Drama therapy for School Dropouts?

An exploration of the potential role of drama therapy as a therapeutic intervention in working with a group of Grade 10 school dropouts in Katutura, Namibia.

A Research Report submitted to the Wits School of Arts,
Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand,
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Drama therapy).

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relevance of drama therapy in providing psychosocial support to out-of-school young people from in Katutura, Namibia. An analysis of the Namibian education system and the issue of student dropout, especially at Grade 10 level, provides a backdrop for this qualitative study. The study applies a developmental approach to understand the challenges that a typically-developing adolescent faces, by reviewing psychosocial developmental theorists' work. An overview of drama therapy and how it can be used as a creative intervention with the proposed population group was also explored. A focus group discussion and five consequent drama therapy workshops provided the data for the study which was analyzed through thematic analysis within a phenomenology framework. Findings from study showed that the intervention was a useful tool for building resilience and empowering to the participants. It also provided a space for them to reflect on their lives, choices and opportunities in order to improve their quality of life. This study is a first of its kind in this context, as there is currently no published research on drama therapy or psychosocial intervention strategies for high school dropouts in Namibia.

KEYWORDS: Drama therapy, school dropouts, out-of-school young people, psychosocial support, Namibia.

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own unaided work and that all the sources cited have been acknowledged by complete reference. The academic work is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Drama therapy) at the university of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my father Zacharias Gariseb.

I know you would be proud of me Papie.

(31 May 1964 - 18 July 2003)

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CHAPTER ONE:

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Dropping out of school before completion holds serious consequences for young people on multiples levels. There are many negative outcomes associated with inadequate education for both the individual and society at large. The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact that leaving school before completion has on the individual and their progress in life. In the context of poverty and the challenges coupled with it, obtaining a formal education is the means to overcome this and a way to improve the quality of life. For many students, especially those who come from low socio-economic backgrounds, education is the only chance they have for building a better future. Consequently, Grade 10 is a critical time in any student's life as it is a time where s/he prepare for the final years of their education after which s/he may either pursue further education or seek employment. However, over the past years in Namibia, poor Grade 10 academic results, high failure rates and school dropouts in the country have caused a growing concern amongst parents, teachers, policy makers and the general public across the country (Person, 2015).

The causes of student dropouts have been researched widely in many countries around the world (Christensen & Thurlow, 2004; Hammond, Linton, Smink & Drew, 2007; Ngware et al., 2018; Rumberger, 1987, 2001; Stephen, Plank & DeLuca, 2008). However, in Namibia very little research exists on student dropouts and the impact of dropping out. A few research studies (Nekongo-Nielson et al., 2015, Marope, 2005, Murangi, 2017, Mapani, 2005) on the student dropout subject, revealed high rates of student dropouts in both primary and secondary schools. In Namibia, dropout rates are particularly high in Grades 1, 8 and 10

(Ministry of Education (MoE) 2001, Wikan, n.d). Students quit school at Grade 10 level mainly due to systemic challenges, such as the re-admission and retention education policy that had been set for Grade 10. At the time this study was conducted (2017) up until the beginning of 2019, the Namibian education policy for re-admission and repetition, had prohibited the repetition of Grade 10 in formal (mainstream) schools (Ministry of Education, 1998, Harris, 2011; Marope, 2005; Pearson, 2015). According to this policy, students who failed Grade 10 once, were not allowed to repeat in formal schools, and therefore could only repeat the grade through the non-formal education sector. This means that if a student failed once to achieve the minimum requirements of 23 points, they would not qualify for Grade 11, and consequently had to enrol at a part-time institution, such as the Namibian College of Open Learning[1], to improve their marks (Ministry of Education, 2001). If they managed to upgrade their points, they would be allowed to return to mainstream schooling to continue with their education.

Over the years, statistics have indicated high numbers of students failing Grade 10 by not meeting the required points to progress to Grade 11. In 2016, out of the 38 277 full-time learners who sat for Grade 10 final examinations, only 21 291 passed (Nampa, 2016). Some 18 137 full-time learners failed to obtain the 23 points required to advance to Grade 11. Close to half of the students who sat for the Grade 10 external examinations failed to meet the required points to proceed to Grade 11, a few were allowed to repeat and a few enrolled with NAMCOL. No measures have been put in place to track the potentially high numbers of students who have dropped out at this grade level. Moreover, in many cases apart from the

[1] **NAMCOL**– Namibian College of Open Learning is a government educational institution that provides learning opportunities for adults and out-of-school young people under its alternative secondary education programme. It offers distance learning as well as part-time tutoring.

being advised to consider the option of going to attending NAMCOL, students are left with no support from the government to return to school. In a national report on school dropouts and out-of-school children, Pearson (2015) contended that the restriction of repeating Grade 10, had essentially condemned many poor students who cannot afford to enrol at NAMCOL, to unemployment. This report also identified the non-repeat policy set for Grade 10 among other factors, as one of the main factors leading to students dropping out of high school (Pearson, 2015). A few studies (Marope, 2005; Kavetuna, 2010; Harris, 2011; Murangi, 2017) demonstrated that many of the students who fail, do not always successfully improve their grades when they repeat and consequently fail, this time in the part-time institutions and as a result further dropout of these institutions. It has been reported that students do not perform very well in NAMCOL's school-level educational programme compared with their counterparts in the traditional formal schools (SAID, 2005, 2011, Murangi, 2017).

For instance, statistics revealed a trend in performance between NAMCOL's part-time candidates and full-time students, with full-time students obtaining most of the 'High' and 'Intermediate' grades, and part-time students obtaining most of the 'low' and 'ungraded' grades (NAMCOL Statistical Digest, 2016, 2017). Full-time students tended to perform better than those who are repeating. This has been attributed to the new learning environment being different requiring students to acquire independent learning skills and to cope with the self-directed learning offered by the part-time institution (Murangi, 2017).

It has become evident from literature that students' drop out due to a variety of complex reasons and causes, thus the phenomenon cannot be attributed to one single cause or factor (Rumberger, 2001). However, the Grade 10 non-repeat policy has been a major contributing factor that has led to many students dropping out particularly at Grade 10 level, by

systematically pushing at risk students out of school (Marope, 2005). Once out of the 'formal' education system, students who fail and are not able to enrol at NAMCOL are no longer catered for by the government and have to find their own way back into mainstream schooling, which can be extremely difficult. Not only do students have to enrol and pay for repeating (upgrading their marks), they also have to deal with the demands and pressures of non-formal or part-time institutions.

Murangi (1996), posits that the student dropout phenomena in the non-formal institutions are different from those in formal schooling, because participation in these two settings is not the same. Participation in part-time education is not mandatory and thus attendance is not strictly monitored as it is in formal schools. Students are therefore free to remain or quit the programs if they wish to without any consequences (Murangi, 1996). Murangi (1996) further indicated that once out of the formal 'supervision' of school, students often start to view themselves as mature young adults and therefore feel that they can do whatever they feel is right for them, with little to no alternative. If students perceive the educational experience is not relevant or perhaps if they find it practically challenging, they are not forced to continue and hence they can withdraw from the program at any time they wish to (Murangi, 1996). With these given conditions and adjustment issues, many young people tend to quit their studies before reaching their goals.

Other challenges that affect students' attendance or commitment to continue their education are related to time and the costs involved such as transport issues, looking after younger siblings and job responsibilities among others. Furthermore, administrators and instructors have little to no control over the situation, as some of the reasons for deciding to discontinue studies are personal and are said to be relatively of less significance (Murangi,1996). The

financial costs involved, are a major obstacle for many students. Whereas education is free in government schools, students who wish to upgrade their marks need to pay for every subject they wish to upgrade or re-do at NAMCOL or other part-time institutions (Murangi, 2017).

Leaving school before completion disrupts young people's momentum and disadvantages their future prospects in many ways. Finding proper employment, or pursuing tertiary education becomes much more difficult. Rumberger (1987) postulated that by leaving high school before completion, young people are challenged with serious educational shortfalls that severely impact their social and psychological wellbeing throughout and into adulthood. Some cited outcomes of dropping out are high unemployment, high incidence of health problems, a large demand for welfare assistance, an increase in mental health and higher crime and delinquency rates (Kronick & Hargis, 2003). Due to their failure to complete secondary school, out-of-school young people are set to experience numerous of negative outcomes, such as the negative impact on adult psychological functioning (Crain-Dorough, 2003).

Being out-of-school reduces one's chance of accessing relevant basic knowledge and skills and the certificates to support them (Ngware et al., 2018). According to Ngware et al. (2018) it further creates barriers to fulfilled employment, well-being, poverty alleviation, economic growth, at household, community and national levels. The outcomes have a rippling impact for the individual as they reach adulthood and are faced with the demands that comes with it. Rumberger (1987) observed that dropout rates vary among social groups and are more prevalent among minority groups. This is based on aspects related to race, ethnicity, language, gender and socio-economic status.

It is against this background, that this research aimed to explore the impact that leaving school before completion has on the life of young people, with particular focus on those who quit school at Grade 10 level. Because students do not always drop out of school voluntarily, but do so due to the interplay between individual and systematic challenges, it is important to consider intervention strategies that address the problem from various vantage points. This study proposes a drama therapeutic intervention for out-of-school young people. The intervention focuses on the psychosocial well-being and development of young people and on finding ways to help them cope with the stresses of school and other social issues that may affect them.

Drama therapy is a creative arts therapy that applies embodied, experimental, and active methods to facilitate personal change and growth. It essentially uses the healing potentials of the arts for therapeutic purposes. It has been applied in various contexts and is proven useful in promoting resilience (Vietri, 2018), improving expression skills, and enhancing interactive communication and problem solving skills. With its theoretical basis in the both the creative arts and psychotherapy, this approach can be useful in promoting social justice and transformation as it does not function in isolation but takes into account the contextual factors of the individuals or population groups such as the social, political, economic and cultural backgrounds.

This study is broadly situated within the qualitative approach and used drama therapy methodologies as a means to examine the problem. The research sought out to explore ways in which drama therapy, could help to alleviate the psychological effects related to dropping out and provide psychosocial support. The study employed a psychological approach by considering the developmental age of students when they dropout. A psychosocial

developmental lens is used to locate and conceptualise dropouts as adolescents, by considering the psychological and social challenges they experience. Life-span developmental theories and other context oriented theories are reviewed to grasp the complexities associated with this life stage. The study was undertaken with young people between the ages of 19 to 25 years from Katutura township in Windhoek Namibia. Taking place from 16th November to 7th December 2017. The drama therapy workshops took place in a dance rehearsal studio at Katutura Community Arts Centre, Windhoek, Namibia.

1.2 Background to the research problem

Namibia, formally known as South West Africa, was a German colony (1884 to 1925) and during World War I became a protectorate of South Africa from 1915 until its independence in 1990. At independence, the country inherited a society that was racially and ethnically segregated (Pomuti, 2008), having endured apartheid. The pre-independence era affected the Namibian society in various ways, education and schooling among these. Before independence education in Namibia was fragmented and divided into eleven semi-autonomous authorities along the lines of race, colour and economic status (Amukugo, 1993). Schooling was a privilege that was afforded to an elite few and subjects such as Mathematics and Science were predominantly for White people who made up a very small percentage of the population (Kandumbu, 2005). One of the most profound features of Namibian history was the imbalance of education levels among the people of the country. (Ministry of Education and culture, 1993).

Furthermore, during the rule of the South African apartheid government, education for Black Namibian people was a vocational utility intended to supply semiskilled and unskilled labour (Kandumbu, 2005). As the result of the high inequity, disparity and unequal educational

opportunities, education became a major challenge that the new government had to deal with. After independence the new government dismantled the apartheid system and consequently a national Ministry of Education was established, and divided into decentralised regional offices (Pomuti, 2014). Since independence Namibia introduced various education policies in efforts to improve and provide education to all communities regardless of their geographic location (Kandumbu, 2005). The new education system prioritised access and quality of education for all Namibians (Education for All, Plan of Action, 2002). This necessitated a change toward education relevant to Namibians, and adaptable to the changing needs of their society, as determined by Namibians themselves (Ministry of Education, 2009).

The Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (now known as the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture) soon began the education reform processes as a way to address the issues of injustice and inequality that prevailed under colonial and apartheid rule (Amukugo, 1993). The government introduced a semi-automatic promotion policy in 1996, promoting students if they failed a grade a second time, for efficiency and quality related reasons (National Report on the development of education in Namibia, 2004). Students were therefore permitted to repeat each school grade only once, except Grade 10.

Conversely, there was an automatic promotion from Grade 11 to Grade 12, as these two senior secondary grades were deemed a joined course, completed over two years (National Report on the development of education in Namibia, 2004). According to the Ministry of Education and Culture of Namibia (1993, p.2) both the German and South African periods of colonial rule deprived Namibia's Black community of the right to education. By declaring education for all, the Namibian Government not only aimed to address the inequalities in access to education, but also the social and economic imbalances that came with the

deprivation of education before independence (Aston, 2010).

Reflecting on the problems in Namibian education, Wikan (n. d) asserted that the goal of quality, accessible and equal education seemed ambitious, given major problems in student enrolments, high incidences of student pregnancies and dropout rates and large differences between performances among regions. Mendelsohn (1997), asserted that the state of education in Namibia is partly a product of circumstances that existed before independence in 1990 as well as the product of developments since then. This alludes to the fact that some of the challenges and shortcomings of the education system that we have been facing as a country, are the results of new reformations in systems.

Recent developments in education include a major transformation in policy. The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture announced a policy change regarding the junior and senior secondary phases in schools. These curriculum changes, which took effect from the beginning of 2019, included moving Grade 10 from the Junior Secondary phase, to the Senior Secondary phase (Kaure, 2016). Consequently, Grade 10 is now the first level for senior secondary and students will no longer write national examinations at this level but only at the end of Grade 11. Grade 11 is now the first exit point in the Senior secondary education phase and students will receive a school leaving-certificate with which they can enrol into tertiary institutions provided they pass with required marks. However, this will still have implications for those who fail Grade 10, as they will have to move back to Grade 9 in order to repeat. This transformation was announced to be trialled with those students who had failed Grade 10 examinations in 2018 (part of the old curriculum). In other words, what this means is that Grade 9 has become the “new” Grade 10. There is no guarantee as to how this innovation in policy will improve the student dropout rate at Grade 10 level or if it will help more students

successfully complete secondary education. Thus there is still a need to create innovative strategies to support students through this transitional process of policy change.

