

# Impact Study on the Implementation of the National Textbook Policy Regarding the Procurement, Distribution and Use of Textbooks in Namibian Schools



Authors:

*Dr Jafet S. Ugwanga*

*Ms Rahab N.O Namolo*

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Professional and Resource Development  
Research Sub-Division

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**Acronyms**

|       |                                          |
|-------|------------------------------------------|
| 4IR   | 4 <sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution    |
| FGD   | Focus Group Discussion                   |
| HoDs  | Head of Departments                      |
| LSMs  | Learning Support Materials               |
| MoEAC | Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture |

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## 1. Introduction and background

Namibia has a *National Textbook Policy* dated 2008 that aims to pave the way forward for learners in formal education to have equitable access to learning support materials (LSMs). The policy was prepared following a review of textbooks and other learning materials development procedures and practices, which included field visits and wide consultation with all stakeholders of the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture (MoEAC). One of the objectives of the policy is to ensure that the textbook supply chain (procurement and distribution) is managed efficiently and transparently and provides the best value for money while catalysing the growth of the indigenous publishing industry so as to contribute to the improvement in the quality of educational opportunities and learning outcomes. The overall objective of the policy is to ultimately achieve a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects in the first instance. However, to date, the one-textbook per learner ratio (1:1) seems to be distant.

Mothowanaga and Gladwin (2021) state that *“teachers and learners are facing textbook shortages, as some teachers do not have a copy of the textbook and the ratio of learners to one textbook prevents others from having access to or sufficient time with the textbook”* (p. 69). According to Josua (2022), textbook shortages in schools have a *“negative effect on the management and delivery of effective teaching and learning”* (p. 292), resulting in poor academic performance. Furthermore, Josua (2022) urges that a shortage of instructional resources, such as textbooks, puts the effective implementation of the revised curriculum in jeopardy. Hence, the shortage of textbooks in Namibian schools at all grade levels is a concern. To address the issue of textbooks in schools, the Minister of Education, Arts, and Culture, Hon. Minister Ester Nghipondoka, presented her budget on Vote 10 for 2023/24 year in parliament on Monday, 27 March 2023. According to Nghipondoka (2023), *“the procurement of textbooks for all phases of the revised curriculum is concluded. The budgeted funds of forty million Namibian dollars (N\$ 40 million) will cover the gap to gradually reach the desired learner-textbook ratio of 1:1”* (p. 19). For the schools to effectively select instructional materials such as textbooks and procure them, the *School Textbook Management Handbook* gives detailed step-by-step advice on how schools should do that and the traps to avoid in relation to the textbook catalogues. Therefore, this study evaluated the implementation of the *National Textbook Policy* on the procurement, distribution, and use of textbooks in Namibian schools from Grades 4-12, especially textbooks with two to three titles per subject per grade on the textbook catalogues.

## **2. Research objectives**

The main objectives of this study were:

- To investigate the impacts of the *National Textbook Policy* on textbook procurement, distribution and use.
- To identify schools' modes of operation with respect to achieving a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects.
- To assess the implementation of the *School Textbook Management Handbook* in relation to the textbook catalogues.
- To understand how schools procure textbooks for Grades 4-12 when there are two or three titles per subject per grade.
- To identify the types of mechanisms used in schools to provide quality education in terms of curriculum attainment despite the shortage of textbooks.
- To understand whether teachers are involved in the process of selecting the textbook titles.
- To examine how the school distributes textbooks to the learners and use them, when there are two to three titles per subject on the textbook catalogues.

## **3. Research questions**

The following research questions formed the basis of this study:

- What are the impacts of the *National Textbook Policy* on textbook procurement, distribution, and use?
- What types of modes of operation do schools use with respect to achieve a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects?
- How realistically does the implementation of the *School Textbook Management Handbook* in relation to the textbook catalogues?
- How do schools procure textbooks for Grades 4-12 when there are two or three titles per subject per grade?
- What types of mechanisms are used in schools to provide quality education in terms of curriculum attainment despite the shortage of textbooks?
- To what extent are teachers involved in the process of selecting the textbook titles?
- How do schools distribute textbooks to the learners and use them, when there are two to three titles per subject on the textbook catalogues?

## **4. Research methodology**

### **4.1 Research design**

A mixed method that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches was used (Dawadi et al., 2021). In this case, questionnaires (online and offline) and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data to evaluate the implementation of the *National Textbook Policy* on the procurement, distribution, and use of textbooks in Namibian schools from Grades 4-12, especially textbooks with two to three titles per subject per grade.

### **4.2 Population and sample**

The population of this study consists of 31 974 teachers in the fourteen (14) regions of Namibia, with a total of 2 002 schools across the regions (Education Management Information System, 2024). The data of this study were collected in five (5) regions (Hardap, Khomas, Oshana, Oshikoto, and Otjozondjupa) with 491 participants (teachers: 375, principals: 66, and heads of departments: 50). For this study, sampling was a two-stage process. The first stage involved all the schools (from Grades 4-12) in each selected region that have access to the Internet to complete an online questionnaire. Then the second stage involved the random selection of 20 schools [Senior Primary (Grades 4-7): 7; Junior Secondary (Grade 8-9): 7; and Senior Secondary (Grade 10-12): 6] from the targeted population in the five regions.

### **4.3 Data collection procedures**

All the schools with Grades 4-12 in the selected five regions were informed in writing about the study through their Regional Directors. In each selected region, all the schools (from Grades 4-12) that have access to the Internet were required to complete an online questionnaire. Then, 20 schools were physically visited by the researchers after receiving the confirmation letters and/or acknowledging receipts of the email from the regions. At each school, the main purpose of the study was well explained to the school principals and the teachers. Participants at the visited schools completed the paper (offline) questionnaires for about 25 minutes, but, in case there were participants who had already completed online questionnaires, these participants were exempted from completing the paper questionnaires to avoid duplication. After completing the questionnaires, one of the school management, preferably the school principal, and one teacher per department participated in the focus group discussion (FGD). The average of each FGD per school was about 35 minutes.

#### **4.4 Data analysis**

Taherdoost (2020) describes data analysis as the process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making. The quantitative data from questionnaires were coded, captured in Microsoft Excel, and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 25). The SPSS generated graphs for easy interpretation in determining the extent to which teachers' experiences and perceptions were in relation to the implementation of the *National Textbook Policy* in Namibian schools. For qualitative, the audio-recorded interview data were transcribed verbatim to form categories of reporting.

