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Equity and Best Practices in Curriculum Implementation: A Multi-Case Study of Namibian Junior Secondary Schools

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Research Article

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Abstract

Introduction: This study presents an in-depth examination of the factors that influence the implementation of the Physical Science curriculum for Grades 8 and 9 in Namibian junior secondary schools. Set within the broader discourse on educational justice and curriculum reform in under-resourced contexts, the research investigates the interplay between systemic inequalities, teacher agency, and local adaptation in the enactment of the curriculum.

Methodology: A qualitative multi-case study design was employed within a critical hermeneutic interpretive framework. Data were collected through interview guides, focus groups, and classroom observations involving a diverse range of stakeholders, including Curriculum Developers, elected Policy Makers, Inspectors of Education, Senior Education

Officers, teachers, parents, and learners. The approach sought to capture multiple perspectives and reveal the complexities inherent in curriculum delivery in the Namibian context.

Results: Findings indicate that resource constraints, limited teaching materials, and curriculum overload present substantial barriers to equitable curriculum implementation. However, the research also identifies several enabling practices at the local level, such as collaborative lesson planning among teachers, adaptive pedagogical strategies, and the presence of responsive and supportive school leadership. These practices enhance curriculum delivery despite systemic limitations. Furthermore, the study underscores the value of involving teachers as co-developers of curriculum meaning, which fosters ownership and adaptability in teaching.

Conclusion: The research concludes that effective Physical Science curriculum implementation in Namibian junior secondary schools requires not only adequate resources but also systemic support for teacher agency, professional learning, and context-sensitive innovation. The study recommends targeted policy reforms, the incorporation of professional learning models, and the strategic integration of experiential learning methods including built-in classroom experiments, simulations, and the use of AI tools to create more equitable and contextually relevant science education. These insights hold both theoretical significance for curriculum theory and practical value for improving educational outcomes in Namibia.

Keywords: curriculum implementation; educational equity; Physical Science; critical hermeneutics; best practices; AI in education

1. Introduction

Educational equity remains a central and persistent challenge in the global educational landscape, with developing countries, including Namibia facing unique and complex obstacles. In Namibia, the Physical Science curriculum for Grades 8 and

9 serves as a fundamental pillar for learners aspiring to enter Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) related fields that integrate these four disciplines. However, the effective delivery of this curriculum is marred by a confluence of factors. Structural inequalities deeply embedded in the educational system, under resourced school laboratories struggling to provide even basic experiments (hands-on learning) and learning materials, and inconsistent professional support have created a substantial gap between the intended curriculum and its implementation in the classroom (Chisholm, 2005; UNESCO, 2017).

This research is firmly grounded in a critical hermeneutic perspective, which posits that understanding is an interpretive process. By adopting this perspective, the study aims to delve into the experiences of teachers in Grades 8 and 9 as they implement the Physical Science curriculum. It also seeks to identify and understand the best practices that emerge in response to the specific contextual challenges they face. A qualitative multi-case study design across three selected regions in Namibia (Oshana, Ohangwena, and Oshikoto) was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of how material conditions, teacher autonomy, and professional collaboration interact in the process of curriculum implementation. This design allows for an in-depth exploration of each school's unique context, capturing rich, contextualized understandings of curriculum implementation practices. The findings aim to reveal patterns and insights that may be transferable to similar educational settings, thereby contributing to broader curriculum scholarship.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Critical Hermeneutics

The study is deeply influenced by Paul Ricoeur's critical hermeneutic theory. Ricoeur (1992) emphasizes that understanding is not a passive reception of information but an active interpretive process, especially when individuals engage with various "texts." In the context of curriculum implementation, these "texts" can be curriculum policies, syllabi, or teaching guidelines. His concept of the "fusion of horizons" is particularly relevant. It suggests that curriculum implementation is not a one-way process of applying a fixed policy but a dialogic interaction between the curriculum (the "text") and the teacher (the "interpreter"). Teachers bring their own experiences, beliefs, and local knowledge (their "horizons") to the interpretation of the curriculum, and in the process of implementation, these horizons merge with the intended meaning of the curriculum.