A noteworthy and related event of Namibian apartheid history was the forceful removal of Windhoek's Black residents from the Old Location, into the then newly-developed township by the former South African government. The people named the place The *Katutura* which loosely translates as *'The place where we do not want to live / a place where we do not belong*' (Bley, 1971). Katutura soon became home to almost half of Windhoek's indigenous Back people (Kotze, 1990*)*. As a result of the apartheid system and its inhumane acts and laws, Katutura reflects the injustices of the past. It is a vibrant and culturally-diverse township which, over the years, has changed in its form and character.

Known as Windhoek's largest township, it comprises different locations that were categorised and named after the different local ethnic groups of Namibia's indigenous people. For instance, there are Damara, Nama, Herero, and Wambo Locations. Further, Otjomuise and Khomasdal, were previously assigned to Windhoek's coloured communities. These tribal groupings were all part of the apartheid governments 'divide and conquer' strategy. People were required to live in Katutura under their own ethnic group section.

The township is categorised by poverty and all of the factors coupled with it; high unemployment rates, poor health services, high learner dropout rates, alcohol abuse, crime and a lack of support structures for the youth in the communities. Of these social issues, unemployment is ranked as one of the most serious, especially among the youth (Shiyukkifeni, 2005). In his research Shiyukkifeni (2005) argues that the current high unemployment rate is mostly attributed to low education levels. It is widely known that the

less educated a person is, the slimmer the chances of them gaining proper employment. According to Lewin (2007), "lack of education is both a part of the definition of poverty and a means of its reduction" (p.2). Lewin continues by stating that "those with more education, and the qualifications that validate what has been learned, enjoy high living standards, greater incomes and accumulate more assets," (Lewin, 2007, p.2). However, those born in poverty or who are uneducated often struggle to make ends meet. Obtaining an education can help an individual to change their life and can provide future opportunities that can help them step out of poverty (Lewin, 2002). Dropping out of school before completion makes it particularly difficult for any young person to find employment, which leads to other psychological and social impairments.

1.3 Rationale of the study

Grade 10 is, and has always been a critical time for many students in public schools in Namibia, particularly because of the concern brought by the non-repeat policy for many years. As mentioned before, the education policy previously restricted the repetition of Grade 10, and those who failed were encouraged to repeat through the non-formal sector (MOE, 2001). The pressure and anxiety to pass is coupled with the terror of failing due to the foreseeable consequences, following from not completing school. A significantly high amount of students failed Grade 10 in the past, and whilst there were a few that were allowed to repeat based on stated condition and criteria, the majority of these young people sought to re-do the grade through alternative non-formal education and many dropped out indefinitely. Consequently, young people in their secondary school years, are developmentally considered as adolescents, and yet they are left to deal with this impediment on their own, with not many options or support by the government.

Due to the negative psychological outcomes associated with dropping out and the long-term socio-economic implications for the individual, this research identified a need for intervention strategies for school dropouts. There is extensive literature on the dropout out problem and its impact on young person's life progression, however in Namibia there is insufficient research available on the dropout phenomenon in general and particularly on intervention strategies to address it. This signifies the magnitude of the problem. Most of the available literature from student dropout studies globally, seem to focus on prevention interventions for at-risk students (Kronick, 1997; Dobizl, 2002). This includes identifying students who show signs such as low academic performance and achievement, disinterest in school and high consistent absenteeism, and providing interventions for them. This presents a gap for the need of intervention strategy that is able to address the psychosocial challenges that may lead to dropping out, as well as provide a space for support that is therapeutic and can be used to build resilience in young people.

Drama therapy methodologies have the potential to facilitate processes of personal growth and transformation and encourage critical thinking (Freire, 1970). It can be valuable in providing psychosocial support to young people in secondary school, as a means to alleviate stress, psychological pressure, manage conflicts and to work through social issues that may be prevalent during this stage. This research therefore proposes the use of drama therapy methodologies for students at risk of dropping out, those who have dropped out or have transitioned to part-time education institutions.

It is hoped that through this study new insight is realised on the challenges that dropouts experience by working with these young people themselves and gaining an understanding of the impact of the situation. Furthermore, this study hopes to fill in the of research that

seemingly is non-existent; that is, psychosocial intervention strategies for school dropouts using drama therapy in Namibia. Hence this research will add to the scholarship of the relevance of drama therapy in Namibia. The findings of this study will have implications for policy makers and educators when considering innovative intervention strategies that appeal to young people in critical grades, such as Grade 8, 10 and 12 and to consider support-based programmes for out-of-school young people or those who are repeating and wish to go back to school.

1.4 Research Aim

The aim of this study was to explore ways in which drama therapy can be used as a form of psychosocial support to Grade 10 school dropouts and out-of-school young people in Katutura. Thus, the question focuses specifically on Grade 10 dropouts. However, after meeting and working with the group, it became apparent that the participants were at different stages in their journeys, and each had a unique experience and reason for not being able to complete their education. Furthermore, the education policy has since changed, regarding Grade 10 repetition, curriculum and readmission. Consequently, this change helped to expand the target population from Grade 10 dropouts, to including out-of-school young people as well as those still in high school.

1.5 Research questions

The evolved primary research question is now:

- In what ways can drama therapy be used as an effective intervention aimed at providing psychosocial support to high school dropouts and out-of-school young people in Katutura?

Secondary research questions were:

- What are the effects of leaving school before completion ?
- How can a drama therapy intervention provide necessary support for these young peopple?
- What do dropouts and out-of-school young people need?
- What alternative (or possible) futures do they imagine for themselves?

1.6 Definitions of terms used

In this study the following operational terms are used to signify the following:

Dropout –noun

Sherman (1991) defined dropping out as a discrete action (an event) that occurs at a particular point in time. Hence, an individual who leaves school before graduating or receiving a diploma is considered a dropout (Sherman,1991, p. 7).

In this research the term dropout is used to refer to a young person who decided to quit school from either NAMCOL or other part-time institution whilst repeating or never returned to secondary school after they failed Grade 10.

Psychosocial support

This refers to providing support that includes individual internal as well as social factors through effective approaches to enhance a person's wellbeing.

Formal education

This refers to education administered in mainstream government schools registered with the Ministry of Education.

Non-formal/Part-time education

This refers to alternative education services offered by an institution[s] through various options; tutoring, distance learning or weekly attendance. It is outside of the formal education program.

Drama therapy

Drama therapy is a creative arts therapy, that intentionally uses drama and theatre process and techniques to facilitate a therapeutic process of personal growth and transformation.

1.7 Structure of research report

This research paper is divided into five main chapters: The introductory chapter presents the research problem and provides the contextual background of the study. This chapter also contains the rationale for the study and defines the research questions and aims.

Chapter two contains the literature review. Here relevant literature on the psychosocial development of adolescents and the impact of dropping out of school has on their transition into adulthood is discussed. An overview of drama therapy is provided and its benefits as an effective intervention are discussed.

Chapter three describes the research design and methods used to collect and analyse data. It further outlines the processes that were undertaken in exploring drama therapy with a group of Grade 10 dropouts in Katutura. The section also provides session outlines as well as the ethical considerations that were followed when working with this population group.

Chapter four provides a detailed analysis of the findings of the intervention, followed by a discussion of the data collected and the key themes that emerged from the sessions.

Chapter five presents the conclusions that were reached in the study. It further states the successes and limitations of the study and ends with recommendations for future research.

Conclusion:

This chapter introduced the research study; presenting the background to the problem being explored and the context in which the study was conducted. The rationale, research questions and aims were clearly articulated. A brief description of the research method is stated indicating that the study is based within the qualitative approach to research.

The following section contains the literature review, discussing key components of the study and reviewing other theorists who have written about adolescent development, dropping out of school and intervention strategies.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature on adolescent development looking specifically at the psychosocial challenges that are commonly related to this stage. Adolescent development is explored in relation to students during their school years of junior to senior secondary (16-20 years) when they are likely to drop out. The causes that lead to students dropping out as well as the effects that dropping out of school before completion has on the adolescent are carefully examined. In addition, the chapter introduces drama therapy and explores the potential of this methodology as an intervention strategy with both students at risk and dropouts in this context. An argument is made for drama therapy as an effective and beneficial intervention in providing psychosocial support for the proposed population group.

2.2 Adolescence

The concept of adolescence is constantly evolving as it is informed by biological, psychosocial, cultural and time-based perceptions (Curtis, 2015). In general, adolescence is said to be a time of development that a young person goes through that is characterised by physical growth and emotional maturity. Adolescence, sometimes interchangeably referred to as "youth", is associated in some common-sense applications to the state of being young, referring particularly to that phase of life between childhood and adulthood (Spence, 2005). According to Sternberg (2014) this "critical" developmental period is conventionally considered as the years between the beginning of puberty and the establishment of social independence. Many definitions of adolescence use the ages of 10-18 years however this may include the span of 9-26 years, depending on the source (APA, 2002). The inconsistency of

the inclusion criteria of ages and sub-stages can often be confusing in determining who qualifies as an 'adolescent' in research or in adolescent programme planning (Curtis, 2015). Nonetheless, adolescence can be a challenging time for anyone, mainly due to the tremendous change that is heeded in search for an independent identity. Many widely accepted definitions of adolescence stress the marked growth and developmental transformation which is preceded by puberty. For instance, the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2015), defines adolescence as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19.

Emunah (1985) on the other hand, refers to adolescence as a stage of "profound physical, psychological, and cognitive change, creating uncertainty and instability" (p.107) offering a more inclusive understanding of what this period entails. This stage of physical growth is also accompanied by sexual maturity which is necessitated by the development of a new concept of body image (Emunah, 1985). Moreover, this period in adolescents' development involves change in developing roles, relationships and responsibilities. All of this happens as the individual begins to figure out who they are.

Erikson (1968) is one of the life-span approach theorists whose contribution to psychosocial development has helped us understand the various changes and challenges that adolescents experience related to identity. He proposed eight, age-graded stages of psychosocial development that occur throughout an individual's life span (Erikson, 1968). Erikson further suggested that each of these stages is accompanied by a unique developmental task or 'crisis' that needed to be overcome. The individual may progress, regress or even remain stuck at any particular stage (Marcia, 2010). According to Erikson (1963, as cited in Brown & Lowis, 2003), the successful completion of each stage will lead to a healthy personality and

successful interaction with others. The opposite is possible for an individual who fails to complete a stage, as they are more likely to not complete further stages or may have an unhealthier sense of self. For Erikson, the central issue of adolescent development deals with the need to form an ego identity (Specht & Craig, 1989). This is the need to separate from dependency patterns and to form a separate sense of self (Erikson, 1968).

Adolescence falls within the fifth stage of Erikson's psychosocial stages of development. This stage involves what he calls the crisis of 'identity versus role confusion' (Erikson, 1963) and the successful mastery of this crisis potentially leads the adolescent from puberty into adulthood. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2006), the main task for adolescents during this period is to accept themselves and search for their own role and place in the world. Adolescents are said to be extremely vulnerable and susceptible to the influence of others at this stage (Fleming, 2004). This period is fundamentally concerned with the existential questions of 'Who am I? What can I be? And Where do I belong?' and so on. Erikson (1963) refers to the quest in this stage as the 'adolescent's search for identity'. He perceives the adolescent mind as an "ideological mind" such that one is "eager to be affirmed by his peers, and is ready to be confirmed by rituals, creeds, and programs which at the same time define what is evil, uncanny and inimical" (Erikson, 1963, p. 263).

A young person at this stage is constantly thinking about the changes they experience and the urges that come with them. These teen years are characterized by increased vulnerability and heightened potential (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Fleming, 2004). Adolescents experiment with different roles or selves, integrating them to form a single identity (Myers, 2007). Specht and Craig (1989) assert that "…old roles are re-examined as part of the search for an independent identity" (p.165). This search for identity is not always consistent as it can be either smooth

and well-defined, or uncertain (Baumeister, 1986). A challenge that arises may be role confusion; where the individual can become confused about who they are and what their purpose is. As adolescents go through developmental changes, they are influenced by situational factors that affect their behaviour and future course of development (Specht & Craig, 1989). Adolescent development takes place during high school years and during these years peers and school activities greatly influence one's thoughts, emotions and resultant behaviour.

The onslaught of changes and social pressures impact the adolescent's sense of identity as there are multiple developmental tasks to accomplish (Myburgh, 2015). It therefore becomes important to take into consideration the pressures and challenges faced by adolescents as well as their social context when working with them. As articulated by Specht and Craig (1989), each generation faces new pressures influenced by the social and economic forces of the times.

While developmental psychology has played a major role in formulating the definitions of adolescence, much of our understanding of the development of young people has been informed by universal stages of development, identity formation, normative behaviour and the relationship between physical and social maturation (White & Wyn, 1997). This is partly problematic as it assumes that age is an absolute universal measure of development and thus does not account for the individual cultural differences, process and change. White and Wyn (1997) opposed the universal notions of youth culture attesting that it tends to undermine the individual aspects of growing up, such as the person's context, social status, class, race, gender and geographic location. They further explain that "young people, to some extent have common status or experiences (e.g. schooling) because of their age, but there are forces

that work against this" (White & Wyn, 1997, p.16). These can be social, political and historic factors that may have great impact on the development of the individual.

Similarly, Spence (2010) supports White and Wyn's view by affirming that the generalisations of the concept of "youth" cannot be taken to represent the complex experiences of being young in any situation. Thus, contextual theories that consider the social, cultural and political backgrounds of adolescent development need to be accounted for in more definite ways to include all possible milieus of young people. In this paper the term young people is used to include adolescents between the ages 16 to 25 years. Early and young adulthood are sub-stages of this critical developmental period (Curtis, 2015). The study focuses on the sub-stages of both the traditional and contemporary notions of adolescence and "early adulthood" which is related to the schooling years and the consequent years after that, which a person may have dropped out of school.

