures interviews and includes the stories of four Namibian subject teachers of their careers. All the interviewed teachers had gained professional experience before data collection. The analysis of data was performed by utilising Polkinghorne’s (2005) method analysis of narratives.

The main categories that formed the results of this study are 1) The construction of teacher identity, 2) The development of teacher identity on a personal and societal level, 3) The dimensions of teacher identity in contemporary context, and 4) The ideal teacher and teachers’ thoughts of their future. Moreover, the main categories are divided into themes, by applying Polkinghorne’s (2005) method. The themes were construed from the data based on the stories teachers told.

The conclusions show that teacher professional identity is constructed through significant people, events and educational environments in teachers’ lives. Moreover, the development of identity is constructed through evaluation on a personal level and by reflecting the changes in teachers’ profession on a societal level. In the contemporary context teacher identity is constructed via experienced roles, motivation in teachers’ profession, practical experiences, educational values and professional challenges. As Flores & Day (2006) point out, teacher professional identity is shaping constantly during the career. Furthermore, teachers in this study define their identity to the future by professional goals and constructing their image of an ideal teacher. In addition, this study supports Sfard & Prusak’s (2005) definition of teacher professional identity as constructed though stories. The conclusions of this study indicate that teacher professional identity has global and universal elements. From the perspective of conclusions cross-cultural research of this topic enriches the understanding of Finnish teacher professional identity.
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1 INTRODUCTION

Studying identities has been relatively popular within psychological and educational research during the last century. As Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons (2006) point out, theorists such as G.H. Mead (1934) and E.H. Erikson (1968) emphasised the inner world of a person and the singular sense of an identity. They represented the idea of an identity which is seen as proportionately stable or constant and beyond the environment’s influences (Davey, 2013). Especially, teacher identity has got its part in the field of identity research. For instance, Uitto, Kaunisto, Syrjälä & Estola (2014) approached teacher identity through emotions and significant people in teachers’ lives. Furthermore, identity has been in the centre of the research linked to the teacher education and the beginnings of the careers of new teachers. Trent (2011) studied English pre-service teacher students in Hong Kong and concentrated on their identity formation during their studies and training. Zeichner & Ndimande (2008) compared the teacher education reforms in the USA and Namibia.

This topic is important for me as I became interested in the essence and the construction of the professional teacher identity in my own native Finnish context during my studies and in the beginning of my own teacher career. I participated in an internship related to my Master’s studies in 2012 and 2013 in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia. During that time I became inspired to study this topic in a foreign culture, and to learn what kinds of elements teacher identity has specifically in the Namibian context.

The aspiration to closely examine foreign cultures and the phenomena constructed in them set the guidelines to my research. Researching this topic is relevant and important in expanding the understanding of foreign cultures and learning more about teacher professional identity away from the Western context. Stenberg (2011) points out that the profession of a teacher is characterised with constant development requirements and that professional development is strongly linked to teachers’ professional identity. The purpose of this study is to increase knowledge on teacher identity specifically in a Namibian context. Studying this kind of a topic has a widening effect to understanding the phenomena in the researchers’ own native culture. It opens the possibility to bring benefits and new information and as a result increase awareness about the researched topic. Also is it crucial to discover if there...
are similarities or differences in teachers’ professional identity development, or if it can be seen as universal.

Since there are a limited amount of studies made on professional teacher identity in Namibia (Ralaingita, 2008), I aimed to approach the topic through a chapter which examines teachers’ professional identity separately, and a chapter which gives an understanding of the studied context. Most of the research made on teacher professional identity I introduce in this study are made in Western countries and a small amount of them in Asian (Trent, 2011) or South African context (Samuel & Stephens, 2000; Cross & Ndofirepi, 2015).

The nature of the research strategy is qualitative due to it being more suitable than quantitative methods for scrutinising identity as a phenomenon. This thesis approaches this topic through a narrative lens, since stories play a significant role in the construction of identities (Kaasila, 2008). I conducted four semi-structured interviews based on themes reflected beforehand from these teachers’ past to their future. My demand for the research was that the interviewees would have to have professional experience in the Namibian context, and all of the teachers fulfilled it. The purpose of the research problem guiding this study was to find answers on how teacher professional identity is construed during the career of Namibian teachers.

The second and the third chapters create a theoretical framework to this thesis, while reviewing the concepts of teacher professional identity, narrative identity, professional development, and the educational culture in the studied country. The fourth chapter explains the research problem and the question, and the fifth chapter gives description to the whole research process. The sixth chapter introduces the results, and at its end suggests and summarises the conclusions. Finally, chapter seven discusses reliability and further research topics and applications.

Since identity, especially teacher identity, has been studied to a great extent in the Western world (Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Britzman, 2003; Millar Marsh, 2002), and additionally in the Finnish context (Kaasila, 2008; Uitto, Kaunisto, Syrjälä & Estola, 2014). Expanding the concept by increasing the consciousness from other cultures bring new nuances to the research field.
2 PROFESSIONAL TEACHER IDENTITY

The main concept of this study, teacher professional identity, is discussed in this chapter. The chapter concentrates on its development, and the research made on it. In addition the concept of narrative identity and teachers’ professional development is approached in this chapter.

Rodgers & Scott (2008) show that research on teacher identity or more specifically teachers’ professional identity has increased recently. Meijer (2011) also agrees and adds that it has emerged especially after the year 2008 (Lutovac, 2014). Cesar & Kumpulainen (2009, 353) also state that deepening the understanding of the teacher identity construction on a personal and professional level is emphasised in the contemporary research. According to Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop (2004) research made about teachers’ professional identity development can be divided into three different main categories. They show that the first category represents studies in which teachers’ professional identity formation was in a centre of a research. The second category of studies which concentrates on the identification of characteristics of teachers’ professional identity. The third category includes teachers’ stories about professional identity. In these studies the term professional identity was construed differently or not construed at all. However, this study focuses on the third category by examining teachers’ professional identity through their stories. Through stories the experienced teacherhood can be approached and analysed.

From these studies can be found crucial aspects of teachers’ professional identity. Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop (2004) state that teachers’ personal practical knowledge (explain the concept) is widely studied. Although the link between teachers’ personal practical knowledge and professional identity has not been pointed clearly. Also some of the features can be emphasising the future research design. The difference of the concepts the “self” and the “identity”, and the contextual matters in teachers’ professional identity formation have to be described. In addition, defining the “professional” in professional identity to the research of teachers’ professional identity development needs to be specified (because).
Davey (2013, 24-25) divides the educational literature on professional identity into three most common approaches. Psychological or developmental, socio-cultural, and post-structural approaches each examine the professional identity, in this study professional teacher identity, from different aspects but there are also similarities in them. My purpose is not to find the similarities, instead I introduce the first two approaches shortly to add the understanding on the third one and to create a base for it. I use the third, post-structuralist one, approach as a lens to view the professional teacher identity and the data together.

As Davey (2013) refers to Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons (2006, 602), the psychological or developmental approach aimed to concentrate on the individual and personal dimension of a human. Instead of viewing identity only from an individual perspective, the socio-cultural approach considers the construction of identity also socially. She points that the psychological or developmental approaches emphasise that the teacher professional identity is an individualistic understanding and a reflection of a person, rather than how she or he is seen by others. Although, a person is constructing the identity through a dialogue which is based on the person’s self-image, and the image other people have on her or him. Typical for socio-cultural approaches amongst the social structures of an individual are a constant personal and professional reflective interaction, and a negotiation of the identity. The most emphasising factor to socio-cultural approach on professional identity is that a person cannot define oneself without other people (Davey, 2013, 25-29.)

Post-structuralist perspectives to study identity underline the nature of multiple, and continually changing and shifting subjectivities in and through the language. Sfard and Prusak (2005, 16) define identity through communicative customs and discursivity. According to Zembylas (2003, p. 221) “identity is formed in this shifting space where narratives of subjectivity meet the narratives of culture”. The aim of post-structuralist perspectives is to bring agency in identity and the power in language together. (Davey, 2013, 29-30) This study applies the socio-cultural and post-structuralist perspectives, more specifically due to teacher identity in this study is seen constructed as socially and in discourse.

2.1 The definitions of professional teacher identity

As reported by Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop (2004) the definition of this concept has several different forms in social science and philosophic research. The research of teacher pro-
fessional identity development has increased lately during the last two decades. (Beaucamp & Thomas, 2009; Bukor, 2011) Although the difficulty of defining the concept *teacher identity* accurately has been labelling the research. As stated by Olsen (2008) the challenge of the definition of the concept is a result of how the term *identity* has been used in different ways in psychological research. Olsen’s (2008, p. 5) definition of the teacher identity can be summed in the following way.

“*Teacher identity is a useful research frame because it treats teachers as whole persons in and across social contexts who continually reconstruct their views of themselves in relation to others, workplace characteristics, professional purposes, and cultures of teaching. It is also a pedagogical tool that can be used by teacher educators and professional development specialists to make visible various holistic, situated framings of teacher development in practice.*” (Olsen, 2008, p. 5)

Lasky (2005) explains that teacher professional identity is an aspect how teachers characterise themselves to themselves and to other people. Both Olsen’s (2008) and Lasky’s (2005) definition represents a socio-cultural perspective to teacher identity. Teacher professional identity can be seen to progress and construed over the whole teachers’ career (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Huberman, 1993; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985). Lasky (2005) also shows that teacher identity may develop in a political context or by the school the teacher is teaching, and also due to an educational reform (Datnow, Hubbard & Mehen, 2002; Sachs, 2000). Lasky (2005) emphasises the aspect of individual teachers’ capacity to teacher professional identity development. According to it, the teacher bring his or her professional and personal heritage to the school environment he or she is working in and to its instructions. It carries the idea of a personal commitment to the profession, the readiness and inner urge to be open to learn from the educational environment in which one is working, its instructions and reforms. (Spillane & Thompson, 1997) In addition Stoll (1999) points out that individual capacity covers teachers’ individual beliefs, educational values, identity, subject field and pedagogical knowledge, teachers’ previous experiences of teaching. Hargreaves (1998) adds the aspect of emotional well-being and Lasky (2004) mentions professional vulnerability to these definitions.
Mayer’s (1999) definition of a teacher identity says that it is concentrated on teachers’ core beliefs about being a teacher and about teaching in general. These beliefs are shaping all the time through teachers’ career and experiences. “It is possible to become an expert practitioner by actually doing the job, by performing the skills, but true professional teaching involved another dimension, an intellectual dimension.” (Mayer, 1999, 8) This states the principle of lifelong learning of a teacher. (Walkington, 2005)

Flores & Day (2006) have examined how new teachers’ identities are shaped and reshaped during the first two years of their teaching career. They also consider the new teachers’ educational beliefs, values, their own learning experiences, professional challenges and the role of a teacher in the school environment when it comes to the identity formation of a teacher in the beginning of his or her career.

Flores’ & Day’s (2006) definition of teacher identity is seen as a process which is continuing and changing continually and involves teachers own values and experiences through reflective ways. Sachs (2001, p. 6) mentions in a context of becoming a teacher:

Figure 1. The construction of new identity, applied according to Flores & Day (2006, p. 230).
“For teachers this is mediated by their own experience in schools and outside of schools as well as their own beliefs and values about what it means to be a teacher and the type of teacher they aspire to be.” (Sachs, 2001, p. 6)

Sachs (2001) also states that teacher identity carries out the idea of transformation and alteration. (Flores & Day, 2006) My aim in this study is to scrutinise the possible transformation, moreover development, of the Namibian subject teachers.

Britzman (2003) is also supporting the idea of dynamic form of teacher identity. According to him the focus is in the process of becoming a teacher when it comes to formation and transformation. Millar Marsh (2002) also stands for the perspective that a teacher is constantly “fashioning and refashioning” (Millar Marsh, 2002, 8) his or her identity (Trent, 2011). In Czerniawski’s (2011, p. 432) research teacher identity is explained in a following way:

“How teachers view themselves as teachers; how teachers view others that they professionally engage with; and how teachers believe they are perceived by ‘others’.” (Czerniawski, 2011, p. 432)

Day, Sammons, Stobart, Kington and Gu (2007) points out that teachers’ identity is constructed from three components which are personal, situational and professional perspectives to teaching. Teachers’ personal identity is lined out from teachers’ working context and includes the identity of personal life of the teacher. When it comes to contexts where teacher is working at, the situational identity is the one affecting to the individual agency and the sense of self. Professional perspective to teachers’ identity is effected by the policies determining teachers’ work, the roles of a teacher including the responsibilities of the work. (Fuller, Goodwyn, Francis-Brophy, 2013)

2.2 Narrative identity

According to Sfard & Prusak’s (2005) definition of identity. According to them identity is not constructed only through stories but identities are stories. Kaasila (2008, 43) refers to Ricoeur’s (1983) definition of a narrative plot as a synthesis which purpose is to bring out the singular events in the story and the complete story together. The aim is to create a plot
which includes the past and future events, and everything in between. In this study my interest is rather to find the contents and the topics of the stories than to concentrate on the form of the stories. This is because of the stories are formed by semi-structured interviews, and combining the events was only done in the analysis process, not before that by the interviewees.

Kaasila states (2008, 44) the stories play a relevant role in the identity formation. According to Ricoeur (1992) people are analysing their identities by telling stories about their lives. The process of telling stories is not only describing the specific events but also emphasising the agency in those events and the combining them as a constructed plot. As a result of this, (Ricoeur, 1983), the sense of the self in constantly under construction. In addition the stories are existing differently and uniquely to the story teller than to other people related to those. (Kaasila, 2008, 44) Connelly & Clandinin (1999) also see identity through stories and focus on how the stories are told but also when, where, and to whom. (Elbaz-Luwisch 2007, 364)

Soreide (2006) studied primary school teachers and how they constructed teacher professional identities with through narratively. She found and defined four categories of identity constructions: “the caring and kind teacher”, “the creative and innovative teacher”, “the professional teacher”, and “the typical teacher”. Moreover, her study represents a post-structuralist perspective for studying teacher identity. The study suggests that the crucial part of constructing a teacher identity demands negotiation between the different identities the teacher has.

2.3 Teachers’ professional development

Gu (2013) studied professional teacher identity construction and professional development of English teachers in Chinese context. Cross & Ndofirepi (2015) approached teacher professional identity and the development of it with South African teachers. Stenberg (2011) states that reflection plays an important role in professional development. By reflection she specifies the expanding influence of teachers’ self-knowledge. Reflection is extending to both an individual’s personal and professional lives, and includes the aspects of self-reflection and the process of understanding. The personal self-identity contains teacher’s values, beliefs, understanding and assumptions. The professional identity on the other hand
includes teachers’ personal practical theory. These together with professional experiences are leading to the professional development in teacher. According to MacLeod & Cowison (2001, 242) teachers can perform their profession as competently due to this. However, this demands critical consciousness and evaluation of their actions. Stenberg (2011) uses reflection as an analysis tool, more specifically interests of reflection and forms of reflection. The concepts presented above form the theoretical framework of this study in a following figure. All of the interviews included elements of these concepts and were brought out in teachers’ stories.

Figure 2: Teacher professional identity in this study.

In the light of above considerations, teachers’ professional identity in this study is constructed through stories and discussion, social interactions, and own experiences based on a person’s deep reflection. These represent both the socio-cultural and post-structural perspectives. In addition teacher identity is approached through the professional development of teachers which is seen to continue during the whole career path.
3 THE STUDIED CONTEXT: EDUCATIONAL CULTURE IN NAMIBIA

The focus of this chapter is to increase knowledge of the studied teacher context in Namibian educational culture. At first, it discusses the educational atmosphere in the country context and the affecting factors of its development. Secondly, it shows the relevant aspects of The National Curriculum for Basic Education in Namibia, and, deepens the understanding of the senior secondary level of education in the curriculum considering that the teachers who were studied to this research were working in those levels. Finally, the chapter ends to a description of cross-cultural perspective and researcher’s position. There are amounts of literature regarding the eras of Namibian apartheid education and missionary education. I will touch on the topic to some extent but my aim is rather to define the references to the Namibian education from the teachers’ and the essence of teacher identity’s perspective. Additionally, my aim is not to concentrate on teacher education in Namibia, due to the decision of intentionally leaving out the topics or questions of teacher education. This is because I wanted to concentrate on the other factors related to teacher identity. Furthermore, the teachers did not bring out information regarding to that, except the experiences in training periods.