Ricoeur's threefold mimesis prefiguration (Mimesis I), configuration (Mimesis II), and refiguration (Mimesis III) offers a nuanced interpretive framework for analysing curriculum implementation. Prefiguration denotes the pre-reflective understanding teachers bring to the curriculum, informed by their prior knowledge, professional experience, and the sociocultural contexts that shape their pedagogical assumptions. Configuration refers to the deliberate structuring of curricular content, whereby teachers translate abstract prescriptions into coherent instructional plans, determining pedagogical strategies, sequencing, and classroom delivery. Refiguration captures the dynamic interplay between the planned curriculum and its enactment, as teachers respond in situ to learner engagement, classroom interactions, and contextual contingencies, thereby reinterpreting and reshaping the curriculum in practice.

2.2 Social Justice Framework

Complementing the critical - hermeneutic approach is a social justice education framework.

Scholars such as Fraser (2008, in Erima and Maringe 2021) and Sen (1999) have emphasized the importance of equitable access to quality education, recognition of diverse learner needs, and the redistribution of resources. In the Namibian context, this framework is crucial for understanding the challenges faced in Physical Science Grades 8 and 9 curriculum implementations. The historical legacy of unequal schooling systems, along with rural-urban divides and language and cultural differences, has led to significant disparities in educational opportunities. Equity in education, from this perspective, is not merely about providing equal resources but ensuring fairness in opportunities and outcomes, taking into account the diverse contexts in which learners and teachers operate. For example, rural schools may have different resource requirements and teaching - learning needs compared to urban schools, and an equitable approach would involve tailoring educational policies and practices to address these differences. Because both learners set for same semi-external Physical science Grade 9 examinations.

By integrating Ricoeur's critical hermeneutics with a social justice lens, the study is able to view curriculum implementation as a socially situated, interpretive act. Teachers are positioned as central agents in the mediation between curriculum policy and learner experience. At the same time, the educational system is held accountable for creating the structural conditions that either enable or constrain effective teaching practices. This combined framework allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the complex factors at play in curriculum implementation in Namibian junior secondary schools.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative multiple-case study design was employed for this research. This design was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of the implementation of the Physical Science Grades 8 and 9 curriculum across different schools in the Oshana, Ohangwena, and Oshikoto regions of Namibia. Each school represents a unique case, with its own set of socio-economic, geographic, and institutional characteristics. By studying multiple cases, it becomes possible to identify common patterns and differences in curriculum implementation practices. The cross-case comparison helps in generalizing the findings to a certain extent and understanding how different contexts influence curriculum delivery.

3.2 Sampling and Participants

Purposive sampling was used to select 33 participants who had direct or indirect experience in implementing the Physical Science curriculum for Grades 8 and 9. The participants included Curriculum Developers, Policy Makers, Science Senior Education Officers from selected regions, Inspectors of Education, Physical Science subject teachers at the junior secondary level, parents, and learners. Curriculum Developers from National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) were included for their in-depth knowledge of curriculum design, goals, and intended learning outcomes, offering critical insights that helped bridge the gap between curricular intent and classroom realities. Policy Makers contributed valuable perspectives on the legislative and regulatory frameworks that influence curriculum rollout, teachers support mechanisms, and resource distribution, thereby shedding light on both the enabling conditions and structural constraints at the policy level. Senior Education Officers, including Science Education specialists, shared their advisory expertise and oversight roles at national and regional levels, offering a broader, systemic view of Physical Science Grades 8 and 9 curriculum implementation processes.