2.2.1 An ecological perspective of adolescent development

In order to understand how the broader social, political environment influences an individual's course of development, it is valuable to look at Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979, 1989) ecological theory of development. Compared to the lifespan approach of development that focuses mainly on the intrinsic characteristic of the person and their behaviours, Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) module outlines every level of society and the interrelated nature of these levels in relation to the developing person. This module highlights and takes into account the importance of both the socio-political context in which a person develops and the developing person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theory is premised upon four key interrelated systems that include, person factors (for example parent or child temperament), process factors (familial interactions), contexts (families, schools, communities) and time (the changes that happened to the child of the environment) (Donald et al., 2006).

According to Bronfenbrenner's ecology of development, human development occurs within four defined contextual systems namely; the micro–, meso–, exo– and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977,1997, Donald et al, 2006). This module provides insight into understanding young peoples' development processes related to schooling and the impact that dropping out before completion has. Furthermore, it is useful to understand how the interaction between the different ecological systems impacts the person and their sense of self. The microsystem is the first layer which is the closest to the individual and it comprises the person, their family, peers and immediate physical home environment. This is considered the central or most important layer among all the ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1977).

The second layer is the mesosystem and it is made up of the interactions between the different components of microsystem. These may include the interrelations between the school and the family such as the parental involvement in their child's school. Next is the exosystem, which is the social context which the child does not necessarily have direct contact with but may through the microsystem (Espelage, 2014). An example of this involves how a parent's workplace hours indirectly impact the child. Next is the macrosystem which is regarded as the cultural blueprint and it may influence the social structures and activities in the various levels (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). This level includes organizational, social, cultural and political contexts which influence the interactions among other system levels (for example, social policies). The last level of the ecological module is the chronosystem and this includes the aspect of consistency or change. This can be either through historic or life events over time (for example: changes through family structure of divorce or death) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Donald et al., 2006; Espelage, 2014).

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), developmental interventions should take place at the macrosystemic level as change in this level impacts change on all other ecosystem levels. The social ecological frame is relevant to look at in this study because it connects individual psychological development to the social context. It helps to frame the issue of dropping out of school as an interconnected problem, that is influenced by multidimensional social factors and not only a decision of the person. The student's attitude towards school, self-esteem, home environment and their familial relationship falls within the micro-system, whereas the family/parental socio-economic status (for example: being employed or unemployed), and the issue of poverty, falls within the mesosystem. The student's school environment and teachers, form the exosystem. The educational policies, curriculum, and social expectations will be found in the macrosystem which interacts with the student through all the other levels. The chronosystem maintains the frequency and or development through patterns and trends that may be identified over time, such as dropout rates, causes and dominant socio-cultural narratives.

2.3 Understanding why students' dropout

Rumberger (2001) argues that understanding why students drop out of school is key to addressing the problem. Internationally, there has been extensive research done on the causes leading students to drop out, however, in Namibia there is little research on this subject. Moreover, no research could be located on the psychosocial effects of dropping out as well as research particularly seeking intervention strategies for dropouts. This section aims to provide some background understanding into the causes and some underlying reasons that lead to students leaving school before completion.

Students drop out of school due to an array of different reasons and they experience the process of leaving school differently. While there are many common causes reported to why

students tend to quit school before completion in dropout literature, many dropout studies have focused on mainstream (formal) schools and not so much on open-distance-learning programmes or part-time education programmes. Therefore, in this study the focus is primarily on students who quit school from either NAMCOL or other similar institutions after failing Grade 10, which has been a trend in Namibia.

This study considered Rumberger's (2001) two theoretical frameworks to understand why students' drop out of school, namely: the individual and institutional perspective. These perspectives were used to gain insight on the underlying causes that may generally lead to students deciding to quit their studies. The individual perspective focuses on students' attributes such as their values, beliefs and behaviour and how these attributes influence their decision to quit school. The institutional perspective focuses on "the contextual factors found in the students' families, schools, communities as well as educational systems, policies and peers that contribute to young people dropping out of school (Rumberger, 2001).

Dropping out of school is viewed as the final event in a long process of disengagement from academic and social activities (Hammond, Linton, Smink & Drew, 2007; Stephen, Plank & DeLuca, 2008). It is thus considered as a process that involves multiple factors and not a single event that occurs suddenly (Hammond et al., 2007). Even though the individual perspective seeks to understand the role of the student in their own process of dropping out, some advocates of the institutional perspective believe that individual attitudes and behaviours are shaped by institutional settings where students live, learn and play (Rumberger, 2001). According to Rumberger (2001), both frameworks are useful, and even necessary in understanding the dropout phenomenon.

Researchers on the subject over the years found that quitting school before completion, reflects a complex interplay between the student, their family background, the school, education systems and policies as well as community variables (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004; Finn, 1989; Rumberger, 2001; Wehlage et al. 1989). It is therefore necessary to understand how the interplay between these different factors affects the student's decision to persist or leave school.

Dropout rates are found to be higher for members who are from racial, ethnic and language minority groups (Rumberger, 1987). It is difficult to compare dropout rates in Namibia based on the grounds of race and ethnicity but a research study (Mapani, 2012) that investigated dropout causes among boys in Windhoek found factors such as peer pressure, poor parental support in the academic and social lives of boys and the boys' own attitudes and values of education as major influences. Rumberger, (1987, 2001) indicated that the problem is prevalent in students from families coming from low socio-economic and poor backgrounds, regardless of what factors are used to measure socio-economic status.

This can be related to students who come from Katutura and surrounding areas as it has been a prevalent problem in many government and rural schools. As reported by other studies, the causes of students' dropping out are complex and mostly unpredictable. Nekongo-Nielson, Mbukusa, Tjiramba and Beukes (2015) in their pilot investigatory study of the causes of students dropping out in Namibia, found dropout rates highest in three regions, namely: Omaheke, Okavango and Kunene. These regions are known to be very vast and rural, having most of their schools located in rural areas (NHIES, 2009/2010, cited in Nekongo-Nielson et al., 2015). Hence the findings in their study, although it is valuable in providing context, is

not enough to gain insight on the situation in Katutura in Windhoek, which is in Khomas region. Nonetheless, the researchers identified a combination of factors leading students to drop out of school which have been further categorised into these five groups: Systemic factors, Social factors, Cultural factors, Economic factors and Parental involvement (Nekongo-Nielson, 2015, p.104). Although all the aforementioned factors are acknowledged, in this current study special focus is given to the interplay between systemic, economic and social factors. It is recognized that the individual is not separate from their social environment, and, as such, the personal factors or reasons can be attributed to the impact of the broader social context.

Systemic factors

These refer to school and education related aspects that are associated causes of why students drop out (Nekongo-Nielson, et al., 2015). Challenges such as the education policies set in place to monitor and manage consistent absenteeism were identified as causal factors in this regard (Nekongo-Nielson, et al., 2015). Plank, DeLuca and Estacion (2005) also reported that students are likely to drop out of school if they have been held back for one or more years in a grade previously. Failure to be promoted to the next grade level induces greater feelings of low self-worth. In relation to educational achievement, students also quit school as a result of not being able to repeat Grade 10 at NAMCOL due to cost-related and other personal challenges. Students who repeat or upgrade their marks through NAMCOL often dropout out due to the pressures of open-distance-learning (Murangi, 2017). The learning conditions differ significantly between the environment in which students first attempt the grade and those of NAMCOL or other alternative learning institutions. By acknowledging the former, this study has identified students' transition process from formal (mainstream) schools to NAMCOL (part-time or adult learning) as a dominant factor that has been overlooked, that

impacts their successful retention in formal schooling. Ultimately, low academic achievement, grade repetition and poor performance and grades lead to feelings of failure and demotivation and eventually students become older for the grade and in relation to their peers. All of these eventually lead to the personal decision to quit school.

Hammond et al. (2007) postulated that students' overall experiences in school may generally influence whether they will graduate from high school, and academic performance and engagement in school are major indicators of potential causes of dropping out. Moving to another school, or changing an educational environment, for instance, moving from a formal school to part-time, bullying, peer influence and parental engagement are also related to students' quitting school. Another major common cause of student dropout is teenage pregnancy (Nekongo-Nielson, et al., 2015; Ekstrom et al.,1986). Teenage pregnancy affects young girls much more than it does their counter parts who are equally responsible.

Sometimes girls fall pregnant and immediately drop out of school due to the stigma, and consequences related to early childbearing. Other reasons for dropping out include economic reasons, such looking for a job to provide for the family (financial struggles) and poverty. These are categorized broadly under the social economic and cultural domain. However, in the report of school dropouts and out-of-school children (Person, 2015) found that there was not a direct link between parental unemployment and causes of students dropping out, even though there were related factors.

2.4 Effects of dropping out

Dropping out of school, regardless of the causes and reasons associated, has a detrimental impact on young people and their progress in life. There are numerous negative outcomes associated with dropping out, including: high incidences of unemployment, health problems, a reliance on public assistance, an increase in mental health problems, as well as higher crime and delinquency rates and homelessness (Cohen and Smerdon, 2009; Kaplan, 1980; Kronick & Hargis, 1998). Kaplan (1980, 1983) outlined three possible explanations for these societal problems. Firstly, dropping out may affect one's self-worth, due to the negative stigma in society related to dropping out, and also due to the loss of opportunities available. The second possible outcome is a disruption to one's coping mechanisms (reliance on peers, teachers and school structure) used in the trying adolescent years. Lastly, one faces new challenges, such as gaining employment or finding a home – adult responsibilities one may not yet be ready for. Not only is the individual faced with the immediate repercussions of incomplete education but the long-term effects that it brings into adulthood. Beauvais et al. (1996) summarised the significance that quitting school before completion entails:

> ...dropping out of school truncates educational and vocational development in ways that dramatically increase the probability of a downward spiral into greater emotional, physical, and economic problems, problems that create additional losses and costs to society and to which some minority groups appear even more vulnerable (p. 292).

Many students who drop out are believed to be dealing with many other issues and leaving school sometimes is a response to these challenges (Blount, 2012). As stated before, the process of dropping out is different for every student based on their schooling situation, age or developmental period, home and home circumstances, gender, and mental/psychological

state. Thus the decision to stop attending school or indefinitely quitting is highly personal, although the causes are intersectional.

Additionally, social factors experienced by students often relate to the personal and psychological problems of dropping out (Blount, 2012). Young people who dropped out of school often experience feelings of low self-worth, low self-esteem and feelings of being left behind (Rumberger, 2001). Being out of school also means that financial support from parents is reduced or cut off completely. Additionally, it creates change of routine in day to day activities for young people, leaving them with more free time, which many reported resulted in boredom. In the focus group discussion held in this study, the group shared that having a lot of free time and nothing to do, can easily lead to high-risk (thrill-seeking) behaviour such as substance experimentation or abuse. Becoming involved with 'wrong' friends and criminal activities such robbing people (for young men) and becoming enticed by older men for the young girls. Due to the number of inter-related factors that may have led to one dropping out, the consequences are complex. In a society where obtaining an education is one's best chance of development, and when even that chance is lost, life can be particularly difficult.

According to Crain-Dorough (2003), researchers have established a negative relationship between dropouts and specific mental health consequences such as rebelliousness and delinquency, low self-esteem and depression (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986; Fine & Roseberg, 1983). Furthermore, some research has demonstrated the impact of dropping out is more severe for females than for males (Crain-Dorough, 2003). Ekstrom et al., (1986) state that dropping out has more negative effects on academic achievement, employment and future education opportunities for women. Young girls who become teenage mothers are at a higher

risk of social and economic disadvantage throughout their lives (Klepinger, Lundberg, & Plotnick, 1995). It has been established that early childbearing is associated with decreased educational attainment (Fergusson & Woodward, 2004; Nekongo-Nielson & Mbukusa, 2014). Nekongo-Nielson and Mbukusa (2014) in their longitudinal study of school dropouts in the Okavango region of Namibia found that in addition to having higher student dropout rates, the region also had high incidence of teenage pregnancy. They interviewed 131 student dropouts of whom 72 were female, and reported that 60 of these young women had dropped out of school due to pregnancy (Nekongo -Nielson & Mbukusa, 2014).

Being a parent adds on to the load of the teenage mom who is now unemployed and out-of-school. Young girls need considerable support if they are to return to school after giving birth to complete their studies, this includes support from the school and their parents. Without such support, it will be unbearable for the young mother. Lastly, it is suggested that there may be common traits such as low intelligence, aggressive behaviour, poor social bonding, and parental difficulties that lead to both dropping out and drinking problems (Crain-Dorough, 2003). Students with parents who have limited resources must be encouraged to be resilient and fight through the challenges and potential likelihood of dropping out (Blount, 2012). Moreover, family background greatly affects educational outcomes and is commonly viewed as the most important predicator of school achievement. Researchers examining family background have found family income, socioeconomic status, and parents' educational attainments are related to dropping out (Blue & Cook, 2004). Social factors experienced by students often lead to personal and psychological issues related to dropping out.

2.5 What can be done? Dropout intervention strategies

Since dropping out of school is influenced by either individual factors such as the person's attitudes, values and beliefs or the institutional factors, the intervention strategies should focus on either factors or both (Rumberger, 2001). Many dropout preventative programs internationally focus on identifying potential dropouts and providing them with resources and support to stay in school. This kind of intervention is not only cost-effective but it is preventative in approach and addresses the issue before it becomes a problem. Rumberger (2001) proposes that if dropout intervention programs intend to be effective they need to be comprehensive to provide resources and support to all aspects in student's lives. This means, essentially, intervention programmes need to take cognisance of the intersecting factors including the individual (aspirations, motivation and peer associations), family history, socio-economic status and previous academic performances (such as grade retentions).

Just as the causes are varied and interlinked, the interventions too should be multifaceted and flexible, pulling on both individual internal factors and external environmental factors, that is, psychosocial interventions.

Preventative intervention strategies

Christenson and Thurlow (2004) recognised that early and sustained interventions are integral to students' success because the decision to leave school before completion is not an instantaneous one, but rather a process that occurs over many years. Knesting (2008) found four factors critical to reducing the risk of students dropping out of high school. These are: (a) listening to students, (b) communicating care, (c) the school's role in dropout prevention, and (d) the student's role in dropout prevention. These are recommendations for schools in particular to consider when thinking about preventative programmes for those students in school, who are at risk of dropping out.