#### **4.5 Research ethical consideration**

As a norm, when NIED officials collect data for the MoEAC, the selected regions are officially informed in writing through their Regional Education Directors before the commencement of data collection. At the schools, participants were fully informed about the purpose and nature of the study and also assured of confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity to the effect that no real names were going to be used (Kang & Hwang, 2023). According to Turcotte-Tremblay and McSween-Cadieux (2018), maintaining confidentiality is essential as it builds trust relationships between the researchers and participants, while breaching confidentiality can harm the characters of the participants. The researchers also made sure that participants' participation was a free will exercise (Creswell, 2014). The participants were also informed of their right to decline or withdraw from the study any time they wished to do so should they feel intimidated or pressured by the research setting.

### **5. Findings**

This study evaluated the implementation of the *National Textbook Policy* on the procurement, distribution, and use of textbooks in Namibian schools from Grades 4-12, especially textbooks with two to three titles per subject per grade on the textbook catalogues. The findings are presented under the following headings: number of participants per region; type of school and participants' work position; participants per school phase; awareness and access of the *National Textbook Policy*; awareness and access of the revised textbook catalogue; the impacts of the *National Textbook Policy* on textbook procurement; the impacts of the *National Textbook Policy* on the distribution of new textbook; the impacts of the *National Textbook Policy* on the usage of textbooks; modes of operation in achieving a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects; the school textbook management handbook; the

major challenges affecting the fully implementation of the *National Textbook Policy*; the recommendations for effectively implement the *National Textbook Policy*; and the way forward. In addition, the extracts from FGDs are reported pseudonyms with names ranging from Teacher 01 to Teacher 60.

### **5.1 Number of participants per region**

It was mentioned under Section 4.2 that five (5) regions were sampled for this study. Table 1 presents the names of these regions and the actual numbers and percentages of the participants per region.

**Table 1: Number of participants per region**

| <b>Region</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|---------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Hardap        | 54            | 11.0                  |
| Khomas        | 92            | 18.7                  |
| Oshana        | 93            | 18.9                  |
| Oshikoto      | 183           | 37.3                  |
| Otjozondjupa  | 69            | 14.1                  |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>491</b>    | <b>100</b>            |

As seen in Table 1, the exact total number of participants across the five regions who participated in the study is 491. The numbers of participants by region are as follows: Hardap (54), Khomas (92), Oshana (93), Oshikoto (183), and Otjozondjupa (69). In percentages, Oshikoto has the highest number of participants with 37.3%, followed by Oshana and Khomas with 18.9% and 18.7%, respectively. Then, the Hardap region has the lowest number of participants, at 11.0%.

### **5.2 Type of school and participants' work position**

The types of schools that participated in the study and the work positions of the participants are presented in Figure 1.

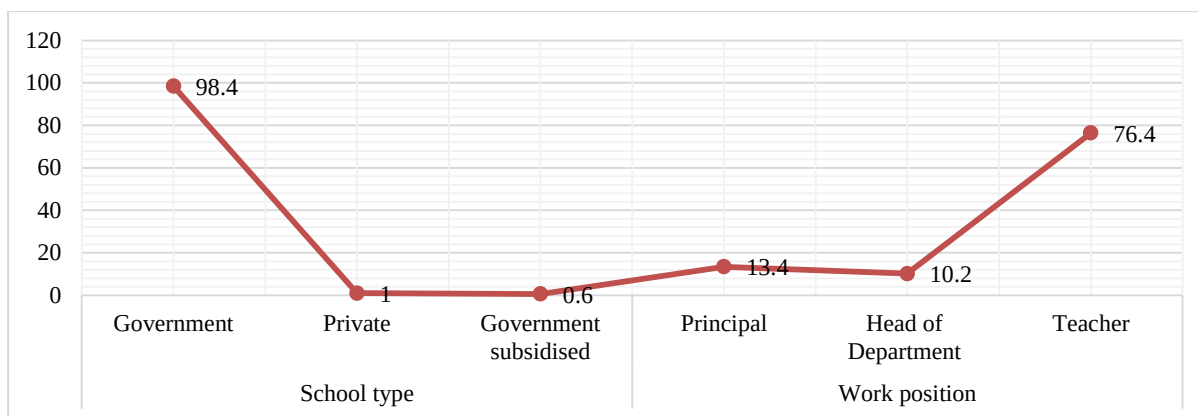


**Figure 1: Type of school and participants' work position**

Figure 1 reveals that the majority of the participants (98.4%) represented the government schools as compared to the private and government-subsidised (funded) schools, with 1.0% and 0.6%, respectively. From the actual numerical data, out of 491 participants, the government schools had 483; private schools had five, whereas government-subsidised (funded) schools had three participants. In terms of work position, teachers were the majority with 76.4% and an actual number of 375, as compared to the principals and heads of departments, who had 13.4% (66) and 10.2% (50), respectively.

### 5.3 Participants per school phase

Schools are different in terms of the grade levels and/or school phases that they offer. Thus, schools that had Grades 4-12 qualified to participate in the study. Table 2 presents the number of participants per school phase.

**Table 2: Participants per school phase**

| School phase                     | Number     | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| Primary school (4–7)             | 142        | 28.9           |
| Combined school (4–9)            | 104        | 21.2           |
| Combined school (4–11)           | 26         | 5.3            |
| Combined school (8–9)            | 9          | 1.8            |
| Secondary school (8–12)          | 160        | 32.6           |
| Secondary school (10–12)         | 38         | 7.7            |
| Combined school (Pre-Primary–12) | 12         | 2.4            |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>491</b> | <b>100</b>     |

Table 2 shows that the majority of the participants (160), which is 32.6%, represented the combined schools that had grades ranging from 8 to 12. The schools with grades 8 to 9 had the lowest number of participants (1.8%).

#### 5.4 Awareness and access of the National Textbook Policy

Figure 2 presents the responses on the participants' awareness of the *National Textbook Policy* and whether participants had a personal copy of the policy. Apart from the personal copy, researchers also wanted to know if the school kept a copy of the policy. Furthermore, participants were asked whether they were aware that the *National Textbook Policy* aims at achieving a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects.