Inspectors of Education, tasked with ensuring quality assurance and curriculum monitoring, provided assessments on how effectively schools adhere to national standards. Physical Science subject teachers, who are directly involved in classroom instruction, contributed practical experiences related to teaching strategies, implementation challenges, and adaptive approaches used to address learner needs and contextual limitations. Parents were included to capture the extent of community involvement and support in their children's educational progress, offering insights into how the curriculum is received and reinforced at the household level. Learners, as the primary beneficiaries of the Physical Science Grades 8 and 9 curriculums, shared firsthand experiences regarding content engagement, learning challenges, and the perceived relevance of Physical Science to their aspirations and future academic or career goals. This diverse and purposively selected group of participants ensured a rich, multi-perspective understanding of curriculum interpretation, negotiation, and implementation across policy, institutional, community, and individual levels.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Multiple qualitative data collection methods were used to ensure triangulation and a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

Semi-structured interviews: These interviews were conducted with all participants. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for flexibility in exploring different aspects of curriculum implementation. Open-ended questions were used to encourage participants to share their experienced factors, interpretations of curriculum policy, instructional challenges they faced, and any adaptive practices they had developed. For example, questions such as "Can you describe a situation where you had to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of your learners?" and "What are the biggest challenges you face in implementing the Physical Science curriculum?" were asked.

Classroom observations: Non-participant observations were carried out in Physical Science classrooms. The focus was on actual teaching practices, such as how teachers delivered lessons, the use of teaching materials, and learner engagement. Observation checklists were used to record details about the teaching methods, the use of resources, and learner participation. This provided valuable insights into the real time implementation of the curriculum in the classroom.

Document analysis: National Curriculum for Basic Education (NCBE) document, Physical Science Specimen and External Examination Papers (Grade 9), national standards and performance indicators for schools in Namibia (NSPIs), The Teacher Self-Evaluation (TSE), The School Development Plan (SDP) and Plan of Action for Academic Improvement (PAAI), syllabi, The Classroom Observation Instrument (COI), syllabi and lesson plans were analyzed. The analysis of these documents helped in understanding the policy context, the intended Physical Science Grades 8 and 9 curriculum, and how schools and teachers were trying to implement it. By comparing the curriculum documents with the actual lesson plans, it was possible to identify any gaps or misalignments in curriculum implementation.

3.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was conducted with the support of AI tools, including ChatGPT, following the coding and interpretive procedures outlined by Turobov, Coyle, and Harding (2024), and guided by Ricoeur’s hermeneutic arc to ensure depth of understanding and contextual interpretation. Initially, codes were developed from interview transcripts, observation notes, and document excerpts. These codes were then iteratively refined to identify recurring themes. The process moved from descriptive coding, where basic categories were created based on the data, to interpretive thematic development. This involved making connections between the codes, identifying overarching themes, and understanding the relationships between different themes. The themes related to resource constraints, curriculum overload, and teacher agency emerged from the data. These themes were then mapped across cases to compare experiences and highlight both common challenges and successful practices. Throughout the analysis, the philosophical underpinnings of the study, particularly the critical hermeneutic and social justice frameworks, were kept in mind to ensure that the analysis was meaningful and relevant.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board to ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner. All participants provided informed consent prior to their involvement in the study. This process involved explaining the purpose of the research, the data collection methods, and the participants' rights. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. The identities of participants were anonymized, and pseudonyms were used in all research materials. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. For learners who participated in the study, consent letters were obtained from their parents or guardians. Special care was taken to ensure respectful and culturally sensitive engagement. The interview questions were designed to be respectful of the cultural and professional backgrounds of the participants, and the research team was trained to remain sensitive to cultural differences during data collection.

4. Findings

4.1 Challenges in Curriculum Implementation

4.1.1 Resource Disparities

One of the most prominent issues across all the schools studied was the significant disparity in access to teaching and learning resources. Teachers consistently reported a shortage of essential materials such as laboratory equipment, textbooks, and ICT tools. In rural schools, this resource gap was even more acute. A Physical Science teacher from a school in the Oshana region lamented, "*We are expected to conduct experiments, but without equipment, we end up explaining instead of demonstrating. It is demotivating for both the teacher and the learner.*" This lack of resources not only affected the practical aspects of teaching but also undermined the intended learner-centered, inquiry based approach of the curriculum. Without proper laboratory equipment, learners were unable to engage in hands - on learning, which is crucial for understanding scientific concepts.