Factors that are related to reduced dropout rates include parental support, positive expectations regarding academic performance, school monitoring and supervision, high regard for education (Christenson & Thurlow, 2004). Thus, interventions should look at ways to affect change in these areas, especially when dealing with direct individual aspects such as attitudes toward education. Christenson and Thurlow further (2004) recommend five critical considerations when addressing the problem of school dropouts: dropout as a process, the role of context, alterable variables, an orientation toward completion and engagement, and the importance of empirical evidence. All of these factors play a critical role when thinking about the dropout phenomenon and ways to tackle the problem.

2.4 Drama therapy–An overview

Drama therapy is a relatively new form of therapy and an academic field, although it draws from ancient rituals in drama and theatre (Jones, 1996). It forms part of the group of 'creative' or 'expressive' arts therapies which include: music, dance/movement and art therapy. These therapies all use the inherent healing potentials of the arts for therapeutic goals, although each form has its unique qualities and roles in therapeutic work, depending on its application, practitioner, client, setting and goals (Myburgh, 2015).

Meldrum (1994) points out that drama therapy involves the obvious combination of two big processes: drama and therapy. This does not simply signify that drama therapy is solely the combination of these two very wide fields; it is a discipline in its own right with its own professional body and research (Meldrum, 1994). Its theoretical foundations are rooted in theatre, psychology, psychotherapy, anthropology and play (Landy, 1994). Given the intricate nature of drama therapy, as a form of therapy that uses creative processes and techniques of drama, there are a number of definitions that explain what drama therapy is all about and they all emphasise the use of the healing aspects of drama as part of the therapeutic process. Standard definitions of drama therapy have been developed by national professional associations and regulatory bodies, and theoreticians (Jones, 2007).

The US National Dramatherapy Association (NDTA) (2004) defines drama therapy as the:

> …systematic and intentional use of drama/theatre processes, products, and associations to achieve the therapeutic goals of symptom relief, emotional and physical integration, and personal growth. It is an active approach that helps the client to tell his or her story to solve a problem, achieve a catharsis, extend the depth and

> breadth of inner experience, understand the meaning of images, and strengthen the ability to observe personal roles while increasing flexibility between roles (National Dramatherapy Association, 2004).

This broad definition describes drama therapy as a way of working towards symptom relief, emotional and physical integration and personal growth (NDTA, 2003), and it emphasises the active and experiential nature of the approach. Similarly, drama therapist Emunah (1994) defines drama therapy as "the intentional and systematic use of drama/theatre processes to achieve psychological growth and change. The tools are derived from theatre; the goals are rooted in psychotherapy" (p.3). Here the goal is to facilitate personal growth and change based on the needs of the individual and thus steering us toward the purpose of drama therapy as a therapeutic intervention.

By using the therapeutic aspects of drama, the drama therapist uses human potential for expression Chang interview (2003, as cited in Jones, 2005). No matter how it is defined, central to all drama therapy work are nine core processes identified by drama therapist Phil Jones (2007). These are: 1. dramatic projection, 2. drama-therapeutic empathy and distancing, 3. interactive audience and witnessing, 4. embodiment: dramatising the body, 5. playing, 6. life-drama connection, 7. transformation, 8. personification and impersonation, and 9. therapeutic performance processes.

These core processes serve as a framework within which the practice of drama therapy can be examined and understood (Jones, 2007). They are not techniques per say but are underlying principles that inform and guide the techniques used by drama therapists. Drama therapy is practised with groups and individuals within a variety of contexts such as schools, mental

health facilities, general health and social care settings, community centres, prisons and other voluntary sectors (Dunphy et al.,2013). It is also offered as an individual or group therapy outside of these institutions.

2.5 Drama therapy as an intervention strategy

Drama therapy is proven to be effective in providing therapeutic support and interventions to diverse client populations across ages, owing to its flexibility. Drama and theatre techniques are at the forefront of any intervention that is applied in drama therapy. As Jones (2007) states, in drama therapy, "drama is the form of therapy" (p.4). Therapeutic interventions are customised to suit the needs of the client or group, which involves understanding the problem at hand and the client group. Drama therapy encourages self-expression, active participation, creativity and imagination in a non-directive, client-centred manner. One of the main aims in drama therapy is for a client or group to achieve a form of transformation by engaging with a problematic area through the dramatic form. A connection is made between the client's internal world, problematic situation or life experience and the activity in the drama therapy session (Jones, 2007).

The creation of alternate worlds, is particularly unique in drama therapy as it can be used in many different ways to provide an effective intervention for young people. A popular method includes allowing the participants to create a performance at an end of an intervention. There is a method within drama therapy called therapeutic theatre which allows for participants to collectively create theatre through meaning-making and discussion of the issues they identify (Conrad, 2004). Summer (2018) suggests that young people struggling with engagement in school or other family and intrapersonal issues may find therapeutic theatre to be an effective tool to increase resilience and support in building positive relationships (Summer, 2018).

2.5.1The benefits of drama therapy

Drama therapy can be applied to multiple population groups for multiple different purposes. It can be used in education settings or in community sectors focused on effecting change for social justice and transformation work. Drama therapy engages clients in an active and experiential approach, by allowing them to express and explore personal stories or feelings, set goals, solve problems and or achieve catharsis (Vietri, 2018). The activities employed in drama therapy are intentionally created based on the client's abilities and needs. According to René Emunah (2009) one of the pioneers of the field of drama therapy, almost all drama therapy approaches are underpinned by Humanistic Psychology. Consequently, drama therapy shares some core principles and concepts from the humanistic psychology which makes it a person-centred as well as a client-led approach.

One of the founders of the Humanistic approach is Carl Rogers (1961) and he believed that human beings have a great potential for self-actualisation. Fundamentally, in his person-centred theory, Rogers positioned the client as the central agent of self-transformation. Essentially, humanistic psychology is holistic in its approach to health, and it perceives the person as more than the sum of their different parts, and therefore accounts for a person's context, history, background, and values within treatment. It underpins concepts such as personal freedom, choice, values, responsibility, autonomy, and meaning (Malchiodi, 2003, p. 58). Similarly, drama therapy draws on the healthy aspects of the person, working from strength-based approach and not primarily with the pathology or mental illness. Compared to traditional forms of therapy which rely mainly on the verbal exploration of a problem, drama therapy seeks to enhance the client's creativity and expressiveness through the use of drama techniques and non-verbal activities and symbolic expression of emotion. This, however, does not exclude the use of verbal emotional disclosure which can often take place through

the drama itself and not necessarily directly (Meldrum, 1994).

Paula Crimmens, a drama therapist whose work focus on children and young people with special needs, identified some benefits and outcomes of drama therapy which includes, but is not limited to: confidence-building, development of self-awareness, responsibility-taking, relaxation, and intra and interpersonal-skills enhancement (Crimmens, 2009, p.9-10).

Although these outcomes are specific to the client group they are relevant to cases of typically-developing young people and adults who have experienced trauma or other stressful life changing situations. Blatner (1992) postulated that one of the advantages of drama therapy is that the therapist can control the degree of distance according to the type of activity used. Some exercises allow clients to express themselves in a rather general fashion with little implication that what is being represented necessarily reflects personal issues. Other exercises bring the subject matter closer to home. All of these activities and methods facilitate moments of insight for participants at different levels.

2.5.2 Drama therapy as a means for psychosocial support

The term 'psychosocial' is a broad concept that is defined in different ways depending on the context. Essentially it refers to the relationship between psychological (internal) and social (external) factors of an individual (Henley 2010 as cited in Meyer, 2017).

The term psychosocial emphasizes the relationship between psychological aspects of our subjective experiences (including thoughts, emotions and perceptions) and broader intersubjective social experiences (for example: relationships, tradition and culture) (UNICEF, 2009). It considers how these elements work to support the individual throughout their lives. Psychosocial support in this context can be understood as the care and support

provided to affect change for the individual and their social environment. While a person needs to be resilient in order get through difficult times, they also need support from their family, friends and community to thrive. There is a need to encourage and build resilience among young people, especially at-risk groups, and drama therapy is a useful approach to achieve that. In drama therapy, taking risks is encouraged within the dramatic reality, offering clients an opportunity to explore and experiment with different roles and maybe creating different endings/outcomes.

Conclusion:

This chapter presented the review of literature on causes of student dropouts and the effects of leaving school before completion for the individual. Adolescent development and common social challenges were also discussed. Further, drama therapy was proposed as an effective and beneficial intervention in providing space to explore social issues and psychological issues that students face. This research postulates that drama therapy methods and process are valuable in providing psychosocial support for the identified population group. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology used in the study. It describes the data collection methods and the sample that was used.

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and describes the procedures that were used to collect data in this research study. It explains the method of thematic content analysis that the data was subjected to as well as the drama therapy processes and methods that were utilised in the sessions. It further describes how the participants were gathered and the ethical procedures that were adhered to when working with school dropouts from Katutura, Windhoek Namibia. As a starting point, the primary research question is stated to frame what the study intended to discover from these processes.

3.2 Primary Research question

- In what ways can drama therapy be used as an effective intervention aimed at providing psychosocial support to high school dropouts and out-of-school young people in Katutura?

3.3 Qualitative research

This is a qualitative study. Qualitative research as described by Willig (2013) is concerned with meaning and is interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events. Corbin and Anselm (2008) define a qualitative study as "a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge" (p.18). Qualitative research allows the researcher to enquire and discover the inner experiences of participants and to determine how meanings are formed through, and in, culture rather than testing variables (Corbin & Anselm, 2008). The study

explored the experiences of young people who dropped out of school through a focus discussion followed by experiential drama therapy workshops. Ultimately the study aimed to explore drama therapy methods with a group of out-of-school young people who all share the experience of having failed Grade 10 and as a result could not complete their secondary education.

3.3.1 Phenomenology

This research broadly falls under the phenomenological paradigm to research. This approach is concerned with experiences and meanings people form, and therefore explores phenomena from the point of view of those who experience them (Willig, 2001). Langdridge (2007) defines phenomenology as a discipline that "aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them; a focus on people's lived experience" (p.4). She further maintains that phenomenology is a qualitative method that focuses on human experience as a topic in its own right. It is therefore concerned with meaning and the way in which meaning arises in experience (Langdridge, 2007).

3.4 Research design

3.4.1 Data collection methods

Data was collected through four qualitative methods to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences. To begin, a focus group discussion was conducted and this hour-and-a-half-long group discussion was audio-recorded and transcribed. A focus group is a qualitative data collection method which essentially constitutes as a group interview (Morgan, 1997). The main aim of the focus group was to elicit responses, views and perspectives from group members on their experiences of not completing school after failing

Grade 10. Furthermore, a focus group was chosen as a first phase process of the data collection which was followed by the drama therapy intervention. The drama therapy workshops were used as a method to collect empirical data. Thus all the reflection sections in the sessions were audio-recorded, to capture participants' initial responses of the drama therapy processes they engaged in. Photographs taken from the installations and objects – drawings created by participants in the workshops – and the researcher's reflective notes of the sessions also constituted as data sources.

3.4.2 The Participants

This research study gathered six Grade 10 dropouts through purposive sampling– five young women and one young man. All the participants were from the Katutura township, Windhoek, Namibia. Purposive selection is done based on people who shared a culture, common experience or perspective (Patton, 2002). In this case it was the common experience of not completing high school education as a result of failing Grade 10. Purposive sampling involves the researcher identifying and choosing only individuals who will best meet the purpose of the research study (Patton, 2002). This process involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who have specific knowledge or experience about the subject being researched (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). I sought out suitable participants through word of mouth, approaching the multipurpose youth centre and by asking for recommendations from people I know. Six participants between the ages of 19-25 years were selected to participate in the study. All of the participants had failed Grade 10 and as a result thereof had not completed secondary education at the time the study was conducted in November 2017.

From these six participants, only three returned for the subsequent drama therapy workshops. One new participant joined the group on the first session, making the total of participants four for the drama therapy workshops; 2 males and 2 females. It is important to mention that from the onset, this study was designed to be an open drama therapy group, this means that new participants could join in at any stage of the process.

3.5 Thematic analysis

The data collected in this study was analysed through thematic content analysis. Thematic analysis, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), "is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. (p.6). Moreover, it often goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic as well (Boyatzis, 1998, as cited in Braun & Clark, 2006). In this context, a theme is regarded as anything that captures something significant about the data in relation to the research question and thus represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The thematic analysis was done following the six phase guide as suggested by Braun and Clark (2006). The six phases that were followed include: 1. familiarising yourself with your research data. 2.generating initial codes, 3. searching for themes, 4. reviewing themes, 5. defining and naming themes and 6. producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This does not necessarily mean that the analysis followed a linear manner where one has to correctly complete one phase before moving to the next phase but it was rather a recursive process (Braun & Clark, 2013).

The transcription of verbal data is considered a way of familiarizing oneself with the data, as such, all recorded data was first transcribed by the researcher herself. The method of thematic

analysis helped to identify themes that reflected the participants' experiences of dropping out of school after failing Grade 10 and the psychosocial impact it had on them. Thematic analysis was chosen for this study owing to its flexibility in determining themes and interpreting these themes in relation to the research questions and its contribution to the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013). Additionally, this method was chosen as "it allows for social and psychological interpretations of themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.37).

Thematic analysis is a useful method because it can be applied to a wide range of research questions including those about people's experiences and it works with different types of data, be it large or small data-sets (Braun & Clark, 2013). Themes that were identified as well as their implications are discussed in detail in chapter four.

3.6 Drama therapy methods

The drama therapy workshops took place over six weeks, meeting with the group twice a week for two-hour-long sessions. Initially my hope was to have eight sessions in total, but the first meeting was used for the focus group discussion and the participants were not available to come in on one day, which was then cancelled, therefore leaving only five days in total to explore drama therapy methods. The sessions were designed with the aim to provide a space for psychosocial support for school dropouts in terms of providing a supportive environment where the participants could develop problem solving skills through expressive modes and re-imagine new or alternative roles and futures for themselves. The drama therapy sessions considered various methods such as role exploration which considered Landy's (1994) role method, narrative mapping exercise which entails narrative tracking, story-telling and enactment as well as projective play methods. The following structure was used for the sessions. The sessions are discussed in detail in chapter four.