In this study I use the concept of educational or culture to define the history, the policies and the curriculum but also the attitudes and the atmosphere of the educational environment in Namibia. Through educational culture my aim is to scrutinise the background of the country’s educational system, and examine shortly its historical background affecting to it. I will analyse from which kinds of aspects and factors the Namibian education and teacher identity is construed of.

3.1 Historical background information of the education system

This chapter examines shortly the history and the background knowledge of Namibia related to the development of the education system. Studying the background knowledge and history of the country is crucial while examining the main factors of the basic education of Namibia. The education system itself is studied through its wider context, the history of the
society and the formation process of it. While researching teacher identity as a phenomenon and a profession of a teacher, it is crucial to examine the wider contexts and junctions.

There are three different historical eras in the education of Namibian history. These can be named as the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial eras. Dahlström (2002) adds a fourth chapter to this and names it as the era of liberation struggle and points out it existed at the same time than the colonial era. The liberation struggle era can be seen as a contrasting movement to the colonial education era and as a pre-stage to the post-colonial education era. (Dahlström, 2002, 69)

According to Dahlström (2002, 70-72) some of the commonalities can be found from the indigenous African education. He rather prefers the name indigenous African education than non-formal or informal education. He claims it would be questionable to use different terms only by the reason it used orders than the Western education system. The main characteristic of it is the oral tradition in changing and forwarding knowledge, such as proverbs, myths, and legends. The purpose of these applications of the oral tradition was to educate, share experiences and ideas, and find out common solutions to problems. The oral tradition was also shared through the mother tongue of the people. Another notable characteristic was the aspect of life-long learning and that it was seen in the society in a larger spectrum. Conception of learning was concentrated on all of the different phases of life, from childhood to senescence but with a view of growing the knowledge base in each life phase. In my opinion as constructivist learning nowadays. Due to this the elderly people usually had the biggest amount of knowledge. The indigenous educational culture is still present in a form of common social sharing in some of the African communities, although the mode of modern education has infiltrated itself into these and is nowadays the prevalent one. Dahlström (2002, 72) notes the contrast between these two educational cultures, referring to the confrontation of the oral and the written tradition, unequal or equal gender conditions, the norms of teacher-centred or learner-centred culture, and reluctance or openness to the change.

Dahlström (2002, 72-82) divides the period of Namibia’s colonial education into three different eras: missionary schooling, schooling under German colonialism, and schooling under South African rule. He calls the colonial education and its western formal style of schooling as an intervention to the indigenous approach for education. From the country’s
point of view, not only the eras under German and South African rule are seen as colonial. Equally the missionary education era is seen as part of the colonial education rule as it was foreshadowing the future. In this study my aim is not to define specifically the contents of each colonial education era but instead to introduce the framework linked to the studied context. The most notable missionaries were represented by London Missionary Society from Great Britain, by Rhenish Mission Society from Germany, and Finnish Mission Society from Finland in 19th century. It was obvious that there were problems these missionaries caused to the indigenous education. Missionary education and the Christian ideology had challenges to fit in to the indigenous one. Christianisation of Namibia by the German and the British was the main factor in taking over in the colonisation process, as it was also seen as an excuse for protecting the missionaries’ property.

The colonial mentality saw itself as a superior to the local Namibian education culture. In general the missionary education was accused in terms of ignorant and maltreating behaviour to the local culture, without belittling the influences of Finnish missionary education. Missionary education also had partially an implication in the segregation policy of the different groups. Education became compulsory during the German colonial era which started in 1884 and ended in 1915 (Orjala, 2004, 70, 74) for the white children in 1911 in Namibia but left the education of black and coloured children to the German missionary societies. However, only a small group were entitled to take part in the compulsory education. This was creating a base for the apartheid ideology and the white Boer supremacy (Dahlström, 2002).

The problems that were brought up by the differences of these two, the indigenous African and the various forms of colonial education, became visible in their socialisation functions. The indigenous African education contained a strong sense of communality; a person became a part of the society via education. The colonial education on the other hand aimed at excluding from a viewpoint of a local people. The exclusion was seen in the degrading the African societies into inferior, and trying to plant the values and aspects of European world without granting the real participation into it. The segregation and exclusion were led to an alienation and later on to the South African education with the ideology of apartheid.

Education in Namibia under the rule of South African Republic continued the customs of colonial education with its old habits, however it was now even more institutionalised and
controlled by the government policies. The apartheid education policies were carried out in the year 1958 by the Van Zyl Commission, and one of its main purposes was to serve education for the 80% of the black children only for four years. By this the white rule wanted to empower itself, create a parallel essence of strongly differentiated groups, and pursue a large group of hardly educated staff. Another purpose was to prevent the birth of any anti-apartheid behaviour. This was done by controlling the missionary education, specifically the church schools, were this behaviour started to appear.

The last purpose was to show that the black people did not need education more than the compulsory four years presented to them. This was pointed out with the privilege given to them meaning they were entitled to further studies but with the lacking competencies from the period of four year education. After the years’ 1978 “so called free elections” (Dahlström, 2002, 80) which lead to the Bantustan education which aim was to categorise education to different tribal groups. Due to the order of Bantustan education, eleven different groups were formed and carried out for about ten years before the country’s independence. By the apartheid education policies Dahlström (2002) refers to Kustaa’s (1997) view of education as a source of inequalities in the society, hence its amount and quality play also an important role in it. However, despite the negative and depressing effects of the colonial era, the existence of past two parallel education systems created a passion towards equal and modern educational rights for all people.

As for the era of the education and the liberation struggle, Dahlström (2002, 82-89) brings up SWAPOs, then a political liberation movement, intentions to improve the education system in several practical ways, free education in the future among other things. The main aims of the liberation of education were to create one common national educational system instead of the old two parallel unequal systems, to make the system more rational and scientific based, and to announce the insights of productive work that lead to the development on a societal level. It also aimed to open the education system more by cooperating internationally, and considered the culture, the creativeness, and the socio-political contexts as a crucial part and boost for the development.

As a conclusion education became an important way to unravel the structures of remains of colonial education. The challenges appeared only after the long-term ambitions were announced and were seen in the difficulties to produce these policies into the practical class-
room work. Before and after the independence amounts of Namibian people were educated abroad not by but for the liberation movement, due to that the country did not have its own human resources for creating the new education system. As a results of this the liberation movement did not establish its own educational practices but got a lot of influences from other countries educational culture, where the expats had studied (Dahlström, 2002).

3.2 The National Curriculum for Basic Education in Namibia and the education system on the senior secondary level

The National Curriculum for Basic Education in Namibia is based on the documents announced after gaining the independence in 1990. (NIED, National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2010, 1) The Namibian basic education is divided to five different parts. The compulsory education starts from the Pre-Primary phase in the year when the child is turning six and it continues to the Lower Primary phase from grades 1 to 4. This is followed by the Upper Primary from the grades 5 to 7 meaning that the child will be 13 when finishing the Primary School. The secondary education covers Junior Secondary, from grade 8 to 10, and Senior Secondary, from 10 to 12, phases. Compulsory education is altogether 10 years and includes the years of age from 6 to 16. Although if the child does not manage to pass one or more years of his or her education, it will be continued the time which is needed. After the grade 10, when the compulsory education is completed, the child can apply into the formal Senior Secondary education level, vocational education or training, distance learning or to the field of employment. (NIED, National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2010, 3) The purpose of the Senior Secondary level is to prepare the learners for further studies in tertiary education or vocational training, to the field of private, public or self-employment. (NIED, National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2010, 15)
The teachers who participated in this study were all working in senior secondary level education in Namibia. In the senior secondary level the students are prepared for the further education, training or employment field. For the final examination held in the end of the grade 12, the students will study English and Mathematics throughout this level as compulsory, “a field of study consisting of three mutually supportive subject”, and certain supplementary subjects. The integrated curriculum also includes such complexes as Environmental learning, HIV and AIDS education, Health and Wellness Education, Human Rights and Democracy, and Information and Communication Technology. All of these issues mentioned are considered to have a role of causing challenges and risks in the Namibian society. The curriculum pursues to the goal that every student will attain the idea of the impacts of these challenges to their lives and environment in every level. (NIED, National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2010, 3-4)

The National Curriculum for basic Education of Namibia defines the goal of basic education to create citizens to build up a knowledge-based society and to give an “overall direc-
tion” to further education. The knowledge-based society in a Namibian context means the adequate use of the cultural knowledge what already exists, the construction of a new knowledge and also being the contribution and use of knowledge via information systems such as research and highly technology. As a result of this producing innovations, entrepreneurship and sustainable development for needs of the community. Globalisation is as well a part of knowledge-based society. (NIED, National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2010, 7)

The curriculum emphasises a strong cultural identity and values in the adaptation of a healthy relationship to the globalisation. In this country’s situation it carries a collaborative culture which has to be also considered. The curriculum also discloses the concept of lifelong learning as its goals. The aim of the curriculum is to build a society which are described in the following characteristics: A society which is 1) caring, 2) healthy, 3) democratic, 4) productive, 5) environmentally sustainable, 6) information, and 7) states for individual development. A caring society includes the thoughts of creating responsible learners with high moral and ethical values. A healthy society is considered to produce physically and mentally healthy individuals, to help learners throughout their learning paths and to equip them with the inner models of equality, integrity, responsibility and respect for life. The concept of a democratic society comprises that the education system is to make the learner aware of his or her own beliefs, opinions and attitudes. Also to give the understanding of democratic principles and practices, human rights, consensus, liberty and justice. The basic core of a productive society is the education to offer knowledge and practical skills for further life to its learners and to inspire to the way of problem-solving, reflective thinking. An environmentally sustainable society in the curriculum context is created by adding people’s consciousness about how the environment is taken care of and respected. Aiming to an information society the curriculum is building an understanding of an information literacy. Developing an information literacy for students is also one of the main aims in the curriculum. In addition to these social aims individual development is considered as important in the curriculum as all the mentioned above are. (NIED, National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2010, 7-8)
3.3 Cross-cultural perspective and researchers’ position

Since the researcher and the research units are coming from the different backgrounds, countries and cultures, it is significant to reflect the cultural contexts of the interviews, as Rastas (2005) presents. She states that if the interviewer and interviewee are originally from the different cultures, their experiences about the researched topic and reality surroundings are slightly differing from each other. As a result of this, it might give challenges to understand each other. By taking in account the age, gender, nationality and such matters are crucial in evaluating the understanding between the counterparts of the interview. Rastas (2005) emphasises the possibility of cultural differences appearing while interviewing and the counterparts’ differing ways to analyse and to classify one’s surrounding world. (Rastas, 2005, 78-102) Before the interviews I aimed to make sure that the purpose of the data collection was clear with all of the interviewees. The cultural differences and features are also related to the different contexts where those topics are discussed. Even if the cultural differences might cause challenges in interview situation, it is important that the researcher has knowledge about the culture of the studied people. It depends on the research focus how much the researcher has to gain knowledge about the culture where the interviewees are coming from and how to define the culture of the interviewees from their own perspective. Although taking in account the all the cultural differences is difficult, the researcher should recognise his or her own unfamiliarity towards the cultural backgrounds of the research units in the analysis process. This has to be considered while the researcher is making interpretations from the researched people’s interview outputs, its contents and meanings. The semantics of cultural differences are related to the research relationship between the interview counterparts and the contents of the interview what is discussed.

My own background is related to the studied topic in a form of an internship. In years 2012-2013 I served an internship in a City of Windhoek’s sector for Community Development Division for five months, as I worked in two different early childhood education centres, and also participated in the administrative work in the field. Through my internship I got familiarised with the education system of Namibia and my interest towards it grew. As a result of this I started reflecting the topic of my Master’s thesis from the base of my Bachelor’s thesis. My first aim was to study the teacher identity of the early childhood teachers but due to the number of workers in the centres the anonymity of the interviewees
was problematised. I aimed to find the interviewees from other early childhood education centres and even thought of widening the topic to the primary education by searching the interviewees from primary schools but without a result. Although, I got an opportunity to interview secondary school teachers and reflected if the topic was suitable to study them. I concluded there was not boundaries to perform the study with them.

While examining a foreign culture and the data related to it, it is important that the researcher is aware of the researched cultures’ history and society. Otherwise the researcher might end up reading and interpreting the data from his or her own cultural basis which is misleading for the research. The external researcher might also bring into attention something new, unconscious and ignorant from the other culture what the interviewee does not notice to mention. (Pietilä, 2010, 419-420) After spending time in the studied context, to a certain extent, I became more aware of the country’s historical and educational background.

Pietilä (2010, 411-417) emphasises the importance of researchers’ reflection in the different phases of interview analysis. Especially when the interview language is not equivalent to the researchers’ native mother tongue. All of these interviews done for this thesis research were proceeded in foreign language, English, both to the interviewer and interviewees. According to Pietilä (2010) proficient language skills are relevant while starting to analyse the data originated from the differing culture of researchers’ own. For researcher it is important to orientate to the country’s culture, history and interaction manners between people. As earlier mentioned, before performing the interviews I had spent and worked in Namibia for about half a year as an early childhood teacher meaning I had working experience from children, parents and colleagues. I had familiarized myself with the culture, people and a local way of working, living and also the educational facilities and culture to a certain extent.

Pietilä (2010) addresses that before analysing the foreign language data the researcher should be familiar with the parts of interview which are causing challenges to assimilate the contents and forms of speech, thoughts and expressions of the interviewee related to one’s language and culture. These kinds of situations can occur for instance in proverbs, figures of speech, humour and non-verbal communication related to the interviewees culture. Some of the interviews contained sayings and proverbs, although I had always a situa-
tion to ask from the interviewee about the specific meaning if I was not aware of them. It is crucial to take in account the participation of the interviewer to the data collection situation, Pietilä (2010) continues. The participant role of the interviewer can be seen as a component of the process of producing information. During the interview the researcher has a possibility to perform defining questions if she or he has not perceived the essential answer of the interviewee. Also the external factors of the interview situation can be collected by the researcher while participating in the data collection by himself or herself instead of analysing the interview proceeded by another researcher. These factors can be such as a non-verbal communication, facial expressions and impressions, a body language, and an atmosphere of the interview. In the interviews I performed, my intention was only to collect the contents of the spoken recorded data with for example pauses, laughing and sighing. Meaning the facial expressions, body language and intonations were left out. In addition it is worth of consideration in what kind of speech, tone etc. the researcher is using for the interviewee.

This thesis is researching the phenomena which are representing the interviewee’s home country’s society and educational environment in a smaller perspective. Thus, the interviewee can be seen as a representer of his or her own culture, Pietilä (2010) points out. In some cases it may cause a comparative setting between the originating country, culture and its habits of the interviewee and the corresponding of the researcher. The researcher should recognize the symbolic values from the interview data and examine it in broader settings. Although in the described position the interviewee might produce even more specifying information about the research subject than in the situation where both of the participants of the interview are from the same country and culture. Comparative position may also cause that the interviewee is polishing his or her native culture extremely or either being utterly critical to his or her own culture’s or country’s phenomena. Consequently, it is important to take in account what or who is the researcher representing in interviewees perspective. The fact how the researched sees his or her own profession, culture or country and how he or she sees the culture represented by the researcher are relevant to the study. All the researched teachers were aware of the purpose of the study and the fact that the researcher was also working as a teacher. Because of this the researcher has to keep in mind that the comparative position may occur in the research and consider during the whole research process, states Pietilä (2010). After several times of considering, the topics
of comparing did not occur during the interviews, although it has to be kept in mind that it might have affected some answers.
4 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTION

The research problem and questions define the guidelines to a study, states Kiviniemi (2007). Although, those are not necessarily clear in the beginning but are specifying and need to be evaluated during the whole research process. This occurred in my study as well, since the final form of research problem and questions were formed in the analysis process. As a result of this, the nature of the study is inductive.