4.1.2 Curriculum Overload

The curriculum was found to be overloaded with content, making it extremely difficult to cover all topics in a meaningful way within the academic year. The time allocated for teaching science, especially considering the need for practical sessions and learner remediation, was considered insufficient. A Physical Science teacher who happen also to be a Head of Department from a school in the Ohangwena region stated, "*There is pressure to complete the syllabus, so we rush through topics. Learners don't get time to absorb or ask deeper questions.*" This rush to cover the syllabus led to superficial learning, where learners were unable to develop a deep understanding of the scientific concepts.

4.1.3 Curriculum - Context Misalignment

Many teachers felt that the curriculum was designed with urban, resource-rich contexts in mind and failed to take into account the realities of rural and under-resourced schools. This misalignment made it difficult to translate curriculum policy into practice. For instance, some of the prescribed experiments required expensive or hard-to-obtain materials that were simply not available in many rural schools. Teachers in such settings often had to improvise or skip these activities altogether, which negatively affected the quality of teaching and learning.

A teacher from Ohangwena Region highlighted this disconnect, stating:*"Right, so I think the challenges one is, um, about the class is more on theoretical and it's not supposed to be the case. If it could be more practical, I believe it could be better, but the problem is infrastructure. And another thing is just that, um, some of the topics, the topics like electricity I have a feeling the topic is too complex with the learners. It's like a topic that needs to be done step by step because it's like a lot of concepts didn't [get] explained to a child at once. That's why most of the learners have a challenge in this topic."*

This perspective underscores how a lack of infrastructure and the absence of curriculum scaffolding can impede learner understanding. The teacher further suggested that foundational concepts should be introduced earlier *"maybe if it could be done in previous grades I think Grade Seven, Grade Six, even Grade Seven then Grade Eight, I believe it could be better."* Such insights reflect the broader concern that curriculum design does not adequately reflect the realities of rural education contexts.

Moreover, the curriculum's language was sometimes perceived as overly technical and not always culturally relevant to learners in rural areas.

This added to the learners' difficulties in grasping scientific concepts, further widening the gap between curricular intentions and actual classroom realities.

4.1.4 Inadequate Teacher Professional Development

Although participants had participated in workshops and in-service training, most found these to be sporadic, generic, or insufficiently targeted. Teachers emphasized the need for sustained and subject-specific professional development in curriculum interpretation, scientific pedagogy, and classroom assessment. A teacher from a school in the Oshikoto Region remarked, *"The workshops we attend are often too general. We need training that specifically addresses the challenges we face in teaching Physical Science in our schools."* Another teacher from Oshikoto Ohangwena Region added, *"Most of the subject workshops now target Physics and Chemistry at the Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level only. We need Physical Science workshops for the junior secondary level."* This lack of relevant professional development limited teachers' ability to effectively implement the curriculum and adapt it to their local contexts.

4.2 Best Practices in Curriculum Implementation

4.2.1 Collaborative Planning and Peer Support

In schools with strong departmental coordination, teachers engaged in collaborative planning and co-teaching strategies. This collaborative approach promoted consistent curriculum interpretation and allowed less experienced teachers to learn from their more experienced peers. A teacher from a school with a collaborative department in the Oshana region shared, "*In our department, we sit weekly to discuss the next topic, plan together, and sometimes even co-teach. It helps us stay on track and share materials.*" Through these collaborative efforts, teachers were able to pool their resources, share ideas, and develop more effective teaching strategies.

4.2.2 Contextual Adaptation of Teaching Methods

Teachers with high instructional competence adapted their lessons using local materials and real life analogies. In the absence of standard lab materials, some teachers used locally sourced items to simulate experiments. For example, in a school in the Ohangwena region, a teacher used household items like soda bottles and balloons to demonstrate gas laws. This made learning more accessible and relevant to the learners, as they could relate the scientific concepts to their daily lives. By using local materials, teachers were able to overcome the resource constraints to some extent and make the learning experience more engaging.