3.6.1 Session plans

Session no.	Plan	Methods explored
Session 1	Introduction and assessment	Six-part story method
Session 2	Creating a story together	Storytelling and enactment
Session 3	Trying on different roles	Role exploration
Session 4	Tracking my story	Journey mapping
Session 5	Closing	Overcoming obstacles and ending

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethics clearance was received (Protocol number: WSOA170913) (Appendix A) through the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for non-medical research with school dropouts in Katutura, Namibia. All of the participants joined the study on a voluntarily basis and were given an information sheet (Appendix B), which explained the study, their involvement and what it would entail. Participants who took part were given a consent form (Appendix C) which guaranteed their confidentiality. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any point, should they no longer wish to participate without any repercussions or judgment. Furthermore, participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used in this research report, to ensure anonymity and to protect their identities. Thus no identifiable information is included in this research report. The sensitive nature of the study was explained to each participant in detail, outlining the benefits and risks of taking part in the study.

As a prerequisite for ethical approval, and as a means for care, contact details of a registered psychologist in Windhoek were provided in case anyone needed additional emotional

support, during or after the research process. All audio-recordings were done with participants' prior permission and are saved on my private, password-protected computer. Additionally, all data is saved on an external hard drive and this data will be destroyed after 5 years. The participants were informed that they could contact the researcher or her supervisor if they had further questions or concerns.

3.8 Reflexivity

According to Malterud (2001) all research is born out of the researcher's background and position, therefore inevitably influences the research topic, the angle from which the topic is investigated, the choice of methods, the findings and the final product. Reflexivity is important in qualitative research as it ensures that the research process as a whole is examined throughout and to reflect on one's own role as researcher in the research (Willig, 2013). As someone who comes from Namibia myself, growing up in Katutura and attending a public school, I found myself reflecting upon my own experience of being in High school. Although I completed my schooling without failing any grade, I remember how it felt like being in Grade 10, the anxiety and the fear of what would happen if "I failed the final exams." I also remember how it felt like, when two of my own siblings and some friends who did not pass Grade 10 and witnessing what they experienced as a result of that.

It is safe to say that all of these experiences in turn inspired me to undertake this research, hoping to find a way to intervene or effect change. Wondering how failing one grade could impact and change someone's life so drastically, I had many questions such as "how much different would things be if these young people I knew had completed secondary school? Or what if they were allowed to repeat at school. Essentially my interest in the research topic was born out of the frustration of seeing so many young people out of school and struggling

to find jobs or pursue their dreams. In other words, just struggling on their own. I was also drawn to the topic because I held the non-repeat education policy of Grade 10 liable for students prematurely leaving school. There seemed to be no support or interventions implemented to aid students transition from mainstream school to part-time institutions such as NAMCOL.

This led to my interest in the causes behind why so many young people dropped out after failing Grade 10 as well as the psychosocial implications of the situation. In light of this, as Willig, (2013) proposes, reflexivity is necessary as it requires me to be cognisant about how I may contribute to the creation of meaning throughout the research process, starting with why or where the research questions arose from. Reflexivity therefore requires an acknowledgement of the impossibility of remaining detached from the subject matter while conducting research (Willig, 2013). Acknowledging one's biases and assumptions in the research processes is only the first part of critical reflexivity, the other is finding ways to relook ones' position as researcher and address these issues. One way I combated these inevitable subjectivities was through engaging with the literature on the topic and consistently returning to the ultimate aim of this study.

Once I began to immerse myself into the research study, I noticed the huge lack of literature on drama therapy interventions in educational settings, particularly with school dropouts and out-of-school young people. The search for literature in this context, became a contextual challenge and consequently inspired me to continue exploring the research problem. As one of the first drama therapists emerging from Namibia, my hope with this research (in the near future) is to introduce the field of drama therapy (methods and processes) by raising an awareness of this methodology within the Namibia context.

Since the participants represented only a small and arguably unrepresentative sample of Grade 10 dropouts in Katutura, this study therefore does not claim universality of findings. The scope of the study (master's research report) as well as the relatively small sample size with other unforeseeable challenges (such as the difficulty in finding committed participants) were some of the main identified limitations of this study.

As a researcher and drama therapist in training I consistently had to engage in critical reflection of my perception and allow space for something different to arise. A way of doing this was through rigorous reading of literature on the topic, even if it was not related to my field of study, but to gain insight on the phenomenon and understand the problem is complex. I had to shift my focus from the policy (move my fixation) to how I envisioned drama therapy to be relevant for young people in this context in building resilience and providing psychosocial support. This process helped me to re-define my research viewpoint and what I indeed wanted to discover.

Conclusion:

The overarching aim of this chapter was to explain the research design and methodology. The chapter also described how data was collected and analysed in the study. The sample and ethical considerations in working with the selected participants in the mentioned context was clearly stated. Lastly, due to the subjective position of the researcher being acknowledged in qualitative research, a section of reflexivity is included, discussing the researcher's position, views and assumptions; and ways these were addressed.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study that were gathered from the focus group discussion and subsequent drama therapy workshops. It is divided into two sections: it begins with a description of the focus group, in terms of the participants, space and setting. This is followed by a description of themes that were identified from the focus group discussion in relation to participants' experiences of dropping out of school and the interpretation of the themes. The second section takes the reader through an exploration of the drama therapy intervention, providing detailed accounts of each session as well as the key themes that emerged from these sessions. The therapeutic outcomes and change that occurred from the drama therapy process are also discussed.

4.2 The focus group discussion

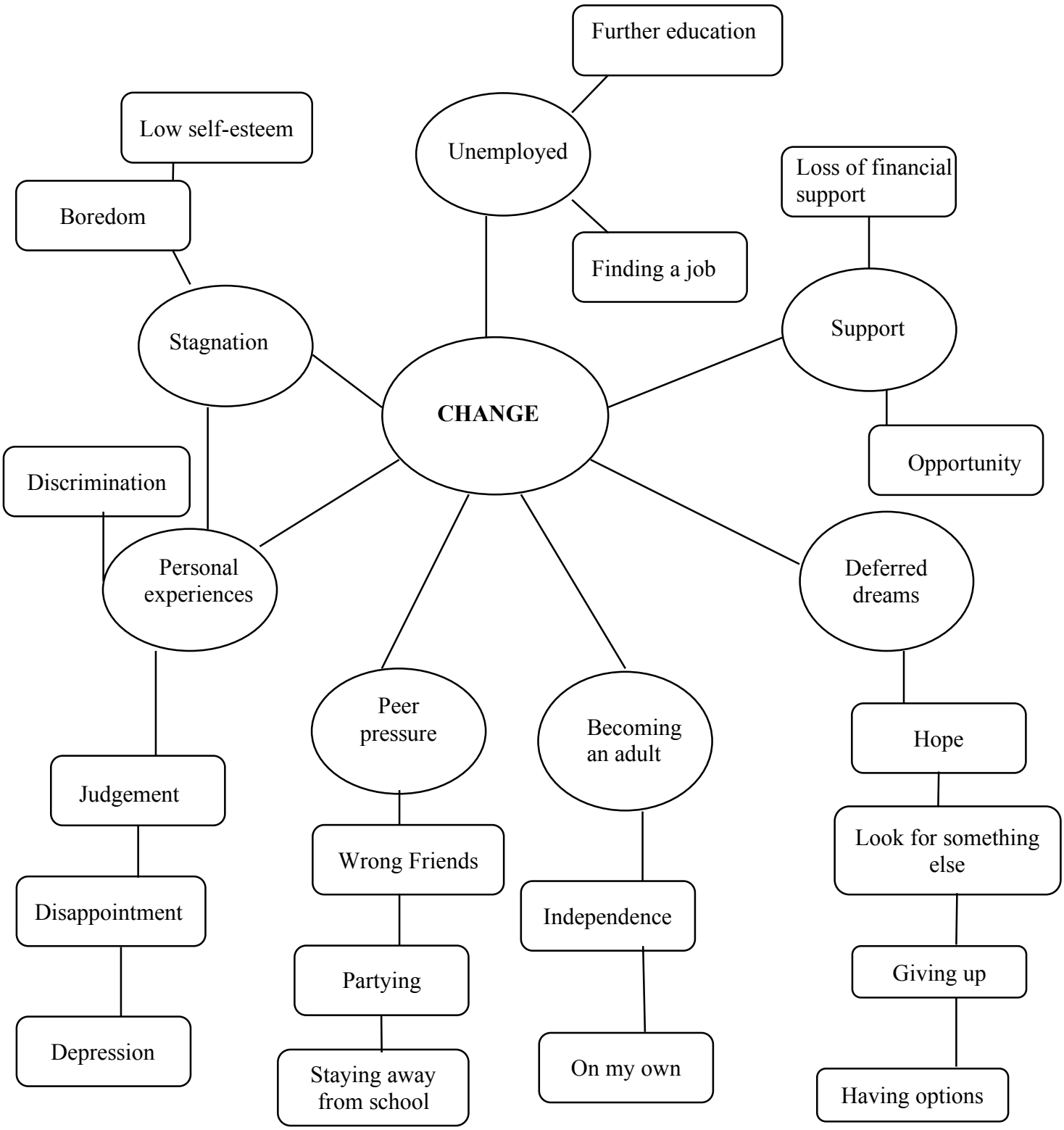
Six participants showed up for the focus group; five young women and one young man. Some participants knew each other before the meeting and arrived together. The meeting took place at the Katutura Community Arts Centre, inside a dance rehearsal studio. The room had mirrors on the walls and bars. There were also many chairs and some desks available for use. The chairs were arranged in a circle, with two pairs of participants who knew each other sitting next to each other on either side and the two who did not sat right across from me in the middle. We started off with a check-in exercise, which involved the participants each saying their name and sharing how they felt in that moment. Participants were then invited to make a sound or a gesture to 'show' how they were feeling. This helped the participants to become comfortable and to get to know each other in a playful manner. After this, the

participants were invited to stand in a circle and do a warm-up activity which involved a focus game and relaxing the body. Drama exercises serve as a way to relax the body, help to focus on being in the present moment and breaking the tension by removing any preconceived ideas and feelings of anxiety. The participants seemed to be calm and ready to begin. Initially, I was a little nervous about how to begin the conversation on the subject of failing Grade 10 and dropping out, which is a sensitive issue in many ways but the participants seemed to be fine and excited to find out what was about to take place.

I began by welcoming the participants to the space and introduced myself – who I am, where I came from, the purpose of the meeting and the research topic being investigated. This was followed by reading the Participant information sheet (Appendix B). I read slowly, line by line, ensuring that the participants understood what was required of them and I stopped to clarify. Participants were then invited to ask questions about anything they did not understand and were given some time to read through the form on their own. Participants were also asked for their permission for me to audio record the session, which they all agreed to.

After this, I casually began the conversation, by asking the participants to speak back to their experience of Grade 10 in general. I next presented the pre-set list of questions (Appendix D) that focused on individual accounts of leaving school, as well as the causes thereof. Seven initial general themes were identified from this discussion, which revolved around the idea of change, change in momentum, development and the newly acquired identity of adulthood. The themes were: *1) Stagnation, 2) Support (lack of financial support, 3) Personal experiences 4) Peer pressure and influence (good friends and bad friends) 5) Unemployment (finding a job) 6) Deferred dreams (finding something else to do) and 7) Becoming an adult (independence).* These themes and sub-themes are illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 1: Thematic map of analysis



4.2.2 Findings from the focus group

The following findings were generated from the questions that were asked in the discussion, and the responses that were rendered containing participants' individual opinions and perspectives. I also share my observations and understandings made of participants' body language, underlying words and thoughts, choice of words used and mannerisms. All of these are presented based on data extracts from the focus group discussion.

"ok grade 10 was fine, but it was just a lot of challenges and temptations…"

The above statement paints the backdrop of the overall experiences the participants referred to during their Grade 10 year. The group highlighted the pressures and demands of their adolescent school years. They further shared subjective accounts of peer pressure, dilemmas between social life and school and the related challenge of managing distractions. The preoccupation with their developing bodies (mostly for the girls) and image as well as the intricacies of sexual and/ or romantic relationships was a big aspect for them. The constant negotiation of their desires versus what was more important was a well agreed upon notion.

"… in grade 10, that was the year where most of us started enjoying ourselves, so sometimes you rather, you open your books and then you are like ae tog, let me go check my friend or then there were just these challenges that came through, how should I say, something always had to come up, something came in the way…"

Being distracted, always seeking for something new or exciting to do or be part of, choosing between friends and their books were major themes, as noted in the quote above. Acceptance/ approval from friends was palpable. Everyone in the group attested to the notion of being

between two worlds. Home and school were identified as two separate worlds each having its role to play in how the individual managed their newly-found freedoms and responsibilities.

"…It's when you go home. When you are at school it's fine, it's like you are in a different environment but when you go home it's a different environment. It's like you are between two worlds and you have to decide."

The group also shared that the grade was not "difficult" per say academically but it was rather the social pressures and temptations that diverted their focus from their studies resulting in them failing the year. They also shared that they all passed the first term and even the second term for some, "but then you start to relax and lose focus thinking that you will also pass the final term". When asked what they needed the most in their lives currently, group members responded saying:

"right now I need a job. That's what I need, a job" (Participant A)

"For me, I even need a job and money." (Participant B)

"I would find a job as well, cause it's not easy… nowadays jobs it's not easy even for a cleaning job you need qualifications so yeah." (Participant C)

"Money! Like a billion dollars, like seriously." (Participant D)

"I would need something else, something extra to do because I am always home and it's kind of stressful when you are always home. Just to do something different with life." (Participant E)

"the job is there but the problem is that you don't get the money the person told you the first day, that's the thing that makes me angry…" (Participant F)

Participants shared that it was not easy to always ask for money and that having a job would make life much easier. Some of the group members had children of their own that they needed to care for. Others still wanted to pursue further studies, and were waiting to see how they performed in the Grade 10 (rewrite) examinations that year. The group further shared how their initial dreams and aspirations had changed since they quit school. Many of the group members were opting for 'something else to do' other than what they had initially wanted to do, which was related to not having completed high school.