This study focuses on the professional teacher identity and therefore concentrates on the beginnings of the career and the choices which lead to this certain career. It examines the changes in the professional teacher identity on a personal and in a wider general level. It also considers the current professional teacher identity, and the ideal teacher profile the teachers brought out in the interviews. Furthermore, the research problem of this study is to define how the professional teacher identity of these Namibian teachers is construed throughout the different points of the teachers’ lives, reflected from the current moment. The specific research question follows the form:

From which essential incidents the professional teacher identity of these Namibian teachers is constructed in the different phases of a career?

My purpose is to examine specifically the stories of four Namibian subject teachers, and how they have constructed their professional teacher identity throughout their careers. In addition, my aim is to find which incidents have influenced the construction and development process of their teacher identity. By examining teacher identity throughout the certain points of teachers’ career, the answers to the research problem can be found. My interests in this study are especially the stories these teachers told, since in narrative identity research, teachers’ professional and personal identity are constructed in their stories contextually in an interaction with the environment.
5 RESEARCH PATHWAY

The description of the whole research pathway is explained in this chapter before the results. It starts with the selection of the approach used, then follows to the methodology of the research, continues to the explanation of the research settings, the collection and the preparation process of the data, and finally concludes with the analysis process. This research is following the qualitative research strategy since it is focused on describing and understanding teacher identity in a phenomenal level. Furthermore, the study is inductive since the theoretical framework was drawn from the data. However, the theory behind teacher identity was partially framing the data collection process beforehand. As a conclusion, this study is written in English as the data collection and most of the references regarding to the essential concepts were stated in English.

Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2002, 87-88) present that instead of aiming to quantitative statistical generalisations, the purpose of qualitative research strategy is to give theoretical dimension to the researched phenomenon. Especially crucial in qualitative research are the people who are functioning as an information sources, and holding plenty of knowledge and experience about the examined topic. Consequently, the selection of researched people and their adaptableness to each other has to be considered carefully before performing the study. Therefore, the selection of researched people for this study was deliberate and conscious. The purpose of the study is also defining its research strategy as Hirsjärvi, Remes, Sajaavaara (2009, 137-139) explains, whether it is qualitative or quantitative. They refer to Yin’s (1984) definition that while considering which strategy is the most suitable can be directed from the research problem and the form of it. The research which aims to describe different phenomena and events occurring in people’s lives, and also to report the essential features from them, can be both qualitative and quantitative. However, taking account to the fact that this research is examining teacher identity, it also defines its research strategy to qualitative.

Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008, 136-137) states that the data is being analysed by the researcher simultaneously than it is being collected, interpreted, and reported narratively. According to them the features of analysis can be divided into four main sections. At first, the analysis is beginning already in the interview situation. While performing the interviews, the re-
searcher may do perceptions about some occurring phenomenon, and may collect more data about them by asking more specifying questions. Secondly, the analysis happens in its settings. The researcher is living the story again while performing the analysis. The written form of the interview is giving a possibility to go into the interview data again and again. Thirdly, the reasoning which the researcher is using, can be either abductive or inductive. In abductive reasoning the researcher is using the existing theoretical ideas which he or she tries to prove with the data. Inductive reasoning on the contrary appears from the data itself. Fourthly, since its various analysing methods, qualitative research does not include one superior method compared to other methods. Choosing the suitable method is up to a researcher.

5.1 Semi-structured interview

This research was performed through the methods of semi-structured interview. There are certain reasons why I concluded this type of interview is an effective way of gaining the data wanted exactly to this research. First of all, the aim of this research is to approach teachers’ experiences and conceptions. Silverman (2005, 112-113) mentions that by choosing the interview method is considered to be more applicable when it comes to studying especially people’s experiences and motivation instead of observational methods. The interview also gives a possibility to see the studied person as a subject as Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008, 35) emphasises. The subject can bring out matters and give interpretations related especially to him or her and is an active counterpart of the interview process. Secondly, I acquired to get as close to the research units’ thoughts and mindset as it was possible considering the research situation. As Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2009, 208) are emphasising, in structured interview the questions are performed in a same order and form in every interview. Although, I aimed to give more space to the presence and the answers of the interviewees by choosing the semi-structured interview as the structured interview might have caused a distant atmosphere. The open interview might have probably caused further versatile and multi-faceted interview results in a different depth scale but also might have lead the exact wanted interview theme to not desired another paths. Although considering the time and locational factors, the conclusion was that the semi-structured interview is practical and explicit when it comes to this research. Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2009, 208) locates the semi-structured interview between the structured and open interview. Essential to this type of interview are the themes and the subject matters which are leading
the interview path without certain strictness. Thirdly, according to Alvesson (2011, 52) highly structured interviews usually tend not to give advanced and versatile answers than semi-structured or open interviews.

Galletta (2012, 1-2) states that the semi-structured interview is often underused despite that it contains significantly possibilities. Semi-structured interview is a flexible way of gaining data, revealing certain kinds of dimensions in the research questions, and also giving space to the interviewees to show new definitions to the main theme of the research. Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2001, 48) are also emphasising the certain and central themes in the semi-structured interview which are chosen in advance and specifying questions related to them. People’s interpretations about phenomena and discussed matters, their personal definitions and explanations about these matters, and how these definitions and explanations are formed in an interaction, are essential to this type of interview (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2002, 77). Also some the considerations of the semi-structured interview are such as: should all the questions be presented to all of the interviewees, is it important to present the questions in the same order in every interview, and should the interviewer present the questions’ phrasing in a similar form also in every interview? Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2002, 77-78) also locate the semi-structured interview between the pure structured and the open interview but the strength of it may range either way or another. The aim of the semi-structured interview in a focus of research problem is to find meaningful answers. The themes chosen to the interview in advance are constructing a knowledge base for the researched subject.

Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008, 83) are stating that gaining the interviewees can be achieved via background community means. The selection of the target interviewees to this research was defined by choosing teachers who already had experience of working in the field. The teaching experience of the teachers varied from three to about twenty years. The interviewees were gained through a so-called snowball technique from the local Namibian teacher community, University of Oulu, and the Finnish-Namibian Society of Oulu. My knowledge of the interviewees before the interviews was based on the fact that all of them had been working in the field for some time, and that served the criterion to this research topic. According to Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008, 61) the singular interview is the most common form of performing interviews comparison to group interviews. Taking into account the fact this research phenomenon is based on teachers’ personal experiences and concep-
tions, the singular interview can be seen more suitable than a couple interview or the group interview.

Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008, 47-48) are highlighting that semi-structured interview is concentrating on certain kinds of conversational themes around the researched topic. The term used in Finnish human and social sciences teemahaastattelu, can be roughly translated in English theme interview. What is the most relevant to the semi-structured interview is that it proceeds via specific and essential themes, instead of detailed questions. Hereby, this type of interview method is exposing people’s interpretations and the meanings given through speech and interaction. Semi-structured interview can be placed closer to the open interview than the structured interview, since the interview topics are equal to every interviewee. In other definitions of semi-structured interview the questions or even the form of questions can be the same to every interviewee. The definition of Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008, 48) shows that the semi-structured interview is carried out without the strict form of questions, although also not as freely as the open interview.

In Alvesson’s (2011, 53) definition, the certain themes of the semi-structured interview are processed and performed but in a style which is taking into account the themes widely and flexibly. The interviewees are offered to expose their own interpretations about each theme and occasionally other relevant and unusual themes may appear instead of those which were beforehand planned. The semi-structured interview is carried out with only few questions and in which the interviewee can openly answer.

Patton’s (2002, 342, 343-344) aspect to interviewing which considers the certain topics explored with all interviewees is called The General Interviewing Guide Approach. This approach is identical to semi-structured focused interview. The purpose of this type of interview approach is the preparation of desired topics and themes before the interview and going through all of them while interviewing. The interview guide is including issues or questions during the interview. It makes sure that the similar essential lines are undergone with every individual interviewed. Despite the certain topics will be deepened, the interviewer is independent to explore even deeper and get more qualified data with specifying questions in a more conversational style. One of the advantages of the general interviewing guide approach is the effective use of time during the interview due to the preparation done beforehand. The emphasis of the interview details can be conducted by the interview-
er, depending on the fact that if it is possible to specify the topics beforehand and to ask the same questions from all the units. Generally, it is not common to go through new topics that are not listed in the interview guide. Although if other topics are emerging with one of the interviewee, it is not relevant to process them with every interviewee.

Galletta (2012, 76-77) uses the term unfolding in a context of efficient interviewing especially researcher's concentration to the respondents' content of the story. For the interviewer it is crucial to understand when it is and when it is not appropriate to interrupt the interviewee for example with specifying questions. While performing an interview with open-ended questions, the researcher must be aware of the potential answer alternatives and due to that reflect if further questions are necessary. The researcher also needs a certain kind of improvisation when the interviewee's narrative comes to the turning points where it is possible to gain more important information. The role of the researcher is to be cautious constantly during the interview in a matter of in which point the interview is and to which direction it is going. It is relevant for the researcher to recognise that the interview should not be overloaded with questions which are outside of the main focus of researched topic. Completing the semi-structured interview includes two important aspects. The first one is the significance of listening carefully for clarification later on and secondly to become aware of the interesting points of the interview for deepening the knowledge about those topics.

Rastas (2005) says that the similarities between the interview counterparts can make the interview situation more fruitful. Also the role of the interviewer is relevant to the results of the interview. When the researcher is naturally interested in and open to the interviewee, his or her narratives and the discussed subject, it might cause a common understanding and due to that beneficial information. (Rastas, 2005, 88) In this study, two of the interviewees and the interviewer were women and two were men. The third interviewee was approximately the same age than interviewer and the first was about 18 years older. Both the second and the fourth interviewees were few years older than the interviewer. Due to anonymity I am only referring to the interviewees here as first, second etc. All of them were from the different ethinical background, meaning that the first and the second interviewee were originally from Zimbabwean background, the third and the fourth interviewee were from Namibian background, while the interviewer was from Finnish background. Although all of them shared a same profession partially, had studied education and had worked as
teachers. As Rastas (2005, 92-93) points out even if the differences occur in the interview situation, it does not make the study less valuable or does not matter if the information is produced for the wanted research topic. In the analysis process the researcher should evaluate his or her speech customs in the interview and its relation and influence to the produced information.

5.2 Narrative approach

The narratives are being told for a precise crowd of people from moments which have happened in the history of the storyteller. They consist on values related to the discussed theme, and discourses which might have been taken for granted without more specified considering. Narratives are functioning as a passage to the actual examined topic and for the purpose of research they need to be accurately interpreted. (Riessman, 2008, 3) Polkinghorne (2003, 5) defines the concept of narrative as a “discourse form in which events and happenings are configured into a temporal unity by means of a plot”. Bruner (1985) divides the narrative inquiry to a paradigmatic-type narrative which aims to collect stories and find common categories and themes from the data. The other type of narrative inquiry according to earlier mentioned is narrative-type narrative which purpose is to collect the singular events and happenings and to form stories out of them which are describing the whole contents. (Polkinghorne, 2003, 5)

Semi-structured interview, which was applied in this thesis research, is one way to produce responses which function as “narrative-like” as Bold (2012, 100) argues. Although the purpose and the nature of the research has to be considered suitable to this approach. As Bold (2012, 17-18) refers to Polkinghorne (1988), narrative is relevant when studying the personal experience and existence of an individual, offering a chance to organise and make these personal events shared between other people. By cause of this narratives are an instrument to define the self and the personal identity. As this thesis particularly concentrates on teachers’ personal and professional identity, narrative approach is seen applicable. In Labov’s and Waletzky’s (1997) definition the narrative analysis is concentrated on studying linguistic structures rather than the content or the meaning of narratives. Specifically, paying attention to the sequence of clauses, the sequence of events, and their relation to each other. Riessman (1993) and Patterson (2008) presented criticism towards Labov’s approach, due to the reason that in the Labovian definition the narrative has to be complete
and the analysis cannot be done from the partial constructions. According to Riessman (1993) the several aspects and the context of the narrative has to be considered in the analysis, in a contrast to Labov’s definition. Different people will perceive and tell the same event differently, considering what caught their attention and how they relate the event to their own experience.

Riessman (2008, 3-5) defines narrative as when the storyteller, here interviewee, "selects, organises, connects, and evaluates" certain events to the listener, here the interviewer. Originally narrative inquiry was evolved for the needs of literature but it can also be considered to be examined from all kinds of spoken, written, and visual data. Although narratives can be found anywhere, some frames can be still set to this research approach. Nowadays, mainly all the spoken mindscapes and written texts, due to including extensive amount of interpreting material, can be recognised as narratives. Although Riessman (2008) emphasises that an individual’s story itself is already clear and does not need any deepening explanation. A tempting storytelling data excludes any other but a single interpretation.

Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara (2009, 218) argues that narrative approach is a way to understand one’s own life, the occurring life events and making those events meaningful through stories. Narrative analysis can be seen suitable lens for research when the focus is on the change and when it is approaching identity. As this research is concentrating on the professional growth and scrutinizing teachers’ identity development, I chose therefore the narrative inquiry. For the selection to use narrative approach, this research follows Polkinghorne’s (2003) methods for analysing the data. The aim is to research people through their narratives, not narratives in their own sense. According to Bold (2012, 95) the use of interviews in the narrative research is acceptable, especially the method being semi-structured interview. This is because the topic framework is set to the interview before the exact interviewing situation but also gives an opportunity to the interviewees to tell their stories without restrictions. Bold (2012, 98) states that when peoples’ experiences and life stories are under focus, the sample of researched is possible to limit to only few interviewees.

As mentioned, in this study I use Polkinghorne’s (2005) analysis method for approaching the data. The first approach is the analysis of narratives, in which the purpose is to find the
common themes from the data. In the second approach the process goes to other direction, the analysis is done by writing stories from the key elements arising from the data. (Polkinghorne, 2005, 12) At first, I conducted both of these analysis types, although I ended up utilising only the analysis of narratives due to narrative analysis did not increase information about the studied topic. I chose utilising the analysis of narratives due to it allows combining the themes arising from teachers’ stories and the further examining of these themes. I also considered utilising phenomenography as an approach since it is examining people’s conceptions or phenomenology which is concentrating on individual’s experiences. Since those approaches are linked to conceptions and experiences I concluded those approaches would have also been applicable to study teacher professional identity. However, I ended up using narrative approach since stories are a vital and a crucial element in constructing identities (Kaasila, 2008) and can be seen as identities (Sfard & Prusak, 2005).

5.3 The collection and the preparation of the data

The selection of research units was deliberative and the interviewees were gained through existing contacts from my working field, through University of Oulu and Finnish-Namibian Society. The interviewees of this study were “purposefully sampled”, as Patton (2002, 230) points out. I started to prepare the topic of this thesis and the collection of the data in summer 2013 from the basis of my Bachelor’s thesis topic. By examining the literature, reflecting the themes and the topic of my Bachelor’s thesis I formed the first round of the interview framework: themes and questions. In the beginning I aimed to research teachers’ educational conceptions but as a result of the literature related to the topic, I directed the research towards a closer view of a teacher identity. At first, the purpose of this study was to interview Namibian early childhood teachers but I wanted to perform the interviews with teachers who had had a University level education. At this point the University level education of early childhood teachers had started recently, still it was challenging to find the graduated teachers. Although I got a collegial opportunity to approach one of the secondary schools in Windhoek, Namibia and to perform two interviews there. As a result of this I prepared the second round of the interview themes. The themes in the interviews were not constructed of the teachers subject related matters such as Mathematics or English but widely around the concepts of being a teacher and teacher identity. Due to that
I did not see boundaries to perform the interviews since I do not have experience of subject teaching.

In the middle of my data collection process I aimed to perform a culturally comparative research. However, I discarded the idea since I wanted to see the teacher identity of Namibian teachers uniquely instead of comparing two different groups. All the interviews I recorded with two recorders to secure the data and were performed between 2013 and 2015. All the interviews contained the same discussed themes, although from a different perspective as a result of teachers’ own views of their teacher identity. Finally, this research got its direction towards a narrative cross-cultural study but left out the comparative perspective of Namibian and Finnish teachers. Although, what gives a cross-cultural aspect to this research is the fact the researcher being from a foreign, Finnish, culture to the research units.