4.2.3 Learner-Centered Pedagogies

Despite systemic constraints, some teachers successfully employed learner-centered methods such as group discussions, problem solving tasks, and concept mapping. These approaches enhanced learner engagement and understanding. For instance, in a classroom in the Oshikoto region, a teacher used group discussions to encourage learners to analyze and solve real world science problems. This not only improved learners' understanding of the scientific concepts but also developed their critical thinking and communication skills. The use of concept mapping helped learners organize their knowledge and see the connections between different scientific ideas.

4.2.4 School Leadership and Advisory Support

When school leadership actively supported science departments by facilitating resource access, arranging peer observation schedules, and liaising with regional advisory services, the implementation of the curriculum was more effective. Engagement with regional science advisors also helped teachers align their practices with policy intent. A school in the Oshana region, where the leadership was proactive in supporting the science department, saw an improvement in curriculum implementation. The school leader worked with the local community to source additional teaching materials and coordinated with the regional advisory services to provide teachers with relevant professional development opportunities. This support from the leadership and advisory services created a more conducive environment for effective curriculum delivery.

4.2.5 Integration of ICT, Local Knowledge, and Informal Networks

Some teachers effectively enhanced Physical Science Grades 8 and 9 curriculum implementations by incorporating simulations, educational videos, and other ICT tools to explain complex scientific concepts. These digital resources were especially valuable in contexts where practical laboratory work was limited. In a school in the Ohangwena Region, for instance, a teacher used YouTube videos to demonstrate chemical reactions that could not be performed due to the lack of equipment. Teachers also creatively blended local knowledge and culturally familiar examples to make lessons more relatable and meaningful. Additionally, professional learning was often extended beyond formal structures through informal digital platforms. Teachers shared resources, lesson plans, and expert insights via WhatsApp groups and other online forums. One teacher from Oshana noted, *"When I don't have a clear idea of how to teach a topic, I ask in our subject group. Someone always shares a video or worksheet that helps."* These practices demonstrated how teachers adapted to resource constraints by leveraging both technology and community-based knowledge systems, fostering more interactive and contextually relevant teaching approaches.

5. Discussion

5.1 Structural Inequities and the Role of Resources

The persistent shortage of teaching and learning materials, especially in rural and economically disadvantaged schools, is a significant structural inequality that undermines equitable curriculum delivery. This finding is consistent with existing literature (Chisholm, 2005; UNESCO, 2017), which highlights the impact of material deprivation on education in sub-Saharan Africa. From a critical hermeneutic perspective, these resource constraints act as a barrier to the meaningful interpretation and implementation of the curriculum. Teachers, as interpreters, are limited in their ability to translate the curriculum policy into classroom practices when they lack the necessary resources. Policy design, therefore, must be more responsive to the diverse contexts in which teachers operate. Policies could be developed to ensure that rural schools receive targeted resource support, such as mobile science labs or online learning resources that are accessible in areas with limited infrastructure.

5.2 Teacher Agency in Overcoming Challenges

Despite the structural limitations, many teachers demonstrated remarkable agency in dealing with curriculum overload and aligning content with learner needs. This aligns with the views of Fullan (2007) and Grumet (1988), who consider teachers as change agents and curriculum co-constructors. Teachers who used adaptive strategies, such as simplifying complex content, using local materials, and collaborating with peers, showed that teacher autonomy, when supported by professional communities, can counterbalance rigid curriculum mandates. For instance, the teachers who engaged in collaborative planning and used local materials not only adapted to the resource constraints but also created a more engaging and relevant learning environment for their learners. This highlights the importance of empowering teachers and providing them with the support they need to exercise their agency in the classroom.