> *"I wanted to be a pilot or an actor but as situations have changed I am looking forward to be an actor. I don't know how or when" (Participant F, 2017)*

From engaging with the participants and hearing their stories both what was said and the unspoken, I realised that there was a need to express these thoughts and feelings. In some ways this spoke to the value and importance of sharing one's story. The group setting encouraged the sense of 'I am not the only one' and thus opened up space for dialogue to emerge. According to McAdams (2001) and Polkinghorne (1988), telling stories is a selective process, where stories that we feel define who we are now, are recollected from the past to explain our present. By telling their story the participants began to make meaning of their journey, and understand their present circumstances. The transference I encountered was that of feeling like I was a teacher in a classroom with a group of teenagers, having a discussion about their lives. There was a desire to be seen, heard and understood. Transference in

psychotherapy refers to the redirecting of emotions or feelings (or desires) from one person to another, often unconsciously (Prasko et al., 2010). In this context it was from the group to me as facilitator and researcher.

Morgan, (1997) affirmed the advantage of a focus group discussion is the ability to observe the interaction on the topic. This was noteworthy as I gain some understanding on group dynamics in comparison to the individual perceptions that would otherwise be gathered from an individual interview process. I also observed interesting interactions of difference in opinion between those participants who dropped out straight after Grade 10 and those who were still repeating through NAMCOL. Morgan (1997) further writes that "group discussions provide evidence of the similarities and differences in the participants' opinions and experiences (p.10) and thus helped me as the researcher to have an overview of the issue being investigated in the study. This was evident in the group as participants agreed with each other in many instances but also expressed opposing views. For instance, one participant shared that she would not be comfortable sitting in a classroom with students who are younger than her and preferred going to part-time school, however another participant interjected by stating that was not the case for him, and he would not mind being in a class until he was 30 years old as long as he achieved his goals.

From the discussion, it was evident that the participants were still figuring out what do with their lives. While there was a sense of hopefulness and a positive anticipation of the future, there was also an undeniable sense of anxiety and uncertainty lingering in the room. This discussion revealed how everything changed for these young people during their adolescent years, and how intensely leaving school before completion impacted their progression of life.

Each of the six participants had a different experience after they failed Grade 10, and thus they each were at different stages developmentally, as well as in their respective journeys.

Participants positions

Two participants shared that they did not return to school after failing Grade 10, indicating that they dropped out instantaneously. They shared that the main reason for this was the lack of financial support to enrol at NAMCOL.

One participant shared that she fell pregnant and stayed away from school during the first half of her Grade 10 year, which lead to her failing the year. She was however fortunate to be allowed to repeat in school the following year but ended up failing again and was repeating for the third time through NAMCOL.

Another two participants where repeating at NAMCOL for the second year.

One participant decided to quit after trying to repeat Grade 10 at NAMCOL twice.

The following challenges were reported as the outcomes of leaving school before completion:

- Feeling hopeless,
- Discrimination and feeling judged,
- Rejection,
- Having to grow up sooner to deal with life's demands,
- Feelings of regret, disappointment and depression,
- Losing old friends,
- Loss of financial reliance on parents and family members,
- Constant struggle to find money,
- Being unemployed,

- Difficulty in finding a job,
- Feeling insecure and having low self-esteem.

However, participants also displayed resilience and hope for the future, and were determined to not give up on their dreams.

4.3 Drama therapy intervention

Drama therapy is a flexible approach which can be applied to various personal and social problems (Andersen-Warren & Grainger, 2000). Drama therapy draws on techniques from the theatre tradition, thus the methods and approaches that drama therapists used are diverse just as theatre techniques are varied (Courtney & Meldrum 1994a). Consequentially, this study explored different methods and processes with the participants, with the aim of giving them a variety of experiences in the short space of time.

A typical drama therapy session

The basic structure of a drama therapy session is consistent and always unfolds in the following way: a beginning, a middle and an end. Most, if not all drama therapy sessions begin with a warm-up exercise; whether it is a physical or introductory warm-up. This serves as an ice breaker to release any tensions that group members may have and to bring everyone's focus to the therapeutic space (Langley, 2006). A bridge-in activity usually follows introducing the theme(s) that are to be explored in the main activity. Next is the main activity, which normally involves the exploration of an issue through a story, movement or, taking on a role or an art-making process (Emunah, 1994; Jennings, 1992; Pearson, 1996).

An important part of a session is the reflection. This involves a process where the group members reflect on the main activity, or parts thereof that stood out for them. It is also a time where the participants can reflect on the drama therapy experience as a whole, pointing out moments of insight, transformation and even stating parts of the process that were difficult. This can sometimes take place in the 'drama' or fictional realm itself. Reflection in drama therapy, for me personally, is one of the most essential/crucial pieces as it allows the participant or group to unpack, examine or make meaning of the process they had just been part of. It is also in this process that the life-drama connections (Jones, 1996) are sometimes realised and shared. An equally important part of the process is to de-role participants, to help the participants come back to ordinary life or to the 'here and now'. Lastly, is the ending of the session which includes checking in with the participants before they leave. This can be done through a closing ritual or game that acknowledged the process that was had (Landy, 1994; Jones, 2007).

The workshops focused on providing an intervention that encouraged resilience, enhanced creative expression and improved social and emotional learning skills. By using drama therapy methods and processes, the intervention aimed to gather information from the group in terms of what appealed to them and what process worked successfully. Furthermore, because drama therapy employs diverse techniques and processes from both drama and psychotherapy backgrounds, it was important to frame the work. Meyer (2014) encourages us be mindful of our positions of privilege as drama therapists, as well as the different socio-economic, and cultural contexts that we work in.

It is noteworthy to mention, my position – as someone who also comes from Katutura, and having growing up in that context – helped me in many ways to understand the participants'

experiences of being in Grade 10. It also helped me to understand the local languages and some cultural nuances and tendencies. Having had previous working experience with young people in high schools, I was somewhat prepared to engage with this population group.
I approached the workshops and group with an openness that the process would produce whatever the group needed it to. In this way I prepared myself to deal with whatever challenges or obstacles could occur, including possible resistance. The aim was not to try to solve the participants' problems or have a seamless encounter, but to trust the process and be as human as I could be. As Pitruzella (2004) reminds us, the drama therapist is not perfect and must not try to be, but rather remain authentic in recognising that they also have unresolved issues.

In the next section I will refer to the four participants who attended the drama therapy workshops by their pseudonyms:
Michelle–female,19-years-old.
Renotjari–female, 19-years-old.
Chase–male, 24-years-old.
Petrus–male, 24-years-old.

An overview of the workshops

Session 1: Introduction to drama therapy (and assessment)

The first session was an introduction of what drama therapy is and what it entails. The aim of this session was also to gauge how the participants engaged with the medium to get an idea of how to move forward. This was necessary as the very concept of "drama therapy" was new to the participants particularly because in Namibia it currently does not exist. In this session I not only introduced drama therapy as a discipline but I also had to explain the purpose of the

sessions as being part of my research study and not necessarily a therapeutic intervention. This session made use of the six-piece story method (6-PSM) (Lahad, 1992), which is a projective play technique that is commonly used in drama therapy as a tool to assess a client's coping mode and to assist them in reaching self-awareness (Lahad, 1992).

The 6-PSM technique uses questions that facilitate a creation of a story (Pendzik, 2003). According to Lahad, coping mechanisms can be placed into six categories of experience (BASIC Ph) a), beliefs and values b) affect and emotions c) social d) imagination e) cognition and f) physical (Pendzik, 2003). In this session, participants were guided through a structured drama therapy process that comprised of a warm-up exercise, check-in, bridge in, main activity, reflection, de-role and closing. The key theme that emerged from this session was this idea of friendship or support (help) and it was based on the friend/helper character from the different stories that were created. This idea of support was reflected in the various qualities of the helper character in each participant's 6-PSM. Below are the story titles and the friend/helper character of each participant:

Renotjari– ***The Butterfly***: here a ladybug was the friend "who was just there for consultation when needed (by the main character) when she needed a friend".
Petrus– ***Okamanetti***: in this story there were many "fan-friends" who always seemed to be there but they are not true friends as he always had to please them to maintain them.
Michelle– ***The Doctor***: here the friend/support was the partner, who was present throughout.
Chase– ***Seems lost***: had "a short friend", emphasised as being 1.2 metres short, who is his close friend.

Session 2: What is our story?

In this session we explored story telling. This was guided by the question of *'what is the story of the group?* I introduced and adapted story-telling and enactment in drama therapy (the sesame approach), however, instead of brining to the space an existing story, we created an impromptu story together where each person in the circle had a chance to contribute to the story, by building on what the previous person had said without necessarily ending it but carrying on from where the previous person stopped.

There are no hard rules to the exercise, and it encouraged spontaneity and free association. In this session I noticed that although it was our third day together for most the participants they were still a little inhibited and slightly hesitant to engage in the activities on their own. I figured that it was because they did not understand the exercises or perhaps even found them to be silly, so I decided to join them in this exercise. After creating the story and allowing it develop over few rounds around the circle, it came to an end. I then invited the participants to choose a role or roles from the story that they were most drawn to. They could also choose other roles that are not necessarily human, be it an object, feeling or element.

I was aware of my position as the facilitator, researcher and drama therapist and how this would potentially influence the outcome of the story, however my being part of the group at the time, helped the participants to feel more at ease as I was modelled at the beginning of each exercise for them. It is also important to note that in that moment I started overthinking about how I may be influencing the story of 'the group' by participating in it. I started to think of ways of not intentionally directing or steering the story in any direction. In that moment I was reminded to return to the 'here and now', which refers to the immediate happenings of the therapeutic hour (Yalom, 2007). That is bringing attention to what is

happening presently, physically, psychologically. I noticed how the participants became more at ease when I was part of the exercise and it made me realise that in that moment I too was part of 'this group' and in many ways added to the dynamic of the group no matter how much I tried to distance myself.

My observation of this session was the disorderly, unstructured and fragmented way in which the story unfolded. This could indicative of a few things of the group process and dynamic It may have been the idea of allowing the participants the freedom to be and do whatever they wanted and the reassurance that there was neither a right or wrong way of doing anything. However,on an some unconscious level, the story contained very definite ideas of what was 'good' and 'bad', including notions of bad influence, dishonesty and regretful behaviour portrayed through the different roles and interactions.

The participants each played a role that was in a way reflective of their different positions in the group dynamic.[2]Renotjari played the main character who was caught between partying with the cool friends and her friend the *Mouse* (played by me) who she ends up abandoning. Michelle played the *Party*, which was wild and free. She was also misleading the main character. Petrus played the *Friends* and he went with the flow where there was fun. Chase decided not to play any specific role and offered to be a supportive character for the others; he seemed ambivalent in his role and position. I played the role of the mouse who was a friend to the main character. My decision to play this role was because at first it seemed like a small part that would not be visible; with the hope to have as little effect as possible on the decisions of the other roles and the direction the story progressed in. This however was countered when I was casted as the friend; a 'good' friend (also victim) at that.

[2] Pseudonyms are used to conceal the identities of the participants.

The story contained themes of relationships, loyalty, learning a lesson, forgiveness and letting bygones be bygones.

The thematic content of the story in some ways reflected the groups dynamic at that stage, which was each participant still warming up to the process and becoming comfortable around each other. It should be noted that the two young ladies knew each other and the young men knew each other prior to the coming to the drama therapy sessions and the two pairs remained close.

Session 3: Exploration of role

The third session engaged the participants in role play and exploration of that role. The session began with a check-in which entailed naming our favourite character or personality be it from a story or movie etc. This session was guided by a question: how can playing a role be therapeutic/ how can role-play potentially help participants to re-imagine their current roles? The main activity focused on identifying a specific role and then becoming that role. Once participants enrolled into various characters, they interacted with each other as these different roles they had created. They walked around, spoke and acted as the roles they were playing. I noticed that at first the participants seemed a little hesitant or guarded to fully let go but eventually they slowly began immersing into the 'dramatic reality'.

As participants started exploring the different roles through their senses and movement, we created short improvisation scenes, with the various suggestions of a place and situation. Emunah (1994) affirms that improvisation not only allows participants to understand themselves better but helps them to explore and practice new roles, behaviours and responses. Since improvisation is impromptu, it is spontaneous and really challenges the individual to be

spontaneous and have fun as there are no real consequences of actions in the imaginative realm. The exercise therefore allowed the participants to play with their new evoked role and stepping out of their habitual roles for a moment. This was not met without any difficulty, as it was apparent at least at first that the participants struggled to 'find' their role or define the roles they were playing. During reflection one participant shared that stepping into a different role was hard at first as she had to "let go" of herself for a bit and assume the identity of this character. For her, Renotjari, becoming a role meant totally letting go of herself in order to freely play another person. This participant stepped into the role of the opposite sex, who she revealed at the end was her uncle who was someone she looked up to.

Oscar Wilde writes *"*man is least himself when talks in his own person, give him a mask and he will tell the truth," (Oscar Wilde in Ellmann, 1969, p. 389). This statement attests to the notion that the "theatrical role/character, like the mask, is both protective and liberating, enabling the expression of what lies buried beneath our real life roles" (Emunah, 1994, p. 7). The session was evidently one of the highlights as all of the participants seemed to enjoy it the most. They referred to the session at the end as being "fun and exciting", loved the idea of playing someone else and learning from the character as they were "creating fun".
The themes that emerged from this session were empowerment, and playing or becoming someone else.

Session 4: Tracking your story (Journey mapping)

This session focused on tracking the participants' respective stories and it made use of the journey mapping exercise. In this exercise participants were invited to create a journey map using various objects and materials, and in so doing, externalise their stories by looking at key moments/experiences of their life in a visual form. The aim of this exercise was to allow

the participants to reflect on their journey through story-telling, marking key or special moments and looking at how their journey has changed or not. This mapping concept relates with the individual's life journey through time and space and how they as individuals have changed and grown over the course of their lives (Almeleh, 2004). In this journey mapping process, the participants were invited to reflect on their Grade 10 year particularly, and think about all of the major events that took place in that year. I limited the scope by focusing it on one year instead of the participant's entire life journey as the mapping process often does.