Hirsjärv & Hurme (2008, 138) shows that the data can be brought into the analysed form in two different styles. At first, the data can be written as a text, transcribed either word by word or only from the main themes or from the interviewee’s speech. Secondly, only the conclusions or thematic coding can be done from the recorded data, without concentrating on writing the data completely. This research is using the specific transcribed form of recorded data. The transcribing is done word by word, also paying attention to pauses but leaves out the intonations of speech. I have transcribed all the recorded data to the Microsoft Word 2013 Word-files. In this analysis process I use the approach which, stated in Kvale’s (1996, 189) definition, is where the interviewer interprets the transcribed data. At first the data is organised and its structure is shown in the process. This can be done by transcribing and analysing the data with a computer. Irrelevant factors and parts to the research are deleted from the data, and the purpose is to make the data clear. The final part is to summarise, categorise, and look for the narrative and interpretations in the actual analysis process. In the transcribing process of my data, I deleted the irrelevant pieces of text, such as repetition of certain words of the interviewees. The pauses and the sentences of irrelevant deleted text I have stated with the sign (-) which are for example, sighs or repetitions. Unfinished or uncompleted sentences I have marked with the sign (...).

The purpose of the data collection was to concentrate on teachers’ own childhood experiences of their schools and teachers, the pathways to the teacherhood and the changes in it,
the teachers’ current professional identity, and the teachers’ future aims to become a teacher they desired to be. The length of the interviews varied approximately from 15 minutes to one hour. One interview was recorded within 15 minutes, one in a half an hour, and the approximate length of two interviews were about an hour. As Patton, (2002, 348) shows the main focus of interviewing in qualitative research is to highlight the interviewees perspective of the world, to construct the interviewees terminology and reasoning, and also to understand how versatile their experiences and perceptions are. Also, since all the teachers working as a subject teachers is functioning as a connecting link between them. Still, the purpose of the data collection was not to focus on the content wise or subject related matters in teaching but to approach the concepts teacher identity, narrative identity and professional development and growth. In addition, by cause of calling the researched people “the teachers working in Namibia”, is because of the country’s multiethnic background and some of the teachers being not born originally in the Namibian country area but had got a citizenship while working and inhabiting the country. The country got its independence in 1990 (Dahlström, 2002, 6), as all of the teachers were born before that.

The focus of the interview data of this study is in the contents of it. Due to that very precise transcribing is not necessary as Ruusuvuori & Tiittula (2005) mentions. Although it is crucial to transcribe both the interviewee’s and the interviewers’ statements. In this study I transcribed both but left out my own statements out from coding. The fact that how precisely the researcher should transcribe the data depends on the phenomenon under consideration, the research problem and the methodical approach, Rastas (2005) highlights. The researcher should transcribe the data in a way that it is able to give responses to the research problem. In a qualitative research it is common to use transcribed data as a basis of analysis since vast interviews are challenging to handle by listening to them and analysing simultaneously. While transcribing the data the researchers’ attention capacity is naturally cropping out part of the emerging information because it is impossible to notice all the observations. Researcher is also under the influence of his or her own culture and as a result of it is interpreting the appearing data through its lenses. Also part of the interpreted data can be seen irrelevant to the research focus. (Ruusuvuori, 2010, 424-425, 427-428)
5.4 The analysis of the data

There are several means to approach narrative analysis. Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou (2008) introduce three main theoretical perspectives in narrative research which are event- and experience-centred, and socially co-constructed perspectives. As mentioned earlier few, in this chapter I focus on the Polkinghorne’s (2003) method of analysing narrative data. At first I will focus on the analysis of narratives by finding, collecting and analysing similarities, common themes and categories from the data. Further, I will perform the narrative analysis by writing a new story from each interview based on the elements found from the data.

For the second part of analysis, the narrative analysis, I read the interviews several times and collected the pieces of interview texts together based on the themes found from the interviews. After this the interviews were considerably effortless to assimilate. This utilised me in the reading process leading to a phase where I could write the small stories of each interviewee.

Nikander (2010) proposes that transcribing is an essential part of the data analysis process as it adds the validity of the research and makes the analysis process more visible to the audience. The speech which is transcribed to text enables the researcher to analyse and to make interpretations and conclusions several times from the data. Putting the data into pieces reflects the researchers’ assumptions about the studied phenomenon and how it is approached. Researchers’ decisions and selections about what is transcribed and how it is transcribed are constructing his or her conception about the researched people. This is why researchers’ own presumptions about the researched phenomenon are important to take under consideration. (Nikander, 2010, 432-435)

As doing the first part of the analysis, the analysis of narrative, I organised and analysed the interview data with QSR NVivo 10 data analysis software but also did the same process alongside by myself by using different colours for categorising. I started analysing the data by listening the completed interviews always after the recording. Then shifting to the transcribing of the data each separately. After this I read all the interviews carefully and intensively changing the depth of reading styles from time to time. I wrote down notes while I was reading and ‘getting familiar with the data’. By writing the notes down I start-
ed similarly coding the data with Nvivo 10 by putting the text pieces and paragraphs into categories, themes or subthemes, or into nodes as in Nvivo 10 it is stated. (Explain more clearly.) During the coding process I read the data repeatedly several times and modified the coding of the data to the different themes, and eventually to the main categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation from the data</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Oh, very interesting! Why hadn’t I become a teacher? I think (-) the fact that (-) you are able to learn something every day.”</td>
<td>Becoming a teacher</td>
<td>The beginning of teacherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think the discipline has actually changed. It goes more like this, that in my case we couldn’t just be like so respect to the teachers. We couldn’t just do that. So discipline, it has changed.”</td>
<td>Evaluation of different times and educational environment</td>
<td>The development of teacher identity in a personal and societal level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“But I think that you’ve managed to make some change on someone. At least that’s what motivates me. And I can say my students some of them they are at Unam (University of Namibia), some of them they are at other Universities and so on.”</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>The dimensions of teacher identity at the present moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If I look at the characters of qualities of a good teacher, I think a teacher should be someone who is able to inspire, inspirational. Teachers should be a good inspiration to kids, to be a role model.”</td>
<td>The ideal teacher</td>
<td>The ideal teacher and teachers’ thought of their future</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: An example of the data coding.

The analysis process is showed above in a table 1. As performing the analysis process, I coded the pieces of text based on the answers of teachers’ into certain themes. From the figure X can be seen an example of a piece of text and its coding into a theme, and finally under a category. In addition, from the annexes 2 and 3, can be seen the dependence of certain themes which are grouped into certain categories.

Under the category The construction of teacher identity I coded the themes The introduction of the teachers: Academic, personal, and professional information, and Becoming a
teacher. The second category *The development of teacher identity on a personal and societal level*, includes the themes *Changes in teacher identity on a personal level* and *Evaluation of different times and educational environments on a societal level*, since the contents of it differs from other categories notably. The third category, *The dimensions of teacher identity in the contemporary context*, is the largest and contains the following themes: *The different roles of a teacher*, *Motivation in teachers’ profession*, *Professional experiences*, *Educational values* and *Professional challenges*. In the last category are the themes *Teachers’ position in a society*, *An image of an ideal teacher*, and *Professional future goals*. I named the themes based on the suitable text pieces or paragraphs from the data, and categories based on the themes.
6 RESEARCH RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The four main themes in my interview structure also form the main categories to the results. The first one is telling about 1) The Construction of Teacher Identity: the reasons and essential incidents leading to that career choice, and the personal, academic and the professional background and childhood memories of the teachers. I have defined the second category to be called as 2) The Development of Teacher Identity on a personal and societal level. This category includes teachers’ professional self-evaluation, and their own evaluation of different times in their career on a personal level and on a general societal level. The third category 3) The dimensions of teacher identity in the contemporary context contains themes such as professional challenges, motivation, and the different roles of a teacher. 4) The ideal teacher and teachers’ thoughts of their future continues to topics related to professional future goals, and teachers’ position in a society.

Figure 5: Teacher professional identity: the categories and themes conducted from the data.

There are some extra themes arising from the four main categories since the interviews were semi-structured and the teachers’ leaded the conversation at times. All of these four
main categories are forming a linear path from the first steps of teachers’ identity to the future goals and the image of an ideal educator. All of the themes are placed into these four categories by considering the temporal and chronological factors. These categories and themes are forming the main results of this study.

6.1 The construction of teacher professional identity in the different phases of career

I analysed each teacher separately at first strictly in each main category and theme, and then conducted the analysis by bringing the common elements together. I aimed to find and bring out the most significant similarities in them but also searched for striking differences. For the analysis of the interviews I applied Polkinghorne’s (2005) analysis of narratives. The main research results of this study are introduced below.

6.1.1 The construction of teacher identity

This category is examining the teachers’ academic, personal and professional background, more specifically their childhood memories from their own schooling times, and the memories of their own childhood and youth teachers. It also explains about their crucial starting points of their teacher career and the processes which lead to the decision of becoming a teacher. As any career of a teacher, these as well, have their beginnings.

The introduction of the teachers: Academic, personal, and professional information

Petrus is a Biology and Mathematics teacher in his thirties and teaches currently in the senior secondary classes, precisely the grades 11 and 12. Most of the pupils in these grades are roughly from age 16 to 18. He has got his teacher education in the University level, and has been working as a teacher for seven years by the time the interview was recorded. Petrus is telling that his access to education started slightly later than other children’s. The reason for this is that his parents did not consider the importance of education to a great extent due to the domestic work Petrus needed to participate in. Despite his parents’ denial, he eventually got access to attend education. Petrus describes his persistence and specifies that going to the school attracted him deeply. The time when this story took its place, the schooling was not compulsory for everyone in Namibia and the country had not gained its
independence yet, which only occurred in 1990 (Dahlström, 2002, 6). He also tells that he was very talented in Mathematics. He passed the tests successfully, although one of his teachers started to doubt his skills and was doubting that Petrus is cheating in his tests. However, he managed to prove his excellence in mathematical skills to the teacher and got the teachers’ respect towards him. Petrus has faced challenges already in the first steps of his schooling career but also has proved that he has a will and skills to go through them.

Ndamona is a language teacher in her mid-forties currently working in a Namibian town. She is originally from another southern African country, where she also has gained her teacher education at first in a Diploma level by graduating in 1989 and later in a University level via distance education from a year 2002 to 2005. She started working in another southern African country in 1990 and worked since she started the University studies in 2002. Altogether her working experience in teaching is roughly 18 years, from three different southern African countries. She moved to Namibia due to her family relations and had worked in the country for about four years when the interview was recorded. Currently she teaches English and Communication Skills in a senior secondary level to the grades 11-12. She states that she has plenty of varying experience from the educational culture of different countries in southern Africa.

Likewise Ndamona, Samuel was born in another southern African country, and started his own Primary education in 1990. He went to the University to study History and English between the years 2005-2008. Samuel is in his thirties and has several qualifications to teach in a secondary level education. He lists English and Literature, Geography and History into his subject responsibility areas currently. He was trained as a teacher in another southern African country and worked there for a while before moving to work in Namibia in 2009. By the time of the interview was recorded he had worked in Namibia for about four years.

Lorraine is in her late twenties and working at the moment as a Geography teacher. She has completed her primary and secondary education in a northern Namibian town and her tertiary education, the teacher education, in a University level. She started teaching in 2009 at the same school she attended herself as a child and worked there until 2011 when she started studying her Master’s degree. Lorraine thinks that she got into a practical level of the work and grew up professionally only when she got experience and get to start teach-
Lorraine describes her own childhood and youth teachers as them having “the kids at heart” and dedicated to their professions. Furthermore, she characterises the teaching methods of her two teachers to be teacher-centred by presenting that the teacher is the one “giving the knowledge” and emphasises the method which was common in the past. She also brings out that the teaching methods of some teachers nowadays may be different varying from a rural to an urban areas of the country.

**Becoming a teacher**

Petrus tells that his dream was initially to become a lawyer instead of a teacher. He had got accepted to a law school in the Republic of South Africa but had difficulties to fund his Law studies. As a result of this Petrus got into a University level to study Education. According to his words, he was not sure about himself if he wanted to study Education in the beginning but after the first training of his teacher education, his interest towards this profession started to grow.

Petrus is adducing that he was growing into the profession of a teacher increasingly by his studies and practical assignments related to those. In his opinion a teacher has to have excellent presentation skills and has to be confident about being in front of the students. At first, he thought he lacked these characters due to his personality. Although, the more he got experience due to his teacher education and training periods related to his studies, the more he started to enjoy teaching and being a teacher. This was a result of being challenged by the learners.

Just as Petrus, Ndamona’s first interest was not to become a teacher. Her parents worked as teachers but she wanted to work on with something related to Arts. In her opinion her character was too shy for being a teacher. Eventually, she got into a teaching career due to her parents expectations and persuasions but after all is currently satisfied and convinced with her choice of staying in this career.

Samuel’s initial dream was to become a lawyer but as he could not enrol into study law he ended up studying to be a teacher. He states that he likes teaching but still feels that it is not his sincerest calling. Likewise Ndamona’s parents, Samuel’s father and mother were
also working as teachers, and as a result of this he admits that it had an influence of his reason for becoming a teacher.

The main reason why Lorraine wanted to become a teacher, is due to that she feels in this certain profession she can learn constantly new things either from the learners, from the preparation of her classes, from her colleagues or from herself. She also wants to make an impact on a societal level as she imagines her learners in the future telling her that they admired her as their teacher. Lorraine states that she had a dream of becoming either a journalist or a teacher. The decision of becoming a teacher was influenced by her own childhood teacher who made an impact on her with her presence and methods of teaching certain subjects. As referring to earlier Lasky (2005) states that teacher identity is developing in a political context or by the school the teacher is teaching (Datnow, Hubbard & Mehen, 2002; Sachs, 2000). Lorraine was teaching in the same school where she was a pupil before and was influenced by her childhood and youth teachers. The main reason for Lorraine’s choice of becoming a Geography teacher as well, is this exact teacher she is telling about. Lorraine became convinced about this career choice in quite a young age.

All of the teachers’ first initial aim was not to become a teacher. Only Lorraine had the career of a teacher in her mind, together with a dream of becoming a journalist, when she was a child. The male teachers’ wanted to become lawyers in the first place, and as Petrus said, a career of a teacher is not in fashion to a greater extent when it comes to the society and young children planning and dreaming about their future. He says:

“It’s not seen as one of the major, yeah well ofcourse to a certain extend it is important, but it’s not seen as one of the most important positions teachers hold in society. Taken example, there are kids playing there, and then somebody asks one of the kids and say: “What do you want to be?” And then the kid says: “Teacher.” It will be taken that, that kid is not a smart kid. A kid, she or he thinks that her performance is not that good to make her become an engineer. Or a doctor. So but then if they ask and the kid say: “I want to be a doctor, sir.” So you could already see that the way the position teachers, is not as important as some other professions. The profession needed but not that important.”
As Fuller, Goodwyn, & Francis-Brophy (2013) states that even when the profession of teaching is seen popular and desired by the university graduates and publicly, teachers still think their profession is undervalued by the society compared to other professions. This study was made in UK, although status of teachers in the society was emphasised to have similar characteristics in Namibia by especially one of the interviewees.

One of the teachers, Ndamona, wanted to pursue a career in Arts in the first place but got into teaching was mostly due to the expectations and demands of her parents, since it was both of their profession. She also said she did not think to be suitable for this profession due to her characteristics.

“I didn’t really want to be a teacher because naturally I used to be a very shy person. (Laughing.) I wasn’t really, you know, outspoken. I was not a in a situation of being comfortable in the company of other people but ahmm... when my parents just said that was the best profession.”

However, she was satisfied to the fact that she became a teacher in the end as she states:

“But up to now if you ask me now to leave my job, I would think twice because it looks like I enjoy teaching. I love teaching. I love dealing with the kids.”

Even if the profession of a teacher was not initially the most desired one, excluding Lorraine who wanted to pursue a career either in teaching or journalism, almost all of them showed passion towards it. Only Samuel did not bring out his passion towards this profession, as loud as the other teachers. Petrus says he gained the passion towards the job through the constant challenge the learners are giving to him.