5.3 Curriculum Context Mismatch

The study revealed a significant disconnect between national curriculum policy and classroom implementation, particularly in under-resourced and rural schools. This misalignment, moreover, echoes Jansen's (1998) critique of policy borrowing and top-down curriculum reform in Africa. Similarly, Gouëdard et al. (2020) argue that the effective implementation of educational policies requires a coherent strategy that integrates three key dimensions: smart policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and a conducive context. Each of these dimensions comprises specific levers that must be addressed to ensure successful implementation. Consequently, teachers in these schools are compelled to continuously recontextualize the curriculum's meaning within their specific circumstances. There is urgent need to adapt the curriculum content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies to fit the local context. This highlights the need for policy flexibility and context-aware training programs. Policies should be designed in a way that allows for local adaptation, and training programs should equip teachers with the skills to make these adaptations effectively.

5.4 Professional Learning and Community Support

Sustained, collaborative professional development emerged as a crucial factor in effective curriculum implementation. Teachers who benefited from departmental teamwork, advisory support, and school leadership engagement were better able to implement learner-centered practices. This finding is in line with Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012) model of professional capital, which emphasizes the importance of human, social, and decisional capital in school improvement. In the context of this study, the collaborative engagements among teachers, school leaders, and advisory services constituted a "dialogue of understandings." Through this dialogue, individual teacher experiences were shared and integrated, leading to a more effective implementation of the curriculum. The schools where teachers had regular opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and received support from school leadership, they were more likely to adopt innovative teaching methods and adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of their learners.

5.5 The Potential of AI in Education

Emerging AI driven technologies like ChatGPT offer significant potential to support teachers in Namibian secondary schools. In resource constrained environments, these tools can serve as supplementary knowledge resources, enhancing teacher agency and pedagogical diversity. For instance, AI can assist teachers in lesson planning by generating teaching materials tailored to specific learning objectives. It can suggest innovative ways to simplify complex scientific concepts, making them more accessible to learners. A teacher struggling to explain a difficult physics concept could use AI to find real world examples or interactive simulations that clarify the topic. Moreover, AI can play a role in developing learner-centered activities. It can analyze learner performance data to identify areas where individual learners are struggling and suggest targeted interventions. This personalized approach to learning can help address the diverse needs of learners in a classroom. For example, if a group of learners is having difficulty with a particular chemistry topic, AI can generate additional practice problems or provide alternative explanations to reinforce understanding.

However, the integration of AI in education is not without challenges. Ethical considerations are paramount. There are concerns about the accuracy of AI generated content, as well as issues related to data privacy and security. In the Namibian context, where some schools may have limited technological infrastructure and digital literacy among teachers and learners, there is a need for careful implementation. Teachers may require training to effectively use AI tools, and schools need to ensure that the use of these tools aligns with the local educational culture and curriculum goals. Furthermore, while AI can provide valuable support, it cannot replace the human element in teaching. Teachers bring their own experiences, cultural understanding, and emotional intelligence to the classroom, which are essential for building relationships with learners and creating a positive learning environment. Therefore, the integration of AI should be seen as a complementary tool rather than a substitute for teacher expertise.

In sum, with proper safeguards and support, AI has the potential to democratize access to instructional support, particularly in isolated or underserved schools. It can help bridge the resource gap to some extent by providing teachers with additional resources and support. However, it is crucial to approach AI integration with caution, ensuring that it is used in an ethical, context appropriate, and pedagogically sound manner.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This multi-case study has provided a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the implementation of the Physical Science curriculum for Grades 8 and 9 in Namibian secondary schools. Operating within a critical hermeneutic framework, the study has illuminated the complex interplay between structural conditions, teacher agency, institutional culture, and policy context alignment in curriculum delivery.

The challenges of inadequate resources, curriculum overload, and insufficient professional development continue to pose significant obstacles to equitable curriculum implementation. However, the emergence of adaptive best practices such as collaborative planning, contextual teaching strategies, and strong support from leadership and advisory structures offers hope. Teachers who actively engage with and recontextualize the curriculum demonstrate that successful implementation is not merely about adhering to policy but about making it relevant and meaningful in the local context.