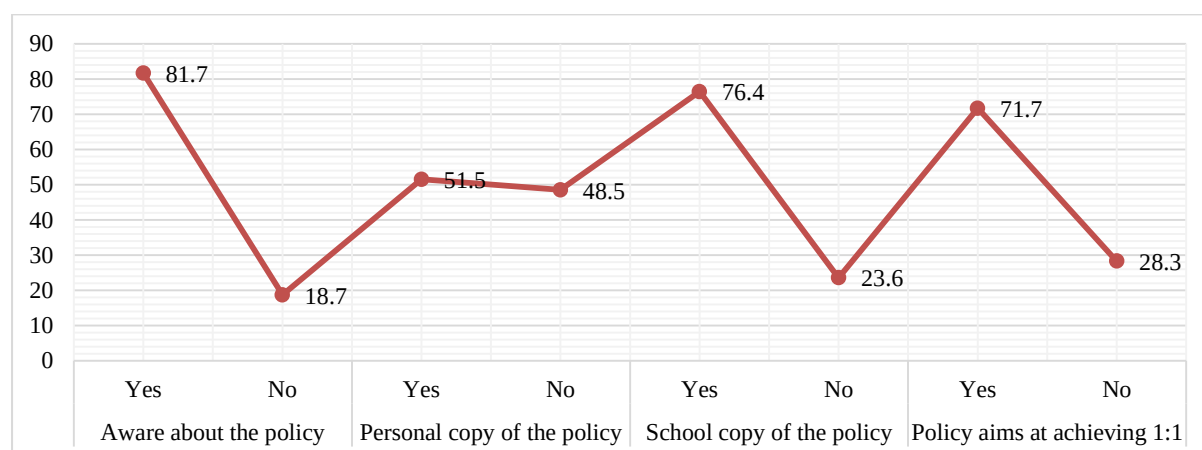


**Figure 2: Awareness and access of the National Textbook Policy**

Figure 2 shows that the majority (81.7%) of the participants were aware of the textbook policy; however, nearly half (48.5%) of them had no personal copy of the policy. Even though some participants were not in possession of the textbook policy's copy, the majority of the participants (76.4%) indicated that there is a copy of the textbook policy at the school. The majority of the participants (71.7%) indicated that they knew that the *National Textbook Policy* aimed at achieving a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects (eight textbooks per learner at the primary level and thirteen at the secondary level), contrary to 28.3% of the participants who did not know.

#### 5.5 Awareness and access of the revised textbook catalogue

The responses on the participants' awareness of the revised textbook catalogue and whether they had a personal copy of the catalogue are provided in Figure 3. Participants were also asked whether the school received a copy of the catalogue through their Regional Education office. Furthermore, participants were asked whether the revised textbook catalogue had a list of approved textbooks.

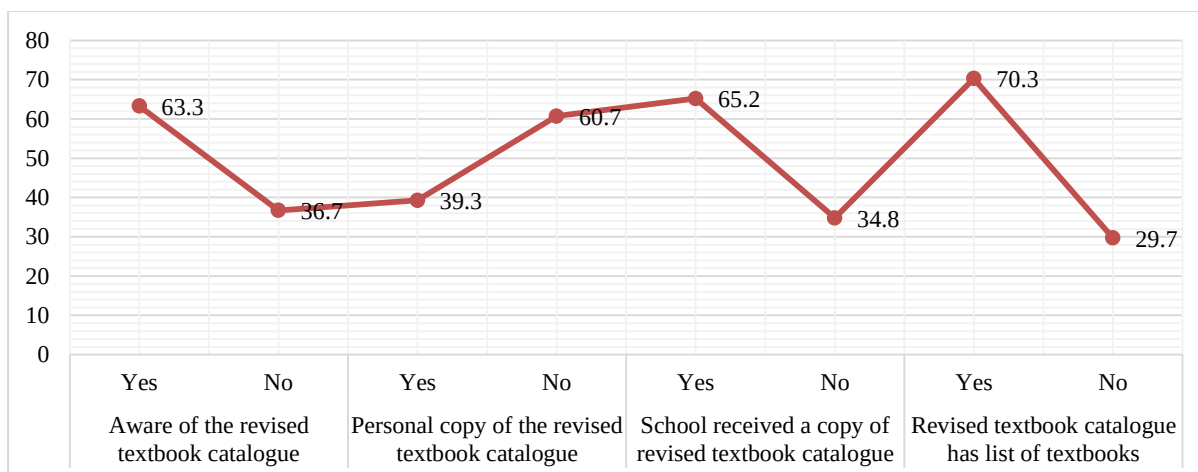


**Figure 3: Awareness and access of the revised textbook catalogue**

Figure 3 displays that 63.3% of the participants were aware of the revised textbook catalogue; although the majority of them were aware, 60.7% of them did not have a personal copy, contrary to 39.3% of those who were in possession of the copy. According to the participants, 65.2% of them indicated that the Regional Education office supplied the schools with a free copy of the revised textbook catalogue. Participants were also asked whether they were aware that the revised textbook catalogue gives a comprehensive list of textbooks and other instructional materials for use in Namibian government schools, and the majority (70.3%) agreed, as compared to 29.7% of the participants who were not aware.

## **5.6 The impacts of the National Textbook Policy on textbook procurement**

Sections 5.6.1 to 5.6.5 dealt with the impacts of the *National Textbook Policy* on textbook procurement and whether participants were involved in the procurement of textbooks for their subjects or phases that they teach.

### **5.6.1 Approved textbook catalogue and selection of one title per subject**

The responses on whether schools always receive the approved textbook catalogue and select one title per subject towards achieving a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio are provided in Figure 4.

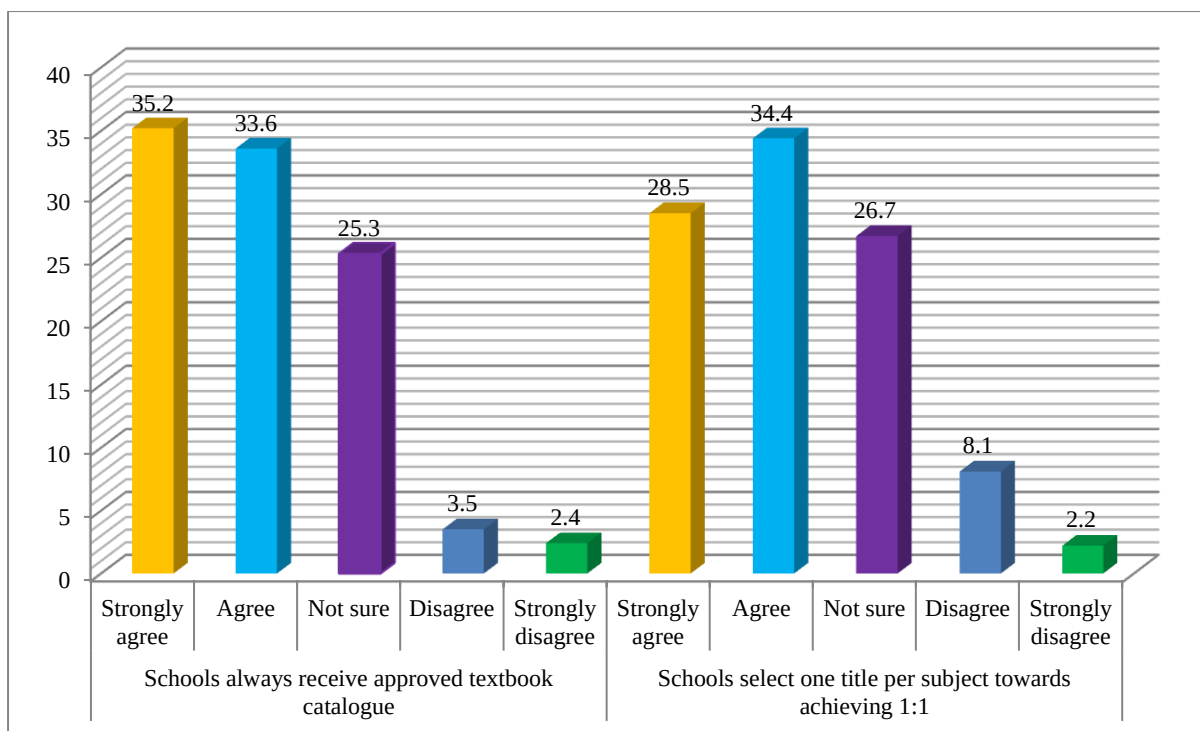


**Figure 4: Approved textbook catalogue and selection of one title per subject**

As shown in Figure 4, the majority of the participants (68.8%) and (62.9%) agreed that their schools always receive the official textbook catalogue with approved textbook titles to guide the school textbook selection committee on what textbooks to order and that their schools select one title per subject in order to gradually progress towards achieving a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio, as prescribed in the revised textbook catalogue, respectively. However, a quarter of the participants were not sure about both statements.

#### 5.6.2 Selection and ordering of textbooks at the school level

Participants' responses on whether the schools select textbooks from the revised textbook catalogue only and not from other textbook catalogues and if the textbooks that the school textbook selection committee selects and orders are always within the school budget allocation are presented in Figure 5.

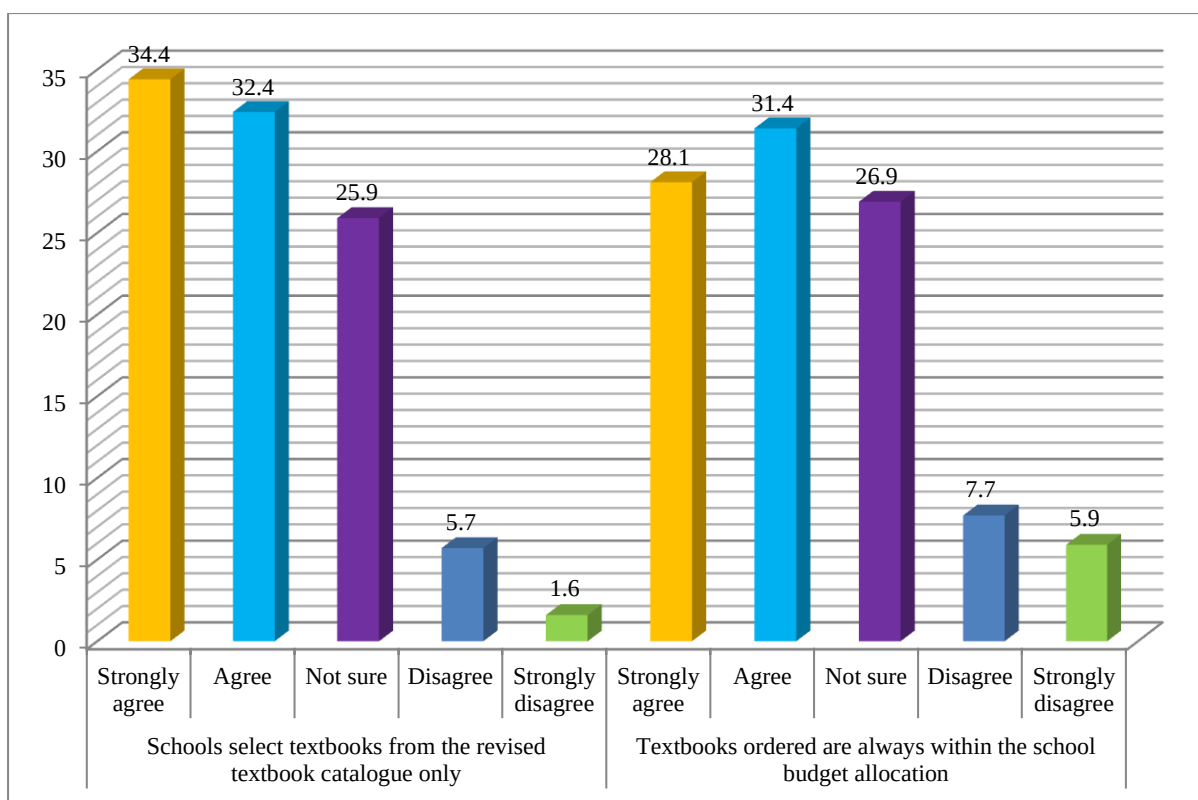


**Figure 5: Selection and ordering of textbooks at the school level**

The majority of the participants (66.8%) indicated that schools select textbooks from the revised textbook catalogue only and not from other textbook catalogues, whereas 25.9% of them were uncertain while the rest of the participants (7.3%) disagreed. About the ordering of textbooks, 59.5%

*"We normally give the samples of textbooks and approved catalogues to the subject teachers. If two are sharing the subject, then they have to sit together and compare the textbooks with the syllabus and then choose the one with clear pictures and cover most of the basic competencies. Then, what subject teachers decide they report it to their HoDs. And in most cases, to the administrative officer who is going to finalise the ordering of textbooks for the subjects per grade. So... teachers choose the textbooks that they want to use."*  
**Teacher 09**

of the participants agreed that the school textbook selection committee selects and orders textbooks that are always within the school budget allocation. Surprisingly, 26.9% of the participants were not sure. During the interviews, teachers were asked to what extent they were involved in the selection of the textbook titles, and some of the teachers' responses are provided in the extracts above.

*"When it comes to the selection and ordering, all the teachers used to come together, and then we asked ourselves what titles we preferred, and then we just ordered textbooks according to our selections."*  
**Teacher 29**

### 5.6.3 Ordering of textbooks from approved titles for enrichment and class use

According to the revised textbook catalogue, schools should order one copy of the other approved titles for subjects listed in the catalogues and use them for enrichment purposes and as a resource for teachers. It is further recommended that schools order textbooks for any

class and any subject as long as these titles are listed in the revised textbook catalogue. Participants' responses are provided in Figure 6.

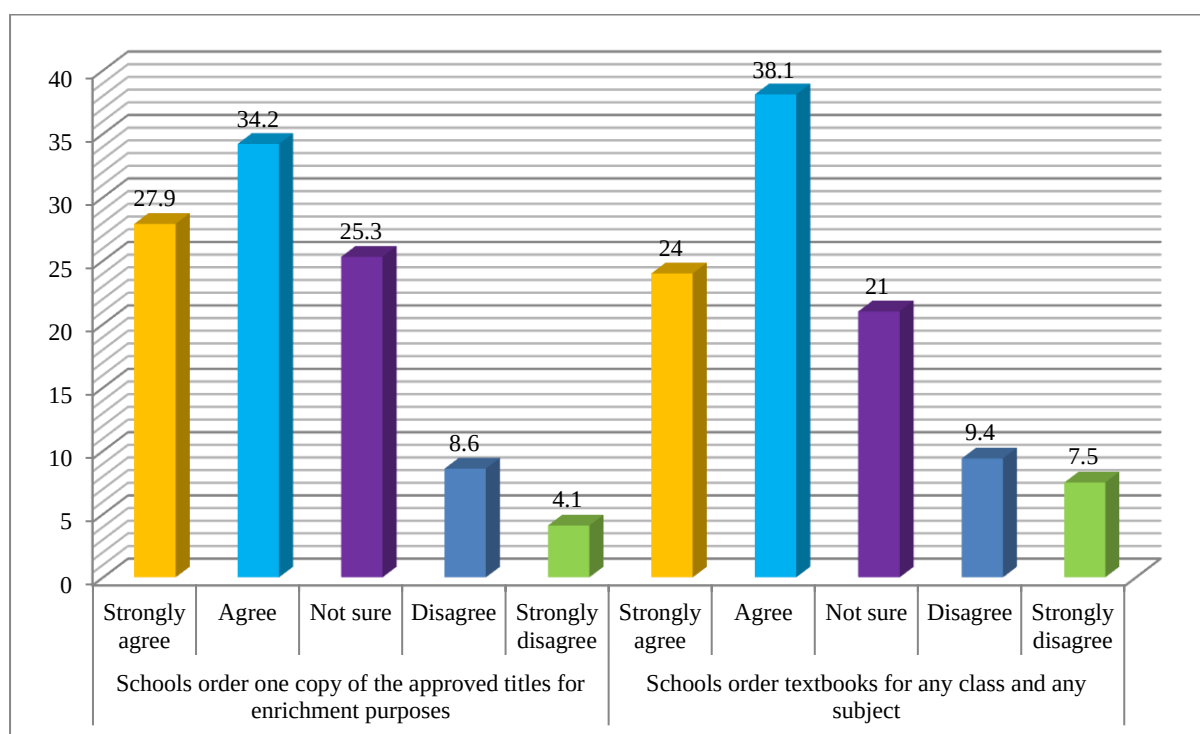


**Figure 6: Ordering of textbooks from approved titles for enrichment and class use**

Figure 6 reveals that 62.1% of the participants agreed that their schools order one copy of the approved titles for enrichment purposes and as a resource for teachers. Similarly, the same percentages of the participants indicated that schools order textbooks for any class and any subject as long as these titles are listed in the revised textbook catalogue.

*"We also have the right to choose and order textbooks we want from different titles, just as resources for the teachers. Which means that we look at one title that we are going to give to the learners and other copies as the resource or reference books."* **Teacher 19**

However, 12.7% and 16.9% of the participants disagreed with those two

*"Let me say English; it has three titles. We choose one that will form part of the teachers' resource books for extra information. Then, after that we order the best textbook from the titles which will be used by or for all the learners."* **Teacher 30**

statements, while 25.3% and 21.0% were not sure, respectively. During the interview, at some schools, teachers revealed that they order more than one textbook from the approved titles. The one textbook was for the learners, whereas the remaining textbooks were to be used by the teachers as resource books for enrichment purposes in relation to the subject contents.

#### 5.6.4 The usage of universal primary funds to purchase textbooks

This study investigated whether schools were using universal primary funds received from the government to purchase textbooks from the approved textbook catalogue in order to

achieve a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects. Participants were also asked if the textbooks that the schools ordered and/or procured were affordable to the government. The responses to these statements are presented in Figure 7.

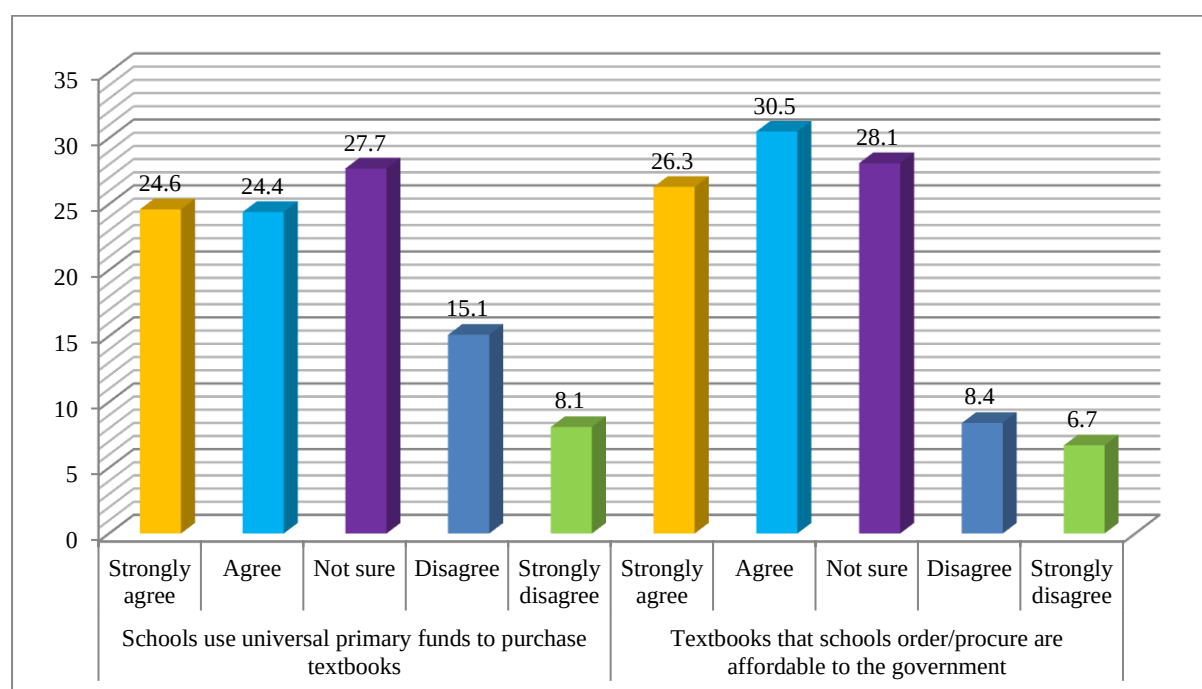


**Figure 7: The usage of universal primary funds to purchase textbooks**

As displayed in Figure 9, 49.0% and 56.8% of the participants indicated that schools use Universal Primary Funds received from the government to purchase textbooks from the approved textbook catalogue to achieve a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects, and the textbooks that the schools order and/or procure are affordable to the government, respectively. Despite the fact that the majority of the participants agreed, a fairly large number of participants (27.7%) and 28.1% were not sure when compared to those who disagreed. During the interviews, there was evidence that schools were not necessarily using the Universal Primary or Secondary Funds to procure learners textbooks on contrary to what they indicated in the questionnaire. However, at some schools, the Universal Primary or Secondary Funds were used to purchase textbooks

*"Sometime the publishers come to our school marketing their textbooks. We order a few textbooks for teachers' reference only using Universal Primary Funds because we cannot use school money to purchase textbooks for all the learners."* **Teacher 17**

*"Mostly we look at the price of the textbook and consider the one that is affordable, depending on the school budget."* **Teacher 47**

*"Normally, it is not the school that selects textbooks; we are given titles of the textbooks that we have to order from the regional office. It's not more informative than comparing to the other regions. As a teacher, a teacher... is a resourceful person; you see...you can just have both textbooks."* **Teacher 29**

that were only used by the teachers as resource books. Schools were only selecting and ordering the affordable textbooks from the approved textbook catalogues, and then the Regional Offices processed the purchasing orders.

### 5.6.5 *The relevance and durability of the textbooks*

Figure 8 provides answers to whether schools order and/or procure textbooks that are relevant to Namibia's educational approaches and can last for at least five years.

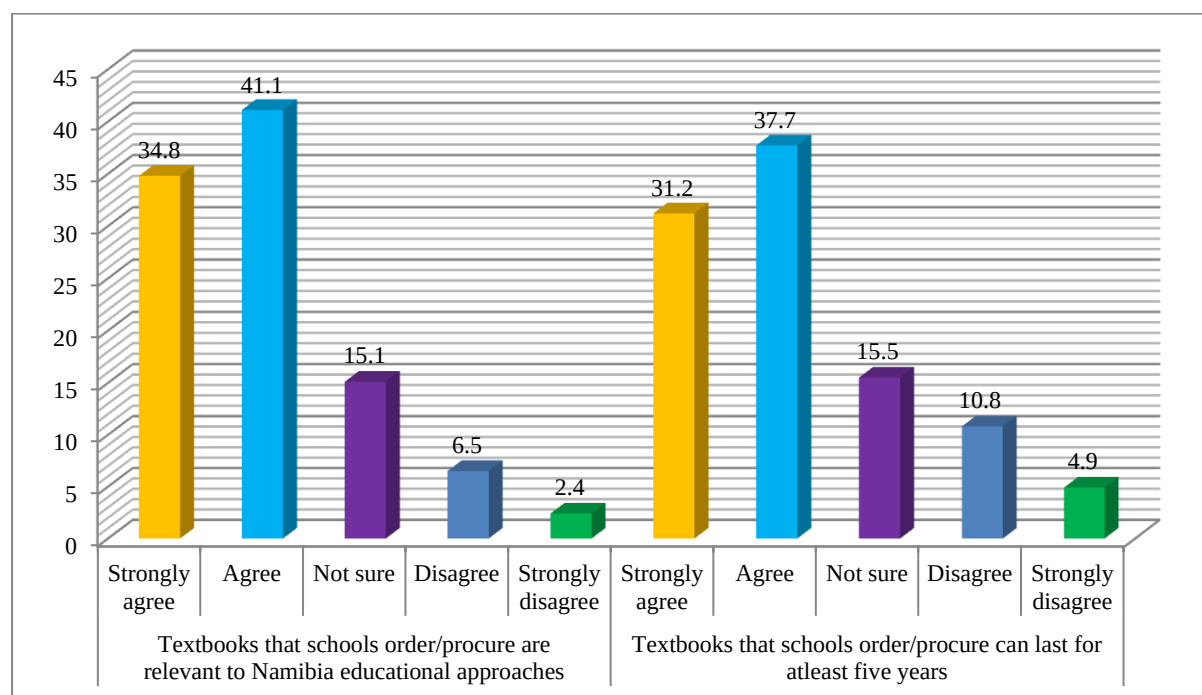


**Figure 8: The relevance and durability of the textbooks**

As shown in Figure 8, the majority of the participants (75.9%) and (68.9%) indicated that schools order and/or procure textbooks that are relevant to Namibia's educational approaches, and the ordered and/or procured textbooks would last for at least five years, respectively, as opposed to 15.1% and 15.5%, who were uncertain about statements.

## 5.7 *The impacts of the National Textbook Policy on the distribution of new textbook*

This section aimed at finding out the impacts of the *National Textbook Policy* on textbook distribution and whether participants were involved in the distribution of textbooks for their subjects or phases that they teach.

### 5.7.1 The distribution of new textbooks in relation to fairness

Responses to the statements on whether the new textbooks were always distributed to the learners during the first trimester or semester and if there were fairness in the distribution of textbooks to the learners in schools are given in Figure 9.

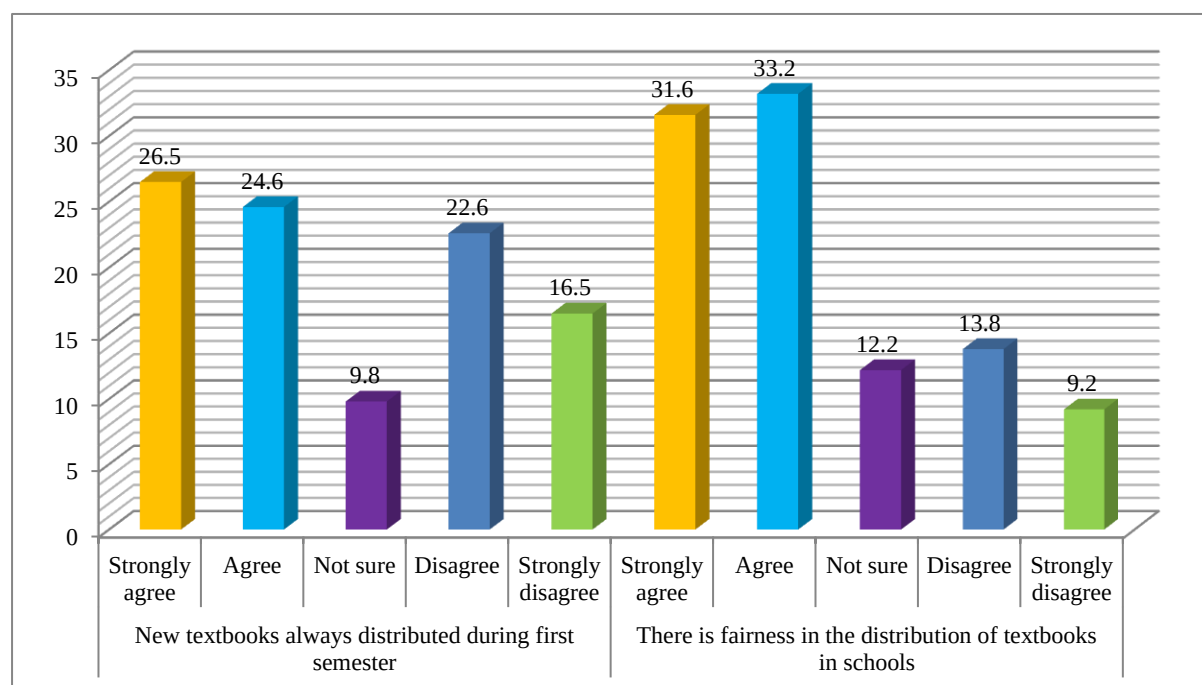


**Figure 9: The distribution of new textbooks in relation to fairness**

Many participants (51.1%) agreed that new textbooks were always distributed to the learners during the first trimester or semester, while a fair number of them (39.1%) disagreed. Furthermore, the majority of the participants (64.8%) indicated that there was fairness in the distribution of textbooks to the learners in schools. During the FGDs, one teacher indicated that they only received one or two textbooks, see extract. The researchers further wanted to know how schools distribute textbooks to the learners and use them, in case there are two to three titles per subject. The responses from some teachers are presented as extracts in the boxes.

*"We don't receive more than two textbooks at our school; we normally receive only one or two textbooks. Then you focus on the textbook that you are using, the one you decide with the syllabus."* **Teacher 36**

*"We usually check our syllabuses and basic competencies and what needs to be taught under those basic competencies. Then we compare our textbooks. You might find that these basic competencies are well explained, or there are good contents in this textbook or in the other one. In that case, then we duplicate that page, and then we give a summary to the learners according to or what comes from that textbook."* **Teacher 14**

*"I normally check the topics in both textbooks, then summarise whatever is written in both textbooks. Then come up with one copy that I share in class. But to distribute the textbooks in class... ayee...we don't do that unless you combine the contents and give the summary."* **Teacher 42**

### 5.7.2 Availability of textbooks in schools for core subjects

Figure 10 provides the responses on whether there was a shortage of textbooks in schools for core subjects. On the contrary, researchers also wanted to know if each learner had a learners' book per core subject.

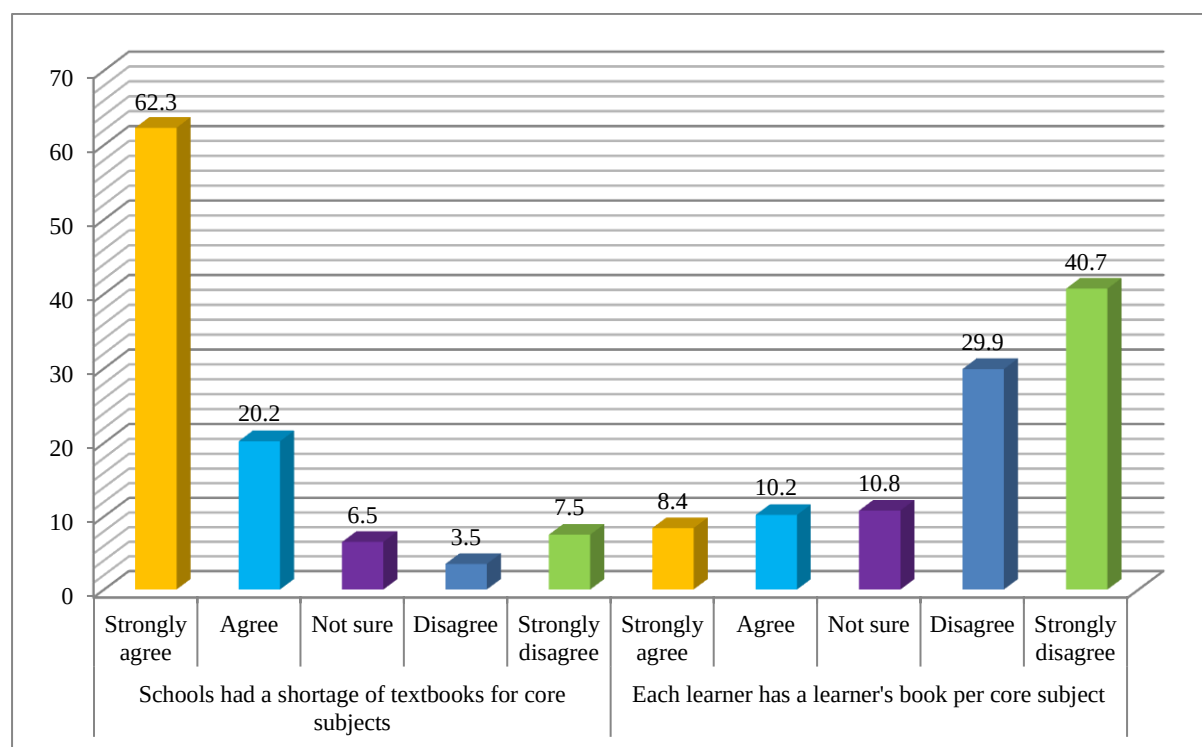


**Figure 10: Availability of textbooks in schools for core subjects**

As displayed in Figure 10, more than 80% of the participants indicated that there was a shortage of textbooks in schools for core subjects. On the contrary, 70.6% of the participants disagreed that each learner had a learners' book per core subject, as opposed to 18.6% who agreed. It is evidence that most schools, as the participants (82.5%) do not have sufficient textbooks for core subjects. Hence, during the interviews, participants were asked to mention the types of modes of operation their schools were using with respect to achieving a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects. Some extracts as responses from the participants are presented in boxes.

*"Sometimes learners share textbooks, which is no longer a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio, whereby we keep the few textbooks at school. Although Grade 4-7 learners were supposed to carry textbooks home, we do not have a choice because of a shortage of books; otherwise, the textbooks might get lost. Sometimes we are making copies of activities or summaries from textbooks for the learners. To be honest, some textbooks are copyright protected, but we do not have a choice. The aim is just to cater for all the learners, and making copies alone is another challenge again because we have to use papers to make copies, which require money again, and they are not enough."* **Teacher 07**

*"Yah... we do not have other ways other than searching for information. We are so lucky that we have Internet and clever touch devices at school; it helps us to do research on Google to find some information that helps us during the teaching and learning process. It came with the Grade 12 new curriculum."* **Teacher 34**

### 5.7.3 Group sharing of textbooks during lessons and home taking of textbooks

Figure 11 presents the answers to whether learners were sharing textbooks in groups during the lessons due to a lack of textbooks. Furthermore, this study sought answers to whether a lack of textbooks resulted in only allowing a few learners to take textbooks home for studying and doing homework.

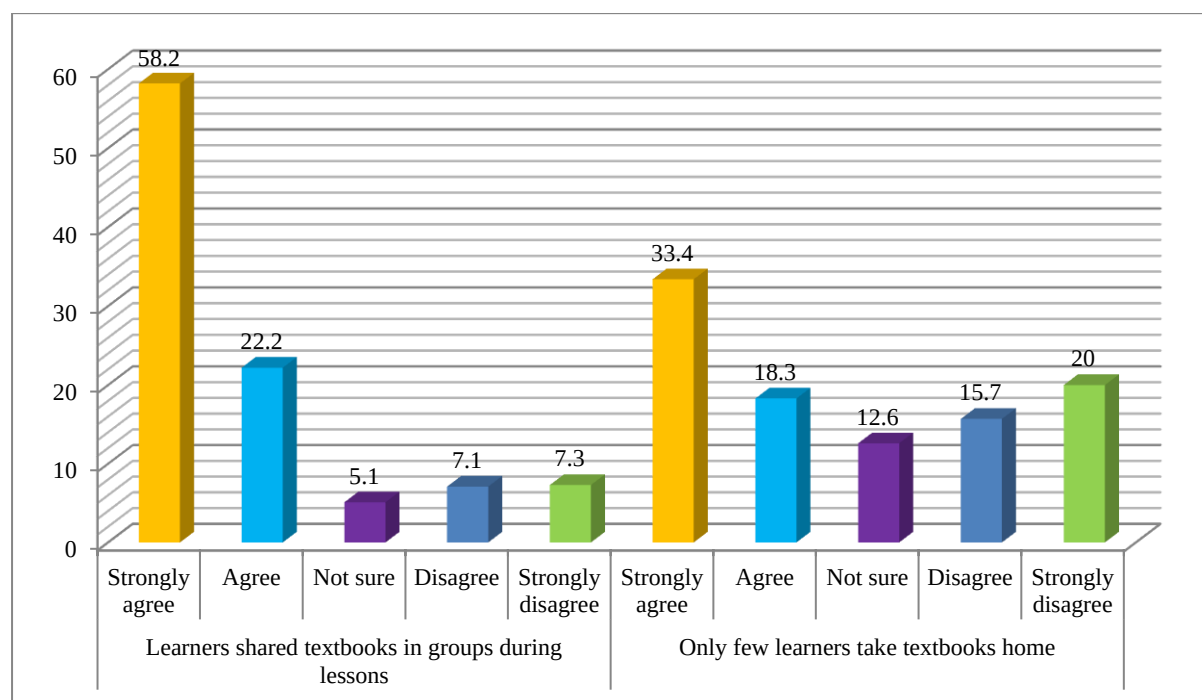


**Figure 11: Group sharing of textbooks during lessons and home taking of textbooks**

The majority of the participants (80.4%) agreed that learners were sharing textbooks in groups during the lessons due to a lack of textbooks. Similarly, 51.7% of the participants indicated that a lack of textbooks resulted in only a few learners being allowed to take textbooks home for studying and doing homework, as compared to 35.7% who disagreed.

*"Due to a lack of textbooks in almost every subject, we try by all means to group learners so that at least they can share... where topics are described better. We are just talking about the textbooks that we don't have, and some of these things that we are talking about here, we did years ago. The textbooks that we have here are no longer in use because they are completely out-dated. So we are just trying to teach from our experience."Teacher 36*

## 5.8 The impacts of the National Textbook Policy on the usage of textbooks

Sections 5.8.1 to 5.8.3 provide responses on whether the *National Textbook Policy* had an impact on textbook usage and if participants were using the prescribed textbooks for their subjects or phases that they teach.

### 5.8.1 The usage of textbooks with two to three titles for core subjects

Figure 12 presents the responses on whether schools were using textbooks with two to three titles for core subjects from the textbook catalogue and if schools were using textbooks that were not listed in the textbook catalogue.