In the mapping process I asked the participants to mark moments on their story that stood out and to use an object to represent these moments. Participants were encouraged to be aware of the feelings and emotions that may arise during the creation of their mapping experience and make mental notes of them. I was mindful that the process was potentially vulnerable-making and may therefore bring up painful memories by asking the participants to remember. Thus I used transference and the atmosphere in the room as a way to help me guide the reflection process by either probing deeper or allowing space for the pain or whatever feelings were present to emerge in the silent moments. By doing that I was able to let the participant guide me in knowing what they needed in those moments.

The journey mapping process allowed the participants to look back on their respective journeys and reflect on the major experiences they encountered that year. This further enabled them to share their personal stories and how much failing Grade 10 affected the course of their lives since then. Each participant was given a moment to share their story and the journey map. Participants witnessed each other's mapping and story-telling process and this in a way fostered a sense of empathy among them. This was evident in the way

participants treated each other gently and the way in which they supported each other. It felt that in this session a 'group' was formed.

The participants, in closing, reflected how this process helped them to speak about difficult experiences that they could not before and there was consensus among them that the mapping experience allowed them to go back to a moment in the past and look at it and to confront situations that took place. In line with this, the key themes that arose from the session were self-acceptance, opening up, looking beyond and facing the difficult. It was helpful, "especially for those who don't talk a lot". Participants also shared that they found the process creative, speaking back to the projective nature of the exercise and how this enabled them to represent real moments, people or events in a symbolic manner. Roles can be played to rehearse real-life situations or to practice or develop skills or personal qualities such as communication or confidence (Jones, 2007).

Session 5: Overcoming obstacles and Ending

This session was framed around overcoming obstacles /challenges by (re)-imagining new or innovative ways to tackle problems. It was also the last session with the participants and thus the overarching aim was to end the drama therapy process and part ways. It is important to note that at this stage the participants had forged a wonderful relationship with each other and had become used to the space and it was not an easy process, both for the participants and myself, as the drama therapist. The drama therapy space had become their 'special' meeting place and weekly 'ritual'. It was important to gently guide them through the process as we came to the end of the session's activity. Since our first session I had been mentioning how many days we had remaining as a reminder that we had only a short time together and would eventually have to end the sessions and say goodbye. The session comprised of three parts.

The first part was about grounding the participants and allowing them to become comfortable in the space since we had to move into a different space physically for our very last session. This was due to an unforeseen event where the office where I collected and dropped off the venue keys being closed and the person in charge not being available. We were fortunate to find an alternative space which was much different than where we had been meeting in the past weeks. As such, both the warm-up and bridge-in exercises focused on mindfulness of physical space, bodily awareness and emotional as well as psychological states of being.

The second part was the main activity of the session which unfolded over three steps: At first, participants were asked to find a comfortable spot in the room and relax. They were then taken through a guided visualisation journey that eventually ended with the appearance of a 'wall'. Participants were then gently guided back the present moment. They were provided with paper and drawing material and then each person was asked to draw an image of a wall. I then asked the participants some questions about their wall, for example: how old the wall was, how long it had been there, what the wall represented in their life, what was on the other side of the wall and whether it was a big or small wall etc.

I also asked them to name their walls and lastly I asked them to indicate on the drawing where they were in relation to their wall. The different walls that were created were named as follows:

a) *Grade 10*

b) *Imaginary concrete wall*

c) *The great wall* and

d) *The hard wall*

In the last part of the activity the participants were invited to collaboratively build a physical wall together. They used furniture, objects, cloth material and drawings to create a joined group wall. The images of the individual wall drawings were pasted onto the group wall. I then asked each participant individually if they wanted to climb over this wall and if they were ready to. This was one of the most significant points of this exercise as each person had a chance to get over to the other side of the wall, taking turns. The "the other side" of this wall represented whatever desired outcome or achievement each participant had imagined for themselves. A noteworthy part was the way each participant chose to climb over the wall:
Petrus– Almost destroyed the entire wall whilst going through it.
Chase– Swiftly climbed over by stepping on a chair with little effort.
Renotjari– Struggled a lot to just begin and needed lots of support from the group.
Michelle– Managed to climb over with some help from the group.

For me, these ways represented the different styles of dealing with problems or obstacles as well the kind of support each person needed. It was also indicative of where the participants were at in terms on their individual journeys. The theme of a support system /structure became apparent in the various ways participants responded to the groups' support when getting across the wall. For some, all they needed was a little "lift" to take the next step in getting onto the other side, while for others it required everyone to encourage them and to suggest options, and also provide helping tools for the person to begin climbing.

The sense I got from this session was a mixture between, anxiety, confrontation, and vulnerability, which was masked by boldness, confidence and strength. This session made me realise that even though all of the participants were willing to go to the "other side" of the wall, it was also vulnerable-making in a sense of confronting this very real

‘wall’[obstacle/challenge] in a playful/imaginative manner. There may even have been feelings of deep frustration expressed by some participants in the way they broke down their walls. For example; Michelle (2017) tore up the drawing of her wall at the end of the exercise and expressed a great sense of relief in doing so. She had also initially expressed that she felt “beautiful” after the process. Almost saying that the ugly part of the process was over or destroyed, revealing a new, fresh possibility. Petrus physically destroyed the symbolic wall as he clambered over it and said: “It fell so what? It’s only imaginary” (2017). This again symbolised gaining a sense of empowerment and controlling what can be controlled.
He further shared that the exercise made him realise that there were steps that needed to be taken before breaking down the wall (the obstacles/hardships).

In this last process, participants demonstrated the powerful paradox of dramatic reality, because even though the exercise was based in the imaginary realm, the experience was real for the participants. The obstacles or challenges were still very real for the participants. Dramatic reality is known as that ‘in-between’ space where two worlds meet, the real and the unreal. Pendzik (2006) has written extensively about this concept describing it as “imagination manifested” (p. 272). This means what is imagined is ‘made real’ or actualised in the physical space, experienced in real time in the body with all awareness. Pendzik (2006) further asserts that dramatic reality is a core concept in drama therapy and one of its most defining features.

This ‘alternate world’ is both real and not real at the same time and therefore allows the individual to experiment, explore and even accomplish what they otherwise are not able to in their ordinary realities. However, having gone through the experience, the individual is able to take what they have learned and integrate into their “real-life-repertoire” (Emunah, 1994,

p.24). Helping the individual to integrate dramatic reality into their everyday lives is perhaps the most important goal for the therapist (Pendzik, 2006). Sometimes the process can bring up feelings of fear and/or anxiety for the individual as they may not be ready to face their real challenge or be afraid of what might happen if they do, thus it should be considered that this process takes time. Dramatic reality allows the expression of the individual's inner world in a way that validates their subjective experience and creates a bridge between them and the external world (Pendzik, 2006). The experience holds major therapeutic potentials for the participants, but in order for it to be effective, clear boundaries between dramatic and ordinary (everyday) reality need to be established (Pendzik, 2006).

As Boal once affirmed, theatre itself is not the revolution, but rather the rehearsal (1979). Similarly, is role playing and doing scene work in the imaginary world created in drama therapy a form of 'rehearsal,' offering the participants an alternative form of reality in which they are free to (re)imagine, dream, play, be and try-out different solutions, roles and actions without any real consequence.

During reflection, participants were invited to share their thoughts and feelings of the process as a whole, or specific moments that stood out for them. One of the themes that resonated throughout the process was that of 'I am not alone in this'. The act of being witnessed and witnessing others made participants feel safe/comfortable in a way were they could be themselves.

4.4 Therapeutic effects of the drama therapy intervention

The following is a discussion of the therapeutic results that were yielded from the drama therapy encounter. Drama therapy proved to be valuable for these young people both

individually and as a group. The findings for each participant are illustrated based on their initial presentation to the drama therapy sessions and how they transformed in the process.

Renotjari was a young woman, who appeared to be timid and spoke in a low tone of voice, speaking only when I directly spoke to her or asked her a question. Her demeanour seemed inhibited and her body tense. She was however always fully engaged in the activities and did not hide her curiosity and interest in drama therapy.

After engaging in drama therapy she slowly began to relax into the process. The use of metaphor and symbol enabled her to express herself more freely and genuinely by allowing the necessary distance. She was one of the group members who seemingly appreciated the creative aspects of drama therapy the most. From the first session she demonstrated sincerity and openness to the process, which allowed her to engage in any activity freely. She was open to learn and engaged in each exercise genuinely and used her vulnerability to access her inner strength.

Therapeutic impact

Two distinct moments of transformation stand out for Reno. The first occurred in the third session when we explored role playing. She played the role of a male character, who was strong, poised and a charming successful actor. She played this role with so much confidence. At the end of the process she shared that although it was challenging at first she managed to 'become' that character. And by playing the character she learned more about him saying "just the body was different but me being in it was easy". The distance of role allowed her to explore her inner desires and aspirations, letting go of the fear and anxieties. Consequently, stepping into the role of the opposite sex (male) she was also able to draw from the masculine

side (energy) of her personality which provided the support, security, strength and self-assurance that she needed. The second moment of transformation was in our last session. In this exercise Renotjari expressed her relief of "overcoming" her wall which was called *The Hard Wall*. This wall represented all of her struggles up until that point and during the process of climbing over the wall, she needed a lot of support, to help her to begin to climb over the wall. She shared that a sense of relief, after breaking the wall and going through it and that the exercise taught her to never give up in life. Essentially this process helped her to get out of her comfort zone. She shared that drama therapy helped her to introspect and opened her mind to new things.

"I felt I was in a closed shell but now I have come out of my shell."

Chase was a tall young man, who had a somewhat canny sense about him and spoke in soft voice. His body language was tense and he often struggled to express how he was feeling during check-ins. He was not part of the focus group and only joined with the other group members in our first session. I had to make time before we began to explain to him the research study and the purpose of the drama therapy workshops. Chase often made the life-drama connection and identified with the projective roles that he explored. He also had an interest in what drama therapy was and what being part of the group could offer him personally.

Therapeutic change

In the third session, which was a journey-mapping process, Chase had a breakthrough which helped him to step out of his comfort zone a little. He expressed that the process allowed him to think and speak about things he struggled to speak about before. In this session he also

shared how difficult it was to think about his past experiences as he illustrates in the quote below:

> *"You know, it was tough to think about what I went through in the past until I got stuck at my first part and whatever…, just started coming through… everything started coming through."*

He shared an experience of a time he got into trouble and was arrested. His voice was very low and the words were inaudible at first. But I had asked him to repeat and he managed to say the words "…me going to jail." From that point forward he began talking continuously, narrating the events that led up to his arrest and how he decided to leave some of his friends. It felt that he had kept it to himself for a long time with the fear of being embarrassed and by naming the experience, he found the courage to let it go. It was as if a floodgate was opened. The use of object projection and reflection helped Chase in some ways to access hidden aspects of himself. He became more open and less inhibited.

Petrus appeared to be a carefree, laidback young man who from the onset showed sincere interest in the drama therapy process. He seemed enthusiastic for the opportunity and shared his appreciation to be part of it. He had a lightness of heart and a sense of humour. He brought Chase to the group the first time. He was committed and always willing to engage and learn something. He also struggled to express himself quite often and searched for the 'correct' words or way of saying something in English. However, he was not shy to ask questions, or to make mistakes in the process.

Petrus was probably the group member who seemed to have enjoyed drama therapy the most. At the end of the last session he shared that he would be interested in drama therapy as a career option if it was possible. In my view, underneath all of the humour and eagerness, there was a need to be seen and be validated. He wanted to prove himself as a worthy and competent human being. He often wanted to share his experiences and realisations in the process, even when words sometimes failed him or left him feeling inefficient.

Therapeutic change

It is almost hard to track a specific moment of transformation for Petrus because he made the most out of each session throughout the drama therapy process. He always managed to share his insights and thoughts after each activity. I believe what drama therapy ultimately offered Petrus was perspective, and a chance to prove (to himself) that he was capable of anything. It also allowed him to assert himself and share his creative insights in a world where he seemingly was not always confident enough to do so.

"There's a quote that goes like this; [it] doesn't matter how big the darkness is, small light can light up the whole world."

During the reflection of session three, he shared that he enjoyed playing the role of the character he had chosen because "he seemed to have a lot of time". It appeared that in a way Petrus identified with the role he portrayed because the character was someone important and commanded respect, and he had time to to do the things he wanted to. Time, he feels he does not have due to having inadequate education or perhaps not feeling fluent enough in English.

"...no more walls and stuff"

This above quote captures Petrus's initial response at the end of our last session. The experience of creating a wall and going through it, made him realise that certain steps needed to be taken before the breaking down of the wall. He then said that he needed to "read more," again referring to the idea that he needed to be knowledgeable to face the hardships in his life.

Michelle was a bright young woman, who was well-dressed and always looked smart. She was articulate and self-assured. She was however one of the participants from whom I encountered the most resistance during the initial stages of the sessions, although it was inconspicuous. My observation of this participant was that of ambivalence characterised by a love-hate relationship. On one hand she was engaged and participated, however at times it seemed as though she would distance herself and was guarded, and her involvement seemed superficial or shallow.

Therapeutic change

Michelle always gave short responses during reflections which made her seem to be distant or detached. However, there were a few moments when she found ways to share some details through the creative objects and exercises. In the journey-mapping exercise, Michelle shared how mapping out her experiences and sharing her story helped her to go back and accept herself but also what had happened. She shared about the time she fell pregnant in Grade 10, and only had her mother by her side during the difficult time. She expressed that all of her friends went away, which left her feeling alone and isolated. After giving birth she was separated from her baby, in order for her to return to school and although she did not say it out loud, I imagined that it may have been challenging for her as a new mom. In this process she created an image with a baby sheltered by an elephant, explaining that it was her mother and her during that time, all the other character/objects were scattered far away. She used a

clock facing outward to represent herself on her map, saying that she was moving forward with time.

In the final session Michelle expressed the initial hesitation she had about sharing her feelings with the group. It was strange for her to witness others opening up and expressing their feelings but by being part of the process, she had become used to the idea and it became a natural process for her. Drama therapy again offered a space for this participant to get in touch with her feelings in a way that was safe and non-judgemental. When asked to share what she had gained from the drama therapy process, Michelle spoke back to the security in knowing that she was not alone in experiencing the challenges, saying:

> *"It taught me that I am not the only one going through this life's challenges, because I thought it was only me who feels bad about this."*

Conclusion:

The drama therapy methods used in this intervention were valuable as they provided a space for these young people to think about their lives, experiences, aspirations and hopes for the future. It provided the group with new perspective to explore their situations. Participants were able to experience therapeutic change through dramatic expression which provided some perspective (Jones, 2007). Furthermore, it facilitated a group coherence which fostered empathy among group members. Drama therapy offered a tangible form of expression for their thoughts and feelings. Most of all it provided the group with a therapeutic encounter, which was not only emotionally cathartic (Meldrum, 1994), but a unique experience that was both emotionally and cognitively engaging.