The study concludes that equity in curriculum delivery is intricately linked to both systemic support and teachers' pedagogical freedom. Recognizing teachers as central interpretive agents in the curriculum process is essential for achieving educational justice and localized reform in sub-Saharan Africa. By understanding the experiences and practices of teachers in Namibian secondary schools, this research contributes to the broader discourse on improving science education in under resourced settings.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Policy Level

Flexible Curriculum Policies: Revise national curriculum policies to incorporate greater contextual flexibility. This could involve allowing schools in rural and underserved areas to adapt the content, pacing, and assessment methods according to their specific circumstances without compromising on educational standards. The schools could be given the autonomy to include local scientific knowledge and practices in the curriculum, making it more relevant to the learners' lives.

Equitable Resource Allocation: Ensure a more equitable distribution of science resources across schools. This can be achieved through targeted support for socio-economically disadvantaged regions. Initiatives such as providing mobile science kits that can be used in schools without proper laboratory facilities or establishing community based science resource centers can help bridge the resource gap. Additionally, partnerships with local businesses and non-profit organizations can be explored to secure additional resources.

Sustained Professional Development: Institutionalize ongoing professional development programs that are subject specific, practice based, and locally responsive. These programs should be developed in collaboration with Teacher Resource Centers and Regional Advisory Services. The workshops could be organized to train teachers on using AI tools in the classroom, as well as on adapting teaching methods to local contexts. Mentorship programs can also be established to support new teachers in implementing the curriculum effectively.

6.2.2 School Level

Foster Collaborative Cultures: Promote collaborative departmental cultures through structured peer-learning, co-teaching initiatives, and reflective teaching dialogues. Schools can organize regular department wide meetings where teachers can share their experiences, challenges, and innovative teaching strategies. Co-teaching can be encouraged, allowing teachers to work together to plan and deliver lessons, which can improve curriculum interpretation and implementation. Reflective teaching dialogues can help teachers analyze their teaching practices and make improvements.

Empower School Leaders: Empower school leaders to support curriculum innovation. This includes providing scheduling flexibility for science subjects, allowing teachers more time for practical sessions and in-depth discussions. School leaders should also facilitate teacher engagement with regional science advisors. They can arrange regular meetings between teachers and advisors, where teachers can seek guidance on curriculum implementation and receive feedback on their teaching practices.

6.2.3 Classroom Level

Contextualized Teaching: Encourage teachers to use contextualized teaching methods that draw on local knowledge and materials. Teachers can incorporate local environmental issues, traditional scientific practices, or community based projects into their lessons. In a rural school, teachers can use local agricultural practices to teach concepts related to biology or chemistry. This not only makes the learning more relevant but also helps learners connect with their local environment.

Responsible AI Use: Promote the responsible use of digital and AI-based tools, such as ChatGPT, in the classroom. Teachers should be trained on how to use these tools effectively and ethically. They can use AI to support lesson planning, content explanation, and formative assessment. AI can be used to generate quizzes or provide instant feedback on learner work. However, teachers need to verify the accuracy of AI generated content and ensure that it aligns with the curriculum.

6.2.4 Research Level

Longitudinal Studies: Undertake longitudinal studies on curriculum implementation practices. These studies should focus on rural-urban disparities and learner outcomes in science subjects over an extended period. By tracking the progress of learners and the implementation of the curriculum over time, researchers can identify long-term trends and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. This can provide valuable insights for policymakers and educators.

AI Integration Evaluation: Evaluate the impact of AI integration in Namibian classrooms as a complementary instructional tool, especially in settings with limited access to physical resources. Research can focus on aspects such as learner engagement, learning outcomes, and teacher satisfaction. By conducting rigorous evaluations, educators can determine the best ways to integrate AI into the curriculum and identify any potential negative impacts that need to be addressed.

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