“And when I went to teach, that’s when I realised the passion when I was being challenged by learners being asked questions that sometimes I don’t know the answer and then I have to go and look for that, so that tomorrow I bring that clear answer. I started liking it because, it really challenge used to be up to date.”
Ndamona thinks that being passionate is the key element dealing with the profession. She emphasises that the learners will notice if the teacher is not having and showing the passion towards the profession.

“Definitely, you can be a very good teacher in terms of being knowledgeable (-) but you won’t succeed if you don’t show passion and if you don’t show interest in listening to the students and if you don’t take time in (-) talking to some of the students who are affected with the problems. So you can’t be a good teacher if you don’t have those attributes.”

Lorraine shows her passion towards both teaching and the larger contexts of the education field. She feels that she is dedicated to her job and that she has a role in supporting her learners in their non-school-related challenges as well.

“I would like to become a perfect educator. I would like to become a problem solver. I should be able to listen to my kids and give them... and solve their every problem they are having.”

Although she wants to work within the education in the future she would also like to use her skills later on for developing the field of education in her country or to teach in the university level.

“I want to remain in the education system. I get to be a teacher, but to get a promotion. Or to be a lecturer at the University and still teaching. Or be working at NIED. I’m still with education. I should be able to do the planning, I should be able to do the assessment or criteria for... So I’d still want to be in the education system. The institution for the curriculum development.”

The people who had influenced on these four teachers choosing the profession of a teacher are their parents or other close relatives, and their own teachers. However, the influence has not always been felt positively by the teachers. Two of teachers’, Ndamona’s and Samuel’s, parents were working as teachers as well, which has had an influence on them drifting into a decision of choosing a career of teaching. Ndamona even felt slightly a pres-
sure from her parents’ side. Lorraine brought out her own teacher as her role model having an impact on her becoming a teacher. Also Petrus’ parents can be seen as a stimulus him choosing the career of teaching, although not directly. Since his parents prevented him of going to the school in the first place it provoked a spark in him of wanting to become someone meaningful, not directly a teacher but he wanted to have an impact on the society. Ndamona describes her parents’ effort to pursue her to choose the teaching career.

“You know it’s so surprising, when I grew up I told myself I would never be a teacher. But simply because what my parents were teachers and I remember during that time when I completed my Secondary level they just pushed me into teaching career. I didn’t really want to be a teacher because naturally I used to be a very shy person.”

Also Samuel felt that a career of a teacher was somehow planned and predefined by his parents and the rest of the family.

“I wouldn’t say I wanted to become a teacher. I can say it just happened. Because I grew up to be a lawyer. But then, I didn’t manage to get enough points to go to the University to study Law. (-) All I can say is that surprisingly my father was a teacher and he is retired now. And then my mom used to be a teacher. And then in my mother’s family, all the kids (all her siblings), they are teachers. Apart surprisingly me, wanted to be a teacher.”

Lorraine describes her own childhood teacher’s teaching methods and who inspired her to become a teacher. She tells that she became curious about all the knowledge her teacher was carrying and then telling to her learners. This teacher was also a Geography teacher, and as Lorraine states, it was a reason she also wanted to pursue a career of teaching Geography.

“When I was growing up (-) I had two careers, professions that I had in my mind. Number one, I wanted to become a journalist. And then number two, I wanted to become (-) a teacher. I chose to become a teacher. So I was inspired by one lady who was a teacher. She is a teacher so every time she comes to the class, she would start teaching without a textbook. Then she will
teach you, she will make sure that you understand. And if you go back home take your textbook and try to see. (-) Then that (-) the preparation. So I was always curious to find out what was the main reason she did it and I got a change to meet her (-) and then I just ask her: “How do you do it?” And she said: “That is because I’m a teacher with the heart. Like I’m doing it for love. I’m doing it (-) I’m having it at my heart. I’m not doing it for fun or anything. I want everything that I (-) that my learners to understand, the way I’m teaching.” Then throughout I think she was my Geography teacher that’s why up to today I started loving Geography.”

Petrus’ spark on, not directly becoming a teacher, but wanting to participate education in general and to become someone meaningful was influenced by his parents preventions of participating in schooling.

“And, my parents were not going to school and they don’t know what school is. So I was prevented from going to school. And I should do domestic work. And then, I could see others, (-) kids going to school and then I started missing something as you know. (-) And then one day, I just decided that I want to go to school. And they (parents) rereminded me and they said: “We don’t want to hear that.” Then next day I decided not to tell them. I just ran off to school.”

Petrus was sceptical of being a teacher at first but felt that he grew into a teacherhood during his studies and practical training periods being part of his studies. He got positive feedback and was encouraged by the teaching experiences.

“I would say that started ahmm (-). It’s called teaching practice. So while we were still under training, so we started just within the University, that you are given a task to teach to your fellow students. So that you gain that confidence of speaking in public. So at first I thought: “How did I get myself into this? Will I really manage to stand in front, and then give all the information that (-) I won’t embarrass myself in front of people”. But I was surprised to after my presentation, everyone is saying: “You made a good choice. You are really going to make a good teacher.” And ahmm that gave me confidence.”
He concluded that having more practical professional experience increases the confidence in teaching. While the formation and construction of his teacher identity, he also experienced the importance of collegial support.

6.1.2 The development of teacher identity on a personal and societal level

All of the teachers reported about the changes, or rather development of their teacher identity, in a larger societal context. However, only two of the teachers, Petrus and Ndemona, told about the changes in teacher identity on a personal level. I concluded this because they had, not only several years of working experience, but also were more able to evaluate themselves more specifically due to experience. Furthermore, all of the teachers reflected their teacher identity from a larger societal perspective as professional identity can be seen as part of the societal context.

*The changes in teacher identity on a personal level*

Petrus’ has made observations in his teacher identity between the different eras referring to a time when he was a pupil himself and to a current moment when he is working as a teacher. Petrus thinks that his certain personality characteristics has developed and adjusted to more favourable since he started his teaching career and during it as well. He states that he has become more capable managing his emotions and more flexible as a teacher when it comes to finding different kind of ways to perform his profession with the colleagues. Hargreaves (2001) states that emotions play an important role in teaching and how teaching shapes teachers emotions as well (Reio, 2005). Petrus brings out that later in his career he has been open for the change and to renew his working methods. He is pointing out that he has learnt these skills from his colleagues and has also accommodated to the working culture better due to this reason. He also emphasised the importance of open discussion and common understanding in cooperation when it comes to working in a school community.

Ndemona has also recognised the professional growth in herself. She tells that working as a teacher has brought a lot of new knowledge to herself. Working with young people has
also taught her to control the emotions. By learning to control emotions at working environment has brought benefits even in to her personal life. Zembylas (2005) has widened emotions to a broader social life of a person through the post-structuralist approach. Ndamona also has observed that her character has changed in terms of becoming more open instead of being a “loner” and a shy person. She adds up this that nowadays she plays a role of an entertainer at her family gatherings because of this. In the beginning of her career, Ndamona did not think that the profession would contain so much responsibilities for the learners. As a matter of fact she did not even want to help the learners in their life challenges. Although with time she changed her mind because she felt the learners truly needed her help and that their problems would reflect on her as well. She contrasted the learners to herself by saying that they will be a result of her when they finish their education. As a result of this she should aim to help them. Hence, she regretted acting as a negotiator between the learners and their parents due to it was then more difficult to create a bond between them.

The changes in teacher identity or the development in teacherhood is construed in an individual and general societal level by the teachers. Both, Petrus and Ndamona, considered the practical teaching experience has affected to their characteristics. They both think they have become more open and have gained skills for controlling their temper or extreme emotions, such as irritableness. Petrus describes his past and present essence of being a teacher.

“I started not being a quiet person, because the type of job does not allow. It allows me to interact with my learners. It allowed me to interact my fellow teachers. So that silence within me, disappeared. That reservation within me, also disappeared in a way because I have to be open to other people that comes to me. Except I was a still having, I don’t know if I should call it, arrogance or short temperedness, so when I was still teaching, I was still having that. That I could be provoked so easily.”

Also Ndamona feels her character has become more open instead of reserved because of working with the young people. She tells the children have taught her to control her emotions and this skill has even transferred to her personal life.
“Generally I’m very emotional person but it has taught me to control my emotions when I’m working with the young children, it has changed me. (-) I’ve learnt to control my emotions, I’ve learnt to actually I have accommodated a lot of people, I used to be a loner. (-) I wasn’t that kind of a person who grew up being in a (-) or entertain a group of people but simply because of my students (-) I can entertain any group of people.”

Evaluation of different times and educational environments on a societal level

Petrus’ opinion to the changes in teacherhood in a general societal level is that teachers used to be in a higher position in earlier times, in addition to be respected and valued by their learners and by the society and by themselves. He describes situations from the present times, when a pupil’s behaviour included actions such as shouting to the teacher.

“They used to be seen as been noble. Now that is I’m not talking in respect to Namibia. They used to be noble and valued, respected. And they respected themselves as well. But, nowadays the trends has changed. (-) I remember during our times when we were learners. I cannot remember having shouted or observed any other learner shouting back to a teacher. But I observe those happenings now and then nowadays. I have not observed during our time, a teacher leaving the class room, (-) disappointed or to a certain extent leaving crying that she or he fails to manage the class room, and leaves the class room in dismay but I observe those things today, so that’s why I say perhaps something has changed somehow.”

Although the changes in an educational environment, in Petrus’ viewpoint is, that modernisation generally speaking has increased rapidly and significantly, especially when it comes to technology. He thinks that the children are being exposed to the technology earlier than before. This he sees through his learners’ use of internet, mobile phones, and computers both in their home environment and at school. Also his comparison of the educational culture is that it has been more teacher-centred in earlier days and is more learner-centred nowadays as he states that teaching contains now more discussion rather than lecturing or preaching.
“One thing that is vivid in terms of change is modernisation. (¬) Technology have come in. For example I have not seen a computer until when I was in grade 8. When I had to go to secondary school. (¬) But nowadays a kid sees those things before they even go to kindergarten. (¬) Exposure is another change that have happened that during those times. (¬) Within the learning environment, the certain that I would say, it was more of teacher-centred. (¬) But that has changed to a greater extend, that learners are being encouraged to be involved in their own learning. And that is being as learner-centred. That, the class room is more of discussions, facilitations rather than lecturing or preaching.”

Ndamona started teaching in a year 1990 after graduating in 1989 and has seen the change in the educational culture. The changes Ndamona notices changes on a societal level are certain kinds of values, such as the respect from the learner’s side. She compares all the countries she has worked in; Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia, and comes into a conclusion that the respect towards the teacher has decreased. Learners have changed and their behaviour to more independent and liberal which means the way they interact with teachers has also changed. Ndamona also states that the learning resources has increased and in the past learners used to value all the resources got from the teacher. She also adds that the learners do not have the culture of reading anymore.

“I can say there were students who respected their teachers as compared to (¬) what I have seen now. Even if I have to compare Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Namibia, it looks like we now have very liberal, independent students (¬) as compared to the time when I started teaching to them. Whether I was too young or you were an old teacher (¬) the respect you would have, that was to existing. I’m telling you. (¬) But yeah ahmm. Right now (¬) if I want to compare on values, especially when I look at behaviour of students, it is gone hayway. (¬) There were no (¬) not much resources but you would find students value to get the resources from you. The reading culture is something else (¬) they don’t have that reading culture.”
In Samuel’s point of view the teacherhood has changed on a societal level when it comes to the discipline. He compares the time between when he was a pupil and his own pupils now. He states that the learners were more disciplined in the past compared to nowadays. The reason for this he sees the changed technology and that the children are being more exposed to several things and the way the children see things is different, and adds to this that not for the better.

“I would say that it’s hard to compare when I went to school and now as I’m teaching now, the discipline of the students. I think the discipline has actually changed. It goes more like this, that in my case we couldn’t just be like no respect to the teachers. We couldn’t just do that. So discipline, it has changed, for the worse of the child. (-) And I would say that (-) in my own opinion it’s because of a changed technology. With them now (-) they are now more exposed to many things, so now that’s why they are not disciplined.”

In Samuel’s opinion technology makes teaching easier and more effective, and as a result of this the learners are more enthusiastic to join the classes. He says that using the internet helps him to organise the classes and to find information and learning material for the learners as well.

Although Lorraine is a relatively young teacher she compares the time when she was a child and evaluates her own childhood and youth teachers to how she is now performing the profession of a teacher herself. In Lorraine’s comparison and evaluation of different times a teacher seemed to be the main source of information to the learners earlier. Although nowadays it is more interactive, containing discussion with the learners. The learners are also more curious for searching information from different resources. Lorraine perceives also the increase of use of information technology within her work and how the learners are utilising it.

“The teacher was the main source of information earlier. But if you look at today I think I would say that in my, for example, in me, in my teaching, I varied questions. If I’m teaching in the kids and the kids are asking a question, then I understand that the teaching is taking place. (-) I think that is one of the (-) one of the main thing that I would to say about today’s education
and then a curiosity. Today’s education, everybody is just curious to know what is happening. (-) And then, I would say that ahmm (-) I would say that when they are now searching information on their own, they are using different sources. So the variety of sources that they (-) students are using today also differs from the part what people used back then.”

She compares the educational environment as she explains that it has been earlier more teacher-centred and more learner-centred nowadays.

“I think it is (-) it’s more on learner-centred, that I can say. It’s learner-centred and back then it was teacher in that. So today it’s learner-centred and then back then it was more teacher-centred.”

Lorraine utilises the applications of information technology era in her work for searching information. She mentions that even almost all of the children themselves nowadays have mobile phones with internet and they might utilise it for educational purposes too. Lorraine states that today’s assessment is more consistent since the teachers are giving the grades based on a certain grading criteria. In her point of view the teacher is seen nowadays more as an instruction giver, a guide, and a facilitator, hence the learners still do the hard work and learning.

6.1.3 The dimensions of teacher identity in the contemporary context

All of these subthemes are the dimensions of these Namibian teachers’ identities in the contemporary context. The following five subthemes are The different roles of a teacher, Motivation in teachers’ profession, Professional experiences, Educational values and Professional challenges.

The different roles of a teacher

Petrus states that a teacher can have several different roles in his work. He brings out four different roles and at first mentions one role, a stewardship, meaning the teacher is leading the learning process of a learner. The teacher is giving the certain means to the learner to cope in life and through the education in general. The teacher is the one failing if some-
thing goes wrong in the teaching process. He takes the responsibility of learners’ learning outcomes, meaning that if the learner did not learn, it is because the teacher did not have means to guide the learner to assimilate the certain contents of the education. Secondly in Petrus’ point of view, a teacher should be a role model to the learners. The teacher should behave in a way as he wants his learners to behave. Thirdly, the teacher is guiding the learners in their decisions and actions. He says that when a learner is doing wrong choices, is it merely the fact that one did not know, not because one did it deliberately. The last role Petrus brings out is a counsellor. In a role of counsellor the teacher is helping the learner to solve the issues which are not content-wise. The learner might fail in some subject if he had home- or peer-related challenges.

“So the fact that the learners didn’t do well, is not because of the learner mistake. It’s because of you who didn’t stewardship them correctly. (-) Do as you want your learners to do. Behave as you want your learners to behave. So you should role model the learners. (-) Not many students do mistakes deliberately. They do because they didn’t know. They make wrong choices because they didn’t know. So as a teacher you have a daunting task to role... to guide them. Into decisions that they take in, the actions that they do whatever case that is. (-) You as a teacher, you are a counsellor. That learners may not only have problems of not knowing how to solve their questions. They might solve the question 100%, but they still experience some other, non-educational issues. Problems at home problems with other learners, peer pressure, and all that. Now if you are only a teacher that concentrated on content wise or subject wise, you may be surprised that a learner that who was giving you 100%, who will give you 20% because you didn’t take care of the other problem that you should have.”

In Ndamona’s opinion the different roles of a teacher includes responsibilities in several areas. Likewise Petrus, also Ndamona mentions a role of a counsellor to the learners, although she does not open this concept further. She tells that teachers should even take a role of a parent because they spend the most of the time with the learners and are the ones who see the change in their mental and physical state. She explains that she actually has to take off the jacket of a teacher and to act according many other roles. She feels this is because the learners spend the most of the time with her.
“You are there as a counsellor. You are there as a... you have to take the shoes of the parent actually, because you are dealing with a... you know teenagers. (-) Or I could say children who are actually (-) changing in terms of a... their mental state, changing in terms of their physical state and we think to spend the most of the time with these children and therefore (-) I have to play the role of... I have to take of my jacket as a teacher and I become a lot of other things. But why I’m saying so they have to feel comfortable there with me because they spend most of the time with me so (-) I can’t be a teacher only. I end up being a counsellor, I discipline the “marion”. (-) A parent as well.”

In the beginning of her career, Ndamona did not think that the profession would contain so much responsibilities for the learners. As a matter of fact she did not even want to help the learners in their life challenges. Although with time she changed her mind because she felt the learners truly needed her help and that their problems would reflect on her as well. She contrasted the learners to herself by saying that they will be a result of her when they finish their education. As a result of this she should aim to help them. Hence, she regretted acting as a negotiator between the learners and their parents due to it was then more difficult to create a bond between them. Ndamona tends to feel sorry for some of her learners because their parents do not seem to give enough time and attention to them. Although she feels honoured to be the one to whom the children are opening up with. She thinks she plays an important role when gaining the trust of the learners and helping them in their challenges.

“With time I ended up actually seeing the inverse of actually playing all those roles that a... something I even have to go for. Forgot my lesson and ended up bringing in a counselling session (-) just to the... Because (-) I feel that they are certain parts of me and they are going to... actually you know when they come out of my hands it means they are already me. And whatever they are going to do it will reflect on me, so I needed to play a role which I never thought I would. (-) I even end up, you know, acting as a go-between their parents actually because some students... they can’t communicate with their parents. They end up opening to me, to their teacher, they start to be-
come closer to me, so I end up being a go-between so that they stop a communication between them and their parents.”

Samuel explains about the different roles of a teacher, professional challenges, and about his way of being a teacher. Samuel recalls that teacher has also other purposes than only to teach the learners subject-wise. Primarily Samuel sees himself as an educator considering that he has dealt with a number of issues of his learners and that he takes time to discuss with them regularly. These issues are for example HIV, AIDS or other non-school related life issues or philosophical questions regarding the learners’ life. The National Curriculum for Basic Education also includes such topics related to risks and challenges (NIED, 2010, 3-4), which Samuel mentions.

“Actually I see myself as an educator. Because personally I have come across a lot of or a number of issues of students whereby you need to prove of being not a teacher only. To be an educator whereby you also advice, so yeah. So I would see myself as an educator. If I can also give you an example maybe (-) I feel that the most of student they also need some time for changing... for themselves, and that’s why I tried also actually comfort them. Even like every day when I’m watching at classes, the first maybe two minutes also, I try to talk them about like you know issues maybe HIV and Aids, maybe just other issues which are not school related.”

From the perspective of an educator level, according to Lorraine, a teacher should act as a mentor and a role model to the learners amongst other roles. She states that a teacher should help them to go through their problems and act as an advisor. She bring out a role of a parent, as she thinks a teacher has such a responsibility of the lives of his or her learners. She concludes that if the learners are not feeling well, they cannot concentrate to the subject contents she is teaching. As a teachers’ subject level, amongst these roles, she mentions the roles of an assessor, a planner, and an information provider. She emphasises the importance of planning, and the learners’ access to information.

“I think a teacher is supposed to be (-) to act as a mentor for these kids. You are supposed to help them when they are going through troubles. You are supposed to be their advisor. You are supposed to be their parents. A teacher
is supposed to be a planner, you are supposed to be doing your planning. You are supposed to be an assessor. You have to assess and you have to be a role model of course. (-) You need to be able to plan what (-) materials are you going to use (-) or how you are going to assess your kids. So it’s not just standing in front of the kids, but you should also take a responsibility being there a parent. As a teacher you should be a parent. (-) I think a teacher is supposed to be (-) you are supposed to (-) you have to be everything. You are supposed to be (-) you, when you are trained, you train as a teacher but you also have to be good in all other areas because you will never know what you are going to face as a teacher.”

Lorraine thinks that she has been through most of these roles she mentioned. The school where she works has a Life Skills teacher but still some of the learners approach rather Lorraine than the exact Life Skills teacher to solve their problems. She reflects that this is a result of her personality, as it is easy to approach for the learners to express their problems. She declares the teacher has many roles but this is the most emphasised.

She also considers that her capacity of helping the learners is enough, although she prefers the help of a Life Skills teacher as well. When the problem of a learner is demanding and wide enough she usually suggests to the learner that they talk together to the Life Skills teacher, and pursue to find a solution to the problem. In some situation she suggest to talk with the Life Skills teacher herself on the learner’s behalf. However, she sees that these situations may be due to that the Life Skills teacher might seem distant to some of the learners since they do not spend as much time with him or her as they spend with Lorraine. She feels relieved that she usually has to act only as an information mediator between the learner and the Life Skills teacher, who is experienced and specialised in counselling.

The teachers surely do play different roles, and these roles can be sometimes truly time taking and include extreme responsibilities such as supervising and taking care of the students mental well-being. The teachers were not prepared for these demanding roles in the beginning of their career but felt that the working experience had taught them to act and react to these challenges. Two of the teachers, Ndamona and Lorraine, concluded that a teacher should act as a parent to the learners.
“Because they spent the most of the time with the learners and who see the change in their mental and physical state.” (Ndamona)

Motivation in teachers’ profession

What motivates Petrus in his work is the feeling of succeeding in it and causing something positive. Especially if he sees that other people value what he has done to cause the success. The other thing what motivates Petrus is if he receives compliments from his colleagues, learners or their parents. This drives him to perform his profession even better. Petrus exposes an unforgettable and influential moment from his teaching career when he took a part of an event where new technology was introduced to the learners and their parents. He acted as one of the introducers and managed to impress many people. Through this event he felt he succeeded in his profession.

“For me, things that keep me motivated is, when first of all, is when I succeeded in what I was doing. How do I know that I have succeeded? It’s (-) when people (-) are talking and say “Hmm, there is this problem that was there, now it’s gone.” (-) Another is ofcourse if I receive compliments. Be it from learners, from parents, or from fellow teachers, it’s one of the motivation. For me to continue doing it even better so that I can receive even more compliments.”

Ndamona gets her motivation to work from dealing with the innocent and genuine children. Referring to the innocence and genuineness of the children she means that they are vulnerable, and might come from quite disadvantaged backgrounds. Because of these facts and working with them every day Ndamona feels that she wants to get closer to them. She gets motivated if she sees that the children have learnt or managed to do something, and are proud of that. Further, she is also has learnt from dealing with the children. This motivates Ndamona to get her profession passionately.

“I would say that what has motivated me actually (-) dealing with innocent children every day. Some of them are vulnerable, some of them are fixing. It could be they are coming from a very disadvantaged backgrounds and as a
result because of always communicating, being in touch with them each and every day (-) I feel like wanting to get closer to know more about them because they are innocent people.”

Samuel gets motivated if his students do not have knowledge on something and is inspired to fulfil the lack of knowledge. Another source of motivation for him is that a teacher is able to make changes in large groups of people. In addition he gets motivated if he sees his learners to be accepted to the higher education.

“Once you are in the job, I would say that now I need to make a change to happen. Because teaching is a lot of time for me for once, and for the students. So that motivates me. If there is a student who comes to your class, who doesn’t know everything about you have seen. (-) But I think that you’ve managed to make some change on someone. At least that’s what motivates me. And I can say my students some of them they are at Unam (University of Namibia), some of them they are at other Universities and so on. That’s actually a change.”

Lorraine gets her motivation from her learners. She says wants to impress the learners. She tells that as a teacher she is keen on learning every day about the subject she is teaching and about the learners, and this is why she keeps motivated. The teacher she had for a long time ago, is still inspiring her, and this she counts as one on the reasons she is motivated.

“I’m eager to learn. I can also say what motivated me to do my work because every day I want to impress my kids, my learners. (-) You should teach the kids to go and think outside the box, not necessarily just inside, let them think outside the box. And also, the feelings for the subjects. I said I’ve been teaching Geography now and I started with Geography so long ago because of this my inspirational teacher. So the feeling for Geography, because I have it at heart, it has, it motivates me to do my work because every day I want to learn something about Geography. So these feelings about the subject also (-) motivates me. And the fact that you are given or you have, you prepare yourself just before the lesson. I think that also motivates me.”
Consequently, these teachers get motivated when they see the growth in their learners and how they have developed and advanced in their studies during years. Gaining the trust of their learners increases teachers’ motivation.

**Professional experiences**

Petrus admits that he has supported the pupils to solve their problems several times and that it has been challenging for him as an educator. He also tells about the example of a serious challenge when a pupil has come to him and told him that she is going to kill herself. In this case he had to play a role of a counsellor. He adds up to this that whatever the challenge may be the educator has to create a favourable atmosphere and environment to guide to help the challenge to be solved. The learner who has the problem has to be relaxed and the teacher must win the trust of a learner before helping to solve the problem.

“It’s something that you should plan. And say how you are going to do it. It’s something that you should do, say, what are the consequences that might arise when I do this.”

Petrus exposes an unforgettable and influential moment from his teaching career when he took a part of an event where new technology was introduced to the learners and their parents. He acted as one of the introducers and managed to impress many people. Through this event he felt he succeeded in his profession.

“They organised an event. It’s an e-learning where you introduce technology into learning. That’s you are using computers, use internet, use mark board and so on. Anything to do with technology. Then it was organised in such a way that they organise maybe ten learners, five learners from each school. And they come and form a class within that place that they were took placed. And then you will be teaching those learners whereas parents and other teachers (-) will be, ahmm, what is the word. When people are sitting there... watching as (-) spectators. So they will be watching you teaching. And I would want to know where I got the courage to do it and I did it that well that
(-) in the end of that people were just queuing up asking: “How did you do this, how did you do it, you did it very well.” It really encouraged me.”

Ndamaoma reflects the essence of a teacher identity and concludes that by being a teacher who is only concerned teaching in subject-wise, the teacher will not conquer the trust of the learners, which is crucial in this profession. She adds the teacher will not succeed in her work if she does not show passion towards it, listen to the learners, or simply be there for the learners helping to solve their problems. According to her, these are the characters of a good teacher. When it comes to the learners who lack of motivation to be in the classroom, with patience and facing the learners as they are, a teacher can make them count on her. Through this behaviour a teacher is letting the learners enjoying coming back to school.

“Because if you only want to be a teacher, to share the knowledge, you will not win the trust. Mmm, because you have to apply all those others (-) I can say. Definitely, you can be a very good teacher in terms of being knowledgeable (-) but you won’t succeed if you don’t show passion and if you don’t show interest in listening to the students and if you don’t take time in (-) talking to some of the students who are affected with the problems. (-) So find the way of dealing with those situations so that the child would end up enjoying coming back to school. Mmm, because some students might end up you know feeling (-) it could be victimized by their fellow learners or other teachers but ehmm (-) find a way of letting them enjoy come back to the class tomorrow.”

From Samuel’s point of view being in a role of an educator has both positive and negative side effects for the teacher. The role of an educator makes the relationship closer and straightforward to the students and as a results of it the students are more likely to open up to the teacher. When the students are opening up their inner being, the teacher is more able to see their weaknesses which helps generally in the teaching process and in a role of an educator. The negative side of the close relationship might be that the learners get use to the teacher and might take advantage of him, as Samuel explains. Samuel refers with this to defining the line between the teachers’ professional role, and the private role.

“First I would say it comes easier, because ahmm educating (-) it makes the relationship closer to the students. Which means that they can open up to
you. And if they are opening up now you can see there are maybe weaknesses and so on (-) Right, and that's where you can pay attention towards to them. But on the other hand again, it also has a negative effect, because once they open up (-) they get kind of used to you. They can take that advantage on your work.”

The most unforgettable professional experiences Lorraine has had during her career are related to successful occasions such as being a responsible one in school festivities and sports events, and learners’ accomplishments on a national level. One of the most challenging situations were when Lorraine started working as a teacher, the age gap between her and her learners was small. By the time, she felt she lacked authority towards her learners.

“I have been regarded of (-) regarded as a best M.C. So when you are having as a Master of Ceremonies, when you are having events that have to be held at school. In most cases I’m always the outstanding one. There I should be the one in front of the people and talking to kids and always say: “I’m teacher Lorraine.” I think this has been the best moment of my life. (-) The worst moment of my life when teach I think was the crazy one... The fact that when I started working I was so young and the kids... (-) It’s so difficult to (-) control. Because I was working with old people. People of almost my age. I was, it was very difficult to control the way they acted towards me.”

Lorraine admits that she had had authority issues with her learners because she was a young, freshly graduated teacher herself. In the beginning of her career she found it challenging to perform everyday work due to some children who took purposefully her attention in the classes. Lorraine concludes that the learners seem to be active and eager to learn new things when they show critical behaviour towards the teaching contents. She has dualistic thoughts about learners’ desire to learn new things and claims that she is satisfied they are eager to learn but at the same time frustrated due to some curriculum contents are reserved for the next grade. According to her most of the learners are keen on learning. She explains about the use peer marking as a teaching method to children due to it is in the Namibian curriculum but also because it saves time from the teaching. By peer marking the learners are also learning from each other.
“So utmost, it’s so difficult, because you cannot hate this child because of what he’s, he is doing as a child, you should understand at first but then the worst of all because every time you have to go to school, you should expect now this child in class and the child is not concentrating. Yes, so I think that’s the worst moment of my teaching.”

In addition Petrus brings out the differences of opinions in his work community and how challenging it might be to give an own insight about something only because it is differing from the one that the colleagues are giving. However, he showed ability to accommodate to it and learn from the working community.

“It’s not that the person doesn’t want that idea, it’s just a different personal habit that will be affected to the person who will end up not wanting to even listen properly to an idea that you are bringing in. And they don’t even believe anything that you are saying but they... It’s a different something against that you have. So those are some of the challenges I see (-) happening around.”

As Lasky (2005) is addressing the teacher brings one’s own personal and professional presence to the school environment and to its education culture. The idea includes the aspect of a personal commitment to the profession as earlier mentioned and, the readiness to learn from the educational environment (Spillane & Thompson, 1997).

Lorraine explains that she does not follow the subject text book accurately and strictly but alternatively uses learner-centred teaching methods such as learners’ own practical discoveries and experiments. Kasanda, Lubben, Gaoseb, Kandjeo-Marenga, Kapenda & Campbell (2005) show in their study which is performed in the context of Namibia that everyday situations and examples in learner-centred teaching are used more in the junior level than the senior secondary level of education. However, Lorraine gives an example of studying climatology, when she teaches the secondary classes rather in their own natural environment than in the classrooms if there is a possibility for that.

“I prefer everything to be about learners doing the discoveries. (-) So with me, I think I do, it’s more about experiments, I want my kids to be able to not
Lorraine concludes that the learners seem to be active and eager to learn new things when they show critical behaviour towards the teaching contents. She has dualistic thoughts about learners’ desire to learn new things and claims that she is satisfied they are eager to learn but at the same time frustrated due to some curriculum contents are reserved for the next grade. According to her most of the learners are keen on learning. She explains about the use peer marking as a teaching method to children due to it is in the Namibian curriculum but also because it saves time from the teaching. By peer marking the learners are also learning from each other.

“There are those ones that are keen to learn. There are those kids that you basically come into class and every day they want to (-) you to give them something to do. (-)But things are they, sometimes things are reserved for the next grade.”

Lorraine evaluates her professional performance by reflecting the key areas of her work. For example, how she deals with the learners or with the administrational issues. She also gets evaluated by the Head of Department of the school where they look at her progress, professional files, and that the work is under control. She also does the professional self-evaluation with the Head of Department of the school, and gets help with the evaluation from the colleagues if needed.

Lorraine has been evaluated also by her learners at some points during her career and thinks it gives a perspective to her professionally. Furthermore, she does not do the evaluation with the learners regularly but only experimentally and occasionally. She explains that some of the learners can be quite harsh with their description of her. This may be the reason Lorraine does not perform the evaluation so often with them.

Lorraine claims the beginning of her career has been less uncomplicated than she thought and compared to her fellow teacher who started working at the same time. She sees, this is a result of a motivating and a supportive team, and working environment due to she worked in the same school in the beginning of her career where she was a pupil once her-
self. The other matter what made Lorraine’s beginning of a career successful was that she genuinely thought she has been able to make an impact on the learners’ knowledge. By this she means they can reflect the subject contents with the reality and outside of a school context.

**Educational values**

As when speaking about educational values Petrus refers to two principles. At first he thinks that a teacher and a learner should share a common respect towards each other. Secondly, he thinks that both sides, a teacher and a learner, can learn from each other in the educational relationship. Example for this is that while the teacher is teaching the learners in a subject-level, the learner can cause growth in a teacher as well, such as help the teacher in emotion controlling. Zembylas (2003) states that teachers’ professional identity is in a constant dialogue and discourse with the learners, parents, and colleagues with emotions linked to it and to teachers’ professional growth. Petrus refers that he has got these insights from the working experience rather than from the teacher education.

“I believe in the value of (-) respect or I will call it respect in to and for direction. (-) That I shouldn't only demand to be respected, while I don’t respect back. Or I should not be demanded to respect somebody, while I'm not respected. So I would value more when respect is coming to me and going from me in equivalence. Another is (-) I see the environment of teaching and learning as being two individuals, that are both learning, and that are both teaching. So the only difference is that, the one is more experienced than the other. But a teacher at times can also learn from a learner, from certain things that you never knew before.”

In addition as referring to values, Petrus reflects the quality in education and brings out his opinion of a good and a bad education. In his point of view education has failed itself when educated people are not useful to the society. With this he refers to people who even have completed tertiary education but who are not utilising their skills to utilise the society. As a result of this education naturally has succeeded when the outcome of it is equivalent to the needs of society.
Then we discussed about Samuel’s values in education. He explains that an educator has to act professionally all the time with the learners and that an educator has to have a certain kind of transparency in his work meaning that he has to be honest and genuine.

“I would say that first thing that is, is professionalism. By professionalism I mean, it makes keeping my standard, my values here as a human being. I am an adult in front of them. Whereby I just don’t say things. I know with and where to end. That’s one thing. Professionalism, transparency and... Then apart from that I cannot insult students also, I cannot insult their being, I cannot discriminate and so on, yeah. So that is professionalism, transparency...”

When it comes to educational values Lorraine thinks teaching should be learner-centred instead of being teacher-centred. According to her a teacher should act as a facilitator and instructor between the learner and the information. The learners should sit in a classroom in groups instead of sitting in rows due to it adds the possibility of peer tutoring and cooperation between the learners.

“I think ahmm towards educational value it should be learner-centred. (-) That means that the learner should be able to the discoveries. It should be about learners and not teachers. (-)You are just there to guide the learners and the learners should be the one to do the work. (-) Teacher is just to believe that is supposed to be an instructor and we can say, that it is subject based education. A subject based education means that you, you are basically just doing it for the sake of the subject, instead of doing it for the sake of the learners. (-) So you are just teaching but without considering how the learners are understand, or if the learners are going through or they understand. As well as the class room settings (-) I think ahmm (-) in different classes my own class because... okay understand what I’m supposed to do by kids sit in groups, because we say that is a basic setting of the class room. For learner centred it should be in groups. But if we see other classes the learners are just sitting in rows. They are not in the groups. I think for a learner-centred classroom the class is supposed to be in groups. The class-
room setting should be in groups so that everything should be about peers tutoring, it should be about learners doing things together, and not just as individuals.”

Lorraine reflects her professional and ethical values and names the respect for the others as the most important which every teacher should have. She thinks the respect has to be mutual from the side of the learner and the teacher, and the teacher will not gain it if she or he does not respect the learner as well. A teacher should hold accountability for the learners’ life and future but also for her or his own profession. Cooperation between the colleagues but also with the learners as well play a crucial role in teacher work. Mutual agreements and understanding can make the work more effortless and avoid problems. For understanding the problems, a teacher has to understand the learner’s holistically. Being an inspirational and a creative teacher, she or he can make the taught subject interesting by creating opportunities for learning and making an exciting lesson plans. Lorraine explain that careful planning in every level of teaching is also important, on a class, a week, a month, and a term base. The last value she emphasises is evaluation. With evaluation a teacher should be able to find his or her position as teacher reflecting to the learners, the colleagues, and other people around.

Professional challenges

Petrus admits that he has supported the pupils to solve their problems several times and that it has been challenging for him as an educator. He also tells about the example of a serious challenge when a pupil has come to him and told him that she is planning a suicide. In this case he had to play a role of a counsellor. He adds up to this that whatever the challenge may be the educator has to create a favourable atmosphere and environment to guide to help the challenge to be solved. The learner who has the problem has to be relaxed and the teacher must win the trust of a learner before helping to solve the problem.

“You don’t just talk not knowing the environment is suitable. You don’t just talk without knowing the learner is or the person is really relaxed with you. You create that atmosphere that is conducive. Now when that atmosphere is created. Then you can go into the task and start talking to the learner.”
When it comes to professional challenges Petrus also emphasises that he has learnt to control his character, to think objectively, and also believe in himself and his own good purposes through them. One of the challenges is provocation and false accusations from his colleagues’ side. He continues that he accommodated to the challenges by reflecting them and due to this knew how to react calmly because the provocation and accusations were caused by his colleagues’ jealousy. He says if he was going to take the false accusations negatively and react negatively towards those, he would only prove that what he did was actually his intention, even if it wasn’t. In addition he brings out the differences of opinions in his work community and how challenging it might be to give an own insight about something only because it is differing from the one that the colleagues are giving.

Ndamona tends to feel sorry for some of her learners because their parents do not seem to give enough time and attention to them. Although she feels honoured to be the one to whom the children are opening up with. She thinks she plays an important role when gaining the trust of the learners and helping them in their challenges. When it comes to professional challenges and problems she explains that there are several kinds of situations she has to deal with the learners and the parents. She realises that being a teacher is being an educator amongst other responsibilities. Challenges occur in terms of discipline and in the large groups there are learners with mixed abilities. With mixed abilities Ndamona means such as learners concentration, presentation and listening skills. She admits that she gets irritated occasionally from certain learners’ behaviour. Still she can see the correlation between the behaviour of the learner and the reason which caused it. Some of the learners might have experienced extreme violence or abuse, and she understands that these incidents have a part in learners’ behaviour. She says the role of a counsellor comes in again in a situation like this. The incidents are pervasive and sometimes Ndamona feel those are following her to her personal life. She tells about an incident when a student has come to her and told her planning to commit a suicide because of experienced violence and abuse. Ndamona was the only person the student told such thing, although she does not continue the story into the details, she explains that she has managed to deal with those kinds of situations. Ndamona mentions the conflicts with some parents too. On the other hand some of the parents expect her to deal with the minor subject-related challenges with the learners but at the same time they dislike if the student gets too close with her confiding their problems to Ndamona. Although, still the same parents do not participate in the school life of
the learners. She adds that she has learnt to deal with the problems carefully without not interfering redundantly.

“Sometimes you try to interfere where there is a problem between a child and a parent. And so you need to keep on trying approaching any situation (-) you have to be very careful because there are certain sensitive family issues you are not supposed to get into.”

Generally speaking, challenges are occurring constantly. She explains that she has to treat the parents’ and their children’s problems carefully and sensitively. By this she means she cannot take sides but rather has to act as a negotiator between them to help to find a solution.

Samuel thinks one of the professional challenge is the amount of the salary of a teacher. According to him it does not correlate with the demands of the profession. He also adds that having a good relationship with the students is favourable when it comes teaching but has also a negative side effects while the students might get used to the teacher and take advantage on him or her.

“Because they know you are also partly close to them and so on. And then they just can take advantage of you. That would be a thing of negative side effect.”

One of the professional challenges Lorraine is facing is the teacher-learner ratio. The amount of learners in a one class can be from 35 to 45 to one teacher. She teaches altogether nine classes and the learners are mostly at the grade 8. The children’s age in their grade 8 can vary from fourteen to sixteen, or even seventeen, due to that some of them are repeating their education or some of them started later than the others. The compulsory education starts with pre-school when the child is six years old, and most of them finish it when they reach the age of eighteen. After that, for example, they start their tertiary education or become employed. Lorraine finds this as one of the professional challenges. She also describes other challenges in a following way. In her opinion it is difficult but crucial to find time to all of the learners.
"I have all these 40 kids and 40 minutes of my lesson (-) of my lesson. You have to take time to know all these kids."

She also thinks that the school where she works lacks the learning equipment. Organising the equipment between the learners takes time from the actual teaching. She also adds that the classes she teaches are overcrowded and it makes teaching challenging.

As a conclusion she feels that she does not have enough time for the exact teaching but she has to organise the teaching material and help the learners with the assignment corrections. One of the professional challenges Lorraine recalls is the lack of parental involvement in Namibia’s education culture. She feel that the parents are not motivated enough to encourage their children to do their home assignments profoundly and that most of the parents are only formally interested in the school-life of their children. Lorraine thinks that this is a wider issue in general in the country. She adds that not all of the parents act like that but sadly a big amount of them. She explains about the example of a parents evening in the beginning of the school year when almost all of the parents join the gathering and are concerned that their child will receive a place in that specific school but although during the school year Lorraine hardly gets into a contact with them. She concludes that most of the parents are only interested in that their children will get a place form a famous school. The teachers usually communicate with the parents with letters they send via their learners to their homes. Lorraine says, the problem arises when the learners occasionally forget to give these letters, and parents do not receive the information of the school meetings or important issues. According to Lorraine, this happens due to that the parents do not communicate with their children. She gives an example of a parents meeting, when only forty parents will appear, when the whole school has 1400 learners. Most of the parents who did not attend the meeting will answer that they either did not get an invitation or were occupied to attend. Lorraine concludes that if a parent is eager to get her or his child to a certain school, then she or he should also have time to attend the meetings regarding the child. As Lorraine is a teacher starting her career, she feels the professional challenges overwhelming at times.

Additionally, one of the professional challenges Lorraine recognises is the position of special education in Namibia, and how it is taken care of. She explains that some of the children with special needs are in the same class than the other children, and this causes a lot
of extra work for teachers, although they are not trained as special educators. In general the personal learning foundations and outcomes are differing vastly from each other which makes organising the teaching challenging.

6.1.4 The ideal teacher and teachers’ thoughts of their future

The themes in this category are defining the teacher professional identity of these Namibian teachers’ to the future. It is constructing from Teachers’ position in a society, An image of an ideal teacher and their Professional future goals.

Teachers’ position in a society

In Petrus’ perspective teachers’ position in a Namibian society is still highly recognised and respected but at the same time not one of the most wanted and valued professions amongst adults and even learners who plan their future career. In his own opinion it is the most necessary profession, since there would be no other professions without it. He says that still many people pursue to another career over teaching.

“My opinion of the position of the teacher in the society, generally is (-) the mother of all professions. (-) So but coming back to the position of teachers in Namibia. It’s contrary to what I just said earlier. (-) It’s not seen as one of the major, yeah well ofcourse to a certain extend it is important, but it’s not seen as one of the most important positions teachers hold in society. (-)

Petrus’ insights of his professional accomplishments include the fact that he can participate in and attempt solving societal problems. He feels that he is in an important position to utilise the society with his skills in an educational level. The biggest accomplishment of his teaching career is the process of becoming a teacher. He states that it is a big achievement to him considering his childhood background, and that he almost missed the opportunity to take part in education. Despite other people’s sceptical anticipations of his career, he found his role as a teacher, and is proudly holding that profession, as he explains a profession of a teacher is a basis for other professions in a society. He sees the effects of the teacherhood in a wider context through his learners’ future.
When it comes to teachers’ position in a society Ndamona considers that being a teacher is an important profession but does not see that concretically on a societal level. In Ndamona’s opinion teacher’s profession should be more valued and upgraded. She also wants to pay attention to the monetary side of the profession, and thinks it should be improved. She sees her position as important for causing other future professions for her learners and due to this remembers her own past teachers who made an influence on her when she was in compulsory education. She concludes that teachers should be upgraded in every country, not only her own.

“When people look at teachers, they think, it’s too (-) a profession which is undermined in the society, but I’m telling you if people could really reflect and tend to think twice, then they would know that this profession should really be upgraded one or the other. The way teachers are looked at in the society, the way teachers are (-) it could be (-) in terms of payed in the society because I’m saying so we are the roots of forming our future leaders.”

Samuel’s view of teachers’ position in a society is that a teacher holds an important profession as he or she is able to influence on a large amount of people, a wealth of the societies, and even countries. A profession can be seen as a way to influence on people’s way of thinking and acting, and the outcomes of them.

“A profession which can (-) change countries, it can change the wealth and so on. One because it deals with the young minds. (-) It grows young minds, it can easily influence by the way we act, by the way we talk, and our future.”

All the teachers, except Lorraine, thought a teacher has an important function in the society. However, they also saw that teachers do not always enjoy the respect as they should. Teachers are responsible from large amounts of pupils and students, and that lack of being valued was worrying and astonishing the teachers.
**An image of an ideal teacher**

Petrus thinks that a good educator has clear goals and knows how to direct the learners towards these goals. One of the characteristics a good educator has is to be visioned and to know to which direction to head and lead the others, but also the reasons behind that. He reflects that in an educational level he can have an impact on the society. In Petrus’ point of view an ideal educator is someone who is able to leave a positive impression on people and a favourable impact on surroundings. If the learners are motivated by their teacher, he or she has made his profession worth of it.

“To have clear goals as to what you want to achieve. (-) An ideal educator, I would say, is that, that is able to impact positive change in both in influence on whatever they lay their hands on. (-) Also an ideal teacher is, when you are able to leave a... an impression, positive impression on someone.”

Ndamona’s image of an ideal teacher is knowledgeable in a subject or a teaching area, and a teacher who is keen on learning new things constantly along the work. An ideal teacher should be able to listen to other people and be open to new ideas. She also emphasise punctuality and the essence of a role model. She says that some of the learners learn more from her than their parents. Due to this a teacher should be able to control her or his extreme emotions (Emotions as a lens to explore teacher identity and change: Different theoretical approaches, Elsevier, Teaching and Teacher Education 21(2005) 895-898), be patient, and well prepared to the classes. By not having a good impression of herself or himself, a teacher can make the learners show their disrespect. Teacher has a huge responsibility on how the learners view the teacher, how they learn new things, and how they respect the teacher. According to Ndamona, showing confidence and a dapper appearance can help in gaining the respect of learners. An ideal teacher also has only a professional relationship to her or his learners. Some of the characters Ndamona mentions for an ideal teacher are the ones she mentioned in the different roles of a teacher.

“You are a role model (-) and I believe that if I’m dealing with the learners they learn more from me rather than their parents. They emulate me. They try to be like me, so everything I will do, the way I talk, the way I behave in front
of them, the way I (-) deal with them. So I should control my emotions because then if I have to shout. That won’t really show that I’m (-) you know, I’m a person whom they can look up to.”

Samuel’s opinion of an ideal teacher would be someone who is a role model to the learners and someone who is making an impact on the learners’ lives in a preferable way. An ideal teacher is changing a learners’ life in a favourable way and is able to motivate the learners. In addition, an ideal teacher should act as a role model to his or her learners.

“We transform their lives. The way we talk, the way we act. (-) So when I do teach someone, I want to be a role model in a good way.”

In Lorraine’s point of view an ideal teacher is able to be a role model and inspire her or his learners, and even other people around. An ideal teacher is hard-working and responsible. An ideal teacher has accountability towards her or his learners’ future and shows the support to them. An ideal teacher performs the profession with her or his heart and devotion. And ideal teacher is devoted to the whole subject she or he is teaching.

“You should be able to (-) understand that you are having children at heart, and that, when you are doing it, you should do it with love.”

**Professional future goals**

As a professional goal Petrus says he desires to be a part of positive societal changes that may occur in the society. He wants to have an effect on the beneficial changes which may utilise people.

“Ahhh, I would say (-) I want to be part of (-) some good societal changes that might have occurred within our society. If there is something good that happened, and then I was part of that change, I will be happy.”

As an opposite he explains he does not want to engage in causing problems. Petrus’ picture of his future within the field of education is optimistic and explains he wants to be an
fluential person in future. He states that dreaming plays an important role when it comes to
the future and the direction where the person is heading. By dreaming or having an idea a
person is having a first step towards to goals he or she wants to go.

Samuel says that his main educational goal is to produce positive results meaning that he
wants to see his students to learn academic skills, go in further in education and wants
them to make a profitable career for themselves.

“I could say I have one goal. Teach to produce results. To produce results. ( )
Making them academic. Simple but true. Making them at Unam and so on.
That’s my main goal. And that is what I want to change.”

He says he teaches to leave footprints for his later generations. He speaks about the time
when he is going to be retired in the future, he would want to see that he had made a real
effort and a change for his learners. Related to this he would like that his learners will re-
member him as their idol teacher.

Lorraine tells about her professional future goals by telling what kind of an educator she
wants to be. She wants to be an educator instead of being a teacher. She seems to sincerely
care about her learners as she refers to her learners as “my kids”.

“I would like to become a perfect educator. I would like to become a problem
solver. I should be able to listen to my kids and give them... and solve their
every problem they are having.”

She is also telling about her Master’s studies and to where those are going lead her in fu-
ture. Her future plans includes the opportunity to teach in the University level or work
within the curriculum development in the National Institute for Education Development.
She has a desire to work within the education system for her whole life and she apparently
has a passion towards it.

The professional future goals teachers bring out are varying from each other. In addition,
Ndama does not mention her future goals at all. Lorraine’s answer is more career orient-
ed than Petrus’ and Samuel’s as she addresses she wants to proceed in her career by aiming to teach in the University or to work with the curriculum development.

“I get to be a teacher, but to get a promotion, to go to a promotional level. Or to be a lecturer at the University and still teaching. So I’m still doing it. Or be working at NIED. (-) I’m still with education. I should be able to do the planning, I should be able to do the assessment or criteria for... So I’d still want to be in the education system. The institution for the curriculum development.”

Also Petrus says he wants to be amongst the influential people in the future. Both Petrus and Samuel have a perspective as they wish to utilise the society through teaching. Samuel’s concrete aim is to produce results and see his students in the further studies, such as University or Polytechnic level studies.

6.2 Research results combined and concluded

As coming back to the research question: “From which essential incidents the professional teacher identity of Namibian teachers’ is constructed in the different phases of the career?” For these four Namibian teachers, significant people and events in their life history affected to their professional teacher identity formation in the beginning of their career. These significant people were, for instance, their childhood and youth teachers, their parents or relatives, and concrete educational events in teacher training related to their studies.

Lasky (2005) and Olsen (2008) state that teachers’ professional identity is seen to develop through the significant people in their lives as the socio-cultural perspective on identity research represents. The teachers themselves also played an important role and agency in construing their identities by reflecting the positive and remarkable moments in the beginning of their careers, such as moments in their training periods or the feedback they got from their colleagues. Lasky (2005) also referred to the agency as it is occurring in the social settings. In the case of this study, agency occurs both in teachers themselves and by reflecting themselves to others.

As Day et al. (2007), Korthagen (2001), and Zeichner (1996) state that the process of growing into the profession of a teacher is more complex phenomenon than managing
alone the subject related matters. That being one crucial part of the developing teacher identity, it most importantly includes the growth process to the teacher community individually, socially and culturally (Cesar & Kumpulainen, 2009, 353). This study brought out the importance of collegial support, and other relevant people in the background in the construction process of teacher identity.

Professional development through evaluation on a personal level affected to these teachers’ teacher identity. Only two teachers evaluated their own personal change while having more working experience than the others. In addition, their views on how the essence of being a teacher has changed through different times on a societal level, influenced on their teacher identity. Especially, they evaluated the latter by reflecting themselves through a broader context, the society they are living in. The processes of construction and progress in teachers’ professional identity is continuing during their whole career as Ball & Goodson, 1985, Huberman, 1993, and Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985 argue. (Lasky, 2005) From here there is a link to the changes in the teacher identity which was construed through professional working experience, reflection, and by growing up meaning by the time some of them learnt to control their emotions. The identity in the changes or the development was also seen through the societal context, as they reflected their own position as teachers and how respected or valued they were. They also reflected their own authority and position as an information provider.

In the contemporary dimension the identity was seen to construct through the different experienced roles of a teacher, motivation in teachers’ profession, professional experiences of teachers’, educational values and professional challenges. The teachers construed their identities to the future with their future professional goals, and teachers’ position in a society, and by drawing an image of an ideal teacher in their minds. Mayer (1999) and Flores & Day (2006) points out that the professional identity of a teacher is changing constantly during the whole career but a teachers’ private life also plays a significant part in it. Furthermore, these teachers expressed their development also in their private lives and reflected that their profession had simultaneously influenced on their personal identities.

For only one teacher, Lorraine, the profession of a teacher was initially a dream. The rest of the teachers originally planned to take another profession in the beginning of their career steps. However, they showed satisfaction to their current profession since they had experi-
enced the profession rewarding through the significant people within their work, more specifically the pupils. The teachers also criticised the teachers’ position in a Namibian society and emphasised it is not as valued and respected anymore as it should be. I concluded the first career dreams and teachers’ position in a society are linked together. Perhaps the profession would be more desired if it was more appreciated in the society. Despite feeling the lack of being valued, all the teachers’ had a strong sense of self-appreciation. All the teachers also had noticed and experienced the lack of parental involvement. They felt that when they would have needed the help and participation of parents, they did not receive it. Sometimes they felt that they played the parents’ role themselves.

The study also showed that the reflection process and development of teachers’ profession and teacher identity is continuing the whole career path. Hence, teacher education is a vital step in forming the teacher identity, the development occurs in real life situations and increases within professional experiences. The teachers stated that especially professional challenges played an important role in their development process while they needed to evaluate themselves and their actions in challenges.

As Sfard & Prusak (2005) emphasise identities are constructed through telling stories. Also in this study the teachers re-built, created, or more specifically updated their professional identities. All of the teachers had experienced to be rather educators than subject-oriented teachers. They felt they were acting as the cornerstones in their pupils’ life.
7 DISCUSSION

One of the main benefits of the study is that the teachers had an opportunity and a position to evaluate themselves as teachers and educators, furthermore their conceptions, values and career. Normally this would not necessarily had occurred in the regular working environment.

7.1 Summary of the research results

In the beginning of this study, before conducting the interviews, I assumed the results and conclusions would give a different kind of an outcome. Meaning that teacher identity, not specifically in a Namibian context but in a different context than my own, would give rather different perspectives than the results and conclusions show. However, this study shows that teacher professional identity can be seen to have global and universal elements. Considering that Namibian education system, and thereby including the teacher education, got influences from Namibians who studied abroad due to the liberation struggle before the independence was gained in 1990 (Sitari, 2004, 145). Furthermore, the universal elements are parts of the Namibian teachers’ professional thinking and understanding. The emphasis of cross-cultural research is crucial in itself, since evaluating teachers’ professional identity in the Finnish context can be enriched through the international and global perspectives.

7.2 Evaluation and ethics

One of the challenges for this study was the interpretations of the researcher about the studied phenomenon. The researcher is external to the researched culture, although familiar with the studied topic. The researcher is coming from the external culture to the studied context and teachers. Since my interest towards this study started while I was serving my own internship related to my studies in Namibia in 2012-2013 for five months, I became increasingly responsive to studying how the profession of a teacher is viewed through Namibian teachers’ perceptions and experiences. Thus, I come from a background of a Finnish educational culture and teacher education, my aim was to study if can I find drastic differences compared to my own existing conception of the profession of a teacher. I believe I got a deeper sense and an understanding of a Namibian educational culture in gen-
eral through my own internship experiences in the country. My own academic background and internship is in the field of an early childhood education, and the topic of this thesis is studying subject teachers’ understanding of a teacherhood, although excluding the subject related matters.

However, I believe the essence of teacher identity in a subject teacher level can be studied through the understanding of an early childhood teacher. In the interview situations we discussed about the concepts appearing, and the interviewee made specifying questions if she or he did not understand it in the first round. Although, as I presented the questions to the interviewees, I wanted to get their own understanding of the discussed theme. For example, in the theme *Evaluation of different times and educational environment*, some of the teachers’ answered both on a personal and wider societal level, while some only answered in the societal level. As in this theme I could have made a specifying question and ask to answer also on a personal level, I consciously excluded it, as it was the interviewees’ interpretation of a discussed theme. Furthermore, I concluded they preferred to evaluate the changes in the teacherhood only on a societal level due to they did not have advanced experience by the time yet. The combining factor between me as an interviewer and researcher, and the interviewees were that all of us shared the same profession.

This research could have carried out different or more extensive perspective to teacherhood if it would have in addition concentrated on the teacher education of the interviewed teachers. Although a number of research, such as Dahlström (2002) and Zeichner & Ndimande (2008), has been made which are focusing on the teacher education and its effects for teachers’ professional development. Instead of concentrating on the education of teachers I aimed to scrutinise the studies which are emphasising the perspectives of teacher identity and teacher professional development. Since identity can be seen to develop during the whole career (Flores & Day, 2006) through the evaluation of one’s own values and experiences, consequently the teacher education cannot play the only crucial part in it.

Transcribing occurred to be challenging at times due to the accent the interviewees used. Neither the interviewees were not native English speakers, nor were I. Although with the careful and repetitive listening of the interview materials, the data transcription was finished. Hence, the data coding was done twice to each interviews by sorting the story pieces
or text pieces with different colours to themes and subthemes. In addition, I performed the coding process again with QSR Nvivo 10 data analysis software.

Before the interview situations I informed or all the interviewees were informed by another person about my professional background and the purpose of the interviews and study. Before starting the interviews I took some time to discuss with each interviewee to make the situation less tensed. Two of the interviewees were slightly reserved before the actual interview started, although discussing with them about the background and the purpose of the interview made them relieved. The fact that the interviewees were reserved might have been a challenge. However, making them conscious about the facts related to the topic made the road less rocky. I concluded that my age, gender, or race was not an issue for the interviewees, since all of them knew my purpose and position in collecting the data to the study. One of the challenges to this study was the summation of the number of interviewees and due to this their recognisability. To protect the anonymity of the interviewees, I decided to change their names from their original ones. Still, I concluded that calling the interviewees by invented Namibian names makes the topic more approachable to the reader.

The younger teachers Lorraine and Samuel, or more specifically the teachers with less experience, evaluated the changes only on a societal level. Due to the young age of Lorraine, she evaluated the changes of different times by comparing her childhood memories and the way her teachers used to teach to how she is teaching now. Also Samuel compared his schooling time to the present moment, because of his young age. Ndamona evaluated the different points of her career and teacher identity, the time when she started teaching and how she has changed personally. Petrus evaluated himself both on a personal level, and referred to the changes in the society as well. The limitation here can be seen from the different aspect the teachers are comparing themselves, the changes in themselves, and the changes in an educational environment. Since the interview being semi-structured, it left the teachers with freedom to answer from their point of view and how they understood the changes, either in themselves or/and in a larger context. In this study, both of the levels, personal and societal, are construing the teacher identity. As the teachers are part of the society and the society is a part of them, it cannot be seen disconnected from their identities.
7.3 Possible further research approaches and applications

Further research on this topic could be conducted by performing a longitudinal study while examining the same teachers several times with semi-structured, open interviewing, or biographical research methods. This would give the concept teacher identity a deeper and a more vast level of knowledge.

Additionally, the comparative approach could give multidimensional perspectives to professional teacher identity. Especially, if we study the researchers’ own cultural context towards the foreign context the researcher. Partly for the same reason, I would be interested in studying the professional identity of teachers’ who have an extensive experience and are retired or about to retire.
REFERENCES


ANNEX 1: INTERVIEW STRUCTURE

- Teachers’ demographical information: age, gender, the grade in which the teacher is teaching.
- The memories of teachers’ own school time.
- The memories and experiences of teachers’ own teachers.
- When did you start teaching?
- Why did you want to become a teacher/an educator?
- When did you became aware/conscious of that?
- Describe, what it like was to be a teacher during the time you started teaching. The first thoughts of being a teacher. (How was it like to be a teacher when you started working? What were your first thoughts about being a teacher/an educator?)

- How long have you taught?
- Do you think being a teacher/an educator has changed during the times and if in what way? (generally and in your situation)
- What kinds of educational beliefs/conceptions did you have then?
- Have those beliefs/conceptions changed? And if they have, describe in what way?
- How has the educational environment changed during your career? Or compared to your childhood when you were at school?

- What kinds of educational beliefs/conceptions do you have currently?
- Do you think a teacher has other kinds of roles as well in her/his work? Describe what kinds of.
- What motivates you with your work?
- What kinds of problems or challenges have you faced?
- What kinds of educational values do you have? Do you think the values in education have changed in general and in your point of view? Describe how.
- What are your beliefs about good education? What is a definition for a good education in your opinion?
• What kinds of characters does a good educator have?
• What kinds of educational goals do you have?
• Teachers’ experiences of his/her achievements in the career?
• How would you define an ideal educator?
• When do you feel that you have succeeded or failed in your work?
• Your experiences of teachers’ position on a societal level.
ANNEX 2: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES – THE THEMES ARISING FROM THE DATA

Ndamona
Personal background, academic background, professional background, becoming a teacher, personality traits, being a teacher, comparison of pupils/different times, the different roles of a teacher, characteristics of a teacher/professional characteristics, motivation in teachers’ profession, professional growth/personal growth as a teacher, professional challenges, being an educator, an image of an ideal teacher, teachers’ position in a society.

Samuel
Personal and professional background information, teaching and working experience, profession as a teacher, (the duration of working experience in a current place), becoming a teacher, comparison of different times & pupils / evaluation of different time & pupils, being an educator, the different roles of a teacher, professional challenges, personal capacity of helping, professional characteristics, motivation in teachers’ profession, values, professional goals / accomplishments, an image of an ideal teacher, professional self-evaluation, teachers’ position in a society.

Lorraine
Personal background, professional background, an image of an ideal teacher, characters of a teacher/professional characteristics, describing the characters of teachers’ own teacher, becoming a teacher, personal growth, professional challenges, comparison of times, the different roles of a teacher, personal capacity of helping, professional experiences, professional accomplishments, educational beliefs, motivation in teachers’ profession, teaching methods, values, self-evaluation (professional self-evaluation), future goals/professional future goals.

Petrus
Personal background information, professional background information, educational background information, childhood and youth memories, experience as an exchange student,
describing the characters of teachers’ own teacher, schooling memories, becoming a teacher, being a teacher/an educator, comparison of times, professional self-evaluation, personal growth, professional growth, teachers’ position in a society, (educational) values, professional experiences, work community, the different roles of a teacher, professional challenges, motivation in teachers’ profession, teachers’ position in a society, qualifying education, the importance of education, an image of an ideal teacher, professional accomplishments, professional future goals, teacher education.
ANNEX 3: ANALYSIS - THE COMMON FOUND THEMES

Theme 1: Academic, personal, and professional background information.
Theme 2: Becoming a teacher.
Theme 3: Evaluation of different times and educational environment
Theme 4: Professional experiences.
Theme 5: Different roles of a teacher
Theme 6: Motivation in teachers’ profession
Theme 7: Professional challenges
Theme 8: Educational values
Theme 9: Teachers’ position in a society
Theme 10: An image of an ideal teacher.
Theme 11: Professional future goals

Themes only appearing once or twice:
   A) Teaching methods – linked to professional experiences
   B) Personal capacity of helping – linked to professional experiences
   C) Professional accomplishments – teachers position in a society
   D) Schooling memories – linked to becoming a teacher
   E) Describing teachers’ own teachers – linked to becoming a teacher
   F) Childhood and youth memories – linked to becoming a teacher
   G) Experiences as an exchange student (excluded due to anonymity)
   H) Work community – linked to professional experiences
   I) Qualifying education, the importance of education,
   J) Teachers’ own teacher education – linked to becoming a teacher