This chapter explored the findings from the focus group and drama therapy intervention that was aimed at providing psychosocial support to out-of-school young people. The chapter described the journey that the participants undertook and the transformative moments they encountered in the sessions. Extracts from the data transcripts are used to illustrate and analyse the participants' experiences throughout the process. Drama therapy as a medium was beneficial for these young people as a space to reflect, learn and re-imagine their roles. The following chapter presents the conclusions reached in the study, providing an overview of the preceding chapters, findings and limitations.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND A WAY FORWARD

5.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter provides an overview of the qualitative study that was undertaken exploring drama therapy with school dropouts in Namibia. Throughout this research study I explored how drama therapy methods can be applied (used) effectively to provide psychosocial support to out-of-school young people from Katutura. This section therefore provides a summary of the chapters covered, conceptual links of the findings and the limitations that were encountered in the research process. Lastly, a way forward for future research is proposed.

5.2 Overview of the paper

Chapter one introduced the problem that was being investigated and presented the context and background of the study. The phenomenon of dropping out of school before completion was explored and the educational pitfalls and their implications on students completing their education were examined. This was further extended in the rationale for the study.

Chapter two broadly looked at the issue of dropping out and the common causes associated with it. This chapter began by defining adolescent development in relation to psychosocial development and argued for a conceptualisation of school dropouts as adolescents. The personal as well as the long-term psychosocial impact of leaving school prematurely was discussed. This chapter also defined drama therapy and discussed how it can be a beneficial approach in providing psychosocial support for adolescent school dropouts as well as out-of-school young people.

Chapter three described the research design and data collection methods. It defined the thematic analysis that the data were subjected to as well the drama therapy methods that guided the intervention process.

Chapter four presented a descriptive overview of the themes that emerged from the focus group discussion on young peoples' experiences of dropping out of school before completion. This chapter further presented the drama therapy intervention by outlaying each session and what transpired from the process. It analysed the findings and their impact for each of the participants.

5.3 Outcomes of the research and possible contributions

At the end the research, a question arises: did I manage to answer the research question I posed in the beginning of this study? The answer is yes. It became more clear throughout the study as to how and why drama therapy would be useful with the identified population group in Namibia. This research explored the ways in which drama therapy would be an effective intervention for out-of-school young people from Katutura. The findings indicate that drama therapy is suitable and beneficial for out-of-school young people in various ways. Firstly, it offered a safe space for the group in which, over time they became comfortable and confident to be their true selves. This space became a weekly meeting place, a ritual that provided some form of structure and consistency to their experience.

Attending the weekly sessions created an opportunity for participants to think about their life and future. The drama therapy space offered an alternate world where they could create and confront or try out things with no serious consequences in a playful manner. Symbols and metaphors created safety in accessing and expressing hidden aspects of the self. The act of

reflection in the sessions allowed the group to process their thoughts and to think about the relevance of the experience to their everyday lives. Findings showed that role play and the creation of imaginative worlds/ alternate reality afforded in drama therapy helped the individual participants to not only reflect on their habitual roles but also re-discover parts of themselves which may have been forgotten or neglected. The use of role play was significant for the participants given its ability to allow the individual to step out of the self or look within, if you will, and thus transcended the limitations of their everyday realities. Landy (1991) writes that role is one of the single most prominent features of drama therapy that separates it from other forms of psychotherapy. Role creates a bridge between the two realities; that is the everyday and the imaginative realm, making this method a significant intervention within drama therapy (Landy, 1991).

Creating an intervention within the group setting also proved to be effective in fostering interactive participation, witnessing others and being witnessed. It enabled group members to empathise with one another other, promoting interpersonal understanding and support among the members. Ultimately the dedicated drama therapy space, which included the physical place, time and conceptual frame, provided a nurturing environment where the participants felt accepted and empowered. In our closing session the group expressed their hopes of having me to come back and have drama therapy with them again.

This demonstrated that they found the intervention useful. Although this intervention was had with out-of-school young people, of whom some were already independent adults, it can be easily replicated to other groups of young people in high school as well as those transitioning from one grade to the next. Drama therapy offered these young people who are dropouts the opportunity to think about themselves as young people with a common setback or experience.

It can be postulated that drama therapy improved self-image and self-esteem in the participants. It improved resilience in the participants and gave them a lot of perspective. Resilience is an important tool to possess when trying to overcome the effects of the adversities that young people faced or may still face.

5.4 Limitations

As it is with all research, there were some limitations found in this research study. One foremost limitation of the research was that the time allocated to carry out the intervention was too short to do in-depth work with the group. A Drama therapy process develops over time and it takes time to establish trust within the therapeutic relationship with the group and the therapist. Thus it seemed as though the 'group' only emerged towards our second last session together and we had to end the intervention after that. Another limitation that may have implications for the findings of the research was the sample size being being much smaller than initially expected. This was mainly due to the time of year that the intervention took place, towards the beginning of the December holidays. Many potential participants were travelling during the time of the study and others who were interested before had left for the holidays by the time we started. I lost three of the six participants from the focus group, consequently the sample size that remained was small and thus no generalisations of the findings can be made. Another limitation is that I could not reach participants for follow up questions after the study, thus the impact of the intervention on the participants' everyday lives could not be evaluated.

5.5 Recommendations

The outcomes and findings of this study have some implication with regard to proposing drama therapy as an intervention strategy in Namibia, where the study was conducted. As a scholar and emerging drama therapist from Namibia, I foresee a possibility of drama therapy not only being recognised as an effective method of intervention but also as a tool to advocate for social change and development. It is my hope that the need for psychosocial interventions are recognised in the educational and community sectors. I believe that drama therapy is a valuable approach to provide psychosocial support for out-of-school young people. With the changes in educational policies having direct impact on students' educational attainment and the various social challenges that adolescents face, an intervention using drama therapeutic methods is necessary and important to reduce psychological stress.

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that an intervention such as the one initiated with the group of out-of-school young people be considered by schools and part-time education institutions that wish to help their students to successfully reach their educational goals. Although no generalisation of the findings can be necessarily made, inferences can be made on the benefits of drama therapy work with other similar population groups. Furthermore, findings and insights obtained from this study identified that young people are in need of psychosocial support to make informed decisions on social issues they may be dealing with, in order to become agents of their own change. This is relevant to their developmental needs and urges during the uncertain adolescent years. School is just one of the many areas that can become compromised when they are trying to figure out their individual identities. The space provided by drama therapy can help them to cope better with the emotional and social pressures.

5.6 Drama therapy in Namibia: a potential for social justice

There is a potential for Drama therapy to be realised and employed in Namibia and it can begin with the conversation of reflexive practice and re-defining applied arts practice in the country. This includes finding the language of healing that resonates with people in the communities and new ways to harness available knowledge for better outcomes. This means expanding the scope of arts therapies beyond the clinical frame and to be mindful of diversity issues, inequalities and the socio-political contexts of people. Psychosocial interventions for out-of-school young people and school going children in educational settings can be useful in tackling many areas of concerns faced by children and young people. Taking from Mushaandja's (2018) definition of the applied arts as an integrated praxis, that uses the arts in community, educational, therapeutic and other social contexts, drama therapy can play a huge role in understanding and bridging individual psychological and social problems.

Through the use of the arts for therapeutic transformation and growth, drama therapy draws on the values and practice of Augusto Boal (Emunah, 1994, Jones, 1996, Landy, 1994). A noteworthy contribution that Boal (1979) brought to theatre activism was the understanding of how individual change is linked to social change and that internal suffering can be viewed as a reflection of one's social and political context (Sajnani, 2012). The benefits of applied arts interventions for social change are well documented in many parts of the world and have been proven useful in raising awareness and creating interventions that aim to address key social issues in communities. Sajnani (2012) affirms that arts therapists have the skills and the knowledge to challenge wider ideologies and social practices, thus making them socially responsible and aligned with critical theorists who challenge various injustices and work to design social redress programs. What this means is that arts therapists are well positioned to provide a resource for communities regarding how programmes are implemented and

supported in an ethical manner (Meyer, 2014).

Applied arts interventions are a valuable means of providing psychosocial support in schools, communities, and cultural settings as they offer healing and insight through engaged, embodied and experiential learning. Jennings (1995) views dramatic imagination and play "to be crucial for survival, as without it we would not be able to imagine how things might be or how they could be" (p. 98). In many ways the involvement in drama and theatre help us to re-sensitize ourselves, to each other, and to the possibilities available to us in every social interaction (Boal, 1979).

This research, in many ways has made me to start thinking about a question posed by Meyer (2014) when she asked "*What do creative arts therapists have to offer communities in need of social justice that extend beyond the individual clinical aspects of health care?"*

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Appendix A: Ethics Clearance certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON MEDICAL)
Esmeralda Cloete

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	**PROTOCOL NUMBER: WSOA170913**
PROJECT	An exploration of the potential role of Drama Therapy as a therapeutic intervention in working with a group of Grade 10 school dropouts in Katutura, Namibia
INVESTIGATORS	Esmeralda Cloete
DEPARTMENT	Wits School of Arts
DATE CONSIDERED	20.09.2017
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved

Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid for 2 years and may be renewed upon application

DATE 28.09.2017 **CHAIRPERSON** .....
(Dr. Tanja Sakota)

cc: Supervisor: Ms Leane Meiring

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Secretary at Room 10005, 10th Floor, Senate House, University.

I/We fully understand the conditions under which I am/we are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I/we guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee. **I agree to a completion of a yearly progress report.**

.....
Signature

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Research Title:

Drama Therapy for School Dropouts?

An exploration of the potential role of Drama Therapy as a therapeutic intervention in working with a group of Grade 10 school dropouts in Katutura, Namibia.

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Esmeralda Cloete, I am a Drama for Life student, at the University of the Witwatersrand and I am currently completing my Master's degree in Drama Therapy. This information sheet provides you with a short breakdown of the study. Please carefully read the information to understand what you are about to undertake. As part of the requirements for Masters at University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), I am required to carry out a research study. The purpose of the study is to explore in what ways Drama Therapy can be used to provide psychosocial support. You have been selected to participate in this study because you are a young person between the ages of 18-25, have not completed secondary school after failing Grade 10, are not in school and are currently unemployed.

This study requires the participants to partake in all three components of the research study. The first part of the study involves participation in a focus group discussion on the the subject of dropping out of school and the psychosocial effects thereof. This will take 1 hour and 30 minutes of your time. The focus group discussion will be audio-recorded. Please see Audio Consent Form. The second part of the study will include a Drama Therapeutic intervention, taking place over six 2-hour sessions. The aim of the intervention is to provide a space to explore and work through feelings and experiences related to dropping out, through the use of drama and play techniques. Logistics of the time and venue will be confirmed with all participants involved before we begin. You are not obliged to attend all sessions but it is recommended that you follow through with the intervention until the end. If at any point during a session you feel uncomfortable, and want to stop, it is not compulsory to continue participating. If you require additional emotional support, you will be provided with a telephone number of a psychologist or counsellors.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. By signing the consent form (Appendix A), you will be agreeing to participate in the research. However, as a participant, you still have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without any repercussions. Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained at all times. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. There will be no compensation for participation in this study.

The final results of this study will be presented in a Master's Research Report. The data will be seen by my supervisor, an external examiner and myself. The final research report will be made available to you upon your request. The research report will be available to anyone who has access to the Wits online catalogue. The study may be published in a research journal.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or alternatively my supervisor should you need any more information.

Thank you for your time.

Esmeralda Cloete

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Leané Meiring

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+27 849521980

Appendix C: Participant Consent form

Research Title:
Drama Therapy for School Dropouts?

An exploration of the potential role of Drama Therapy as a therapeutic intervention in working with a group of Grade 10 school dropouts in Katutura, Namibia.

I hereby agree to participate in the research focus group discussion. I give consent to take part in the Drama Therapeutic intervention to follow.

I understand that I am giving this consent freely and without being forced to do so. I also understand that I can withdraw from the process at any time should I not wish to continue and that this decision will not affect me negatively in any way.

The purpose of the study has been explained to me. I take into consideration that the topic of dropping out of school may be a difficult topic to discuss and I am aware that should I require additional counselling support whilst engaging in the research the facilitator will provide me with a referral to appropriate services. I will not be named in the research report and confidentiality and boundaries will be established with the group.

I consent to be part of the Focus Group discussion ☐

I consent to be part of the Drama Therapy sessions ☐

I give permission for photographs to be taken in the sessions ☐

Participant Signature: _____ Date_____

Appendix D: Focus group questions

Duration: 1h30m

Group setting:

Everyone seated in a circle.

Check-in:

Going around the circle, each person will introduce themselves and share how they are feeling.

The researcher will open the discussion by welcoming everyone and stating the purpose of the Focus Group.

Questions:

1. I would like to invite each of you to speak a little about Grade 10:

   What were your experiences during your Grade 10 year?

   What was your first thought when you learned you had not qualified for Grade 11?

   What did you do after attempting Grade 10 for the first time?

   At what stage did you decide to not continue with schooling?

   Would you say this was a personal choice?

   What are some of the reasons that led you to decide to not go back to school?

   Discussion

2. What are some of the challenges you faced after leaving school for good, and now?

   Discussion

3. Tell me about how you have been affected emotionally, and also socially.
4. How would you best describe your experiences of not completing school?

   Discussion

5. If you could change something about your current situation, what would it be?
6. What do you need the most at this stage in your life?
7. What were your dreams or aspirations then, and what are they now?
8. What do you expect from participating in the Drama Therapy sessions?
9. What do you wish to achieve through the sessions?

Thank you for your time. I hope to see you all for the drama therapy sessions.

Focus Group Questions

Duration: 1h30m

Group setting:

Everyone seated in a circle.

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   Discussion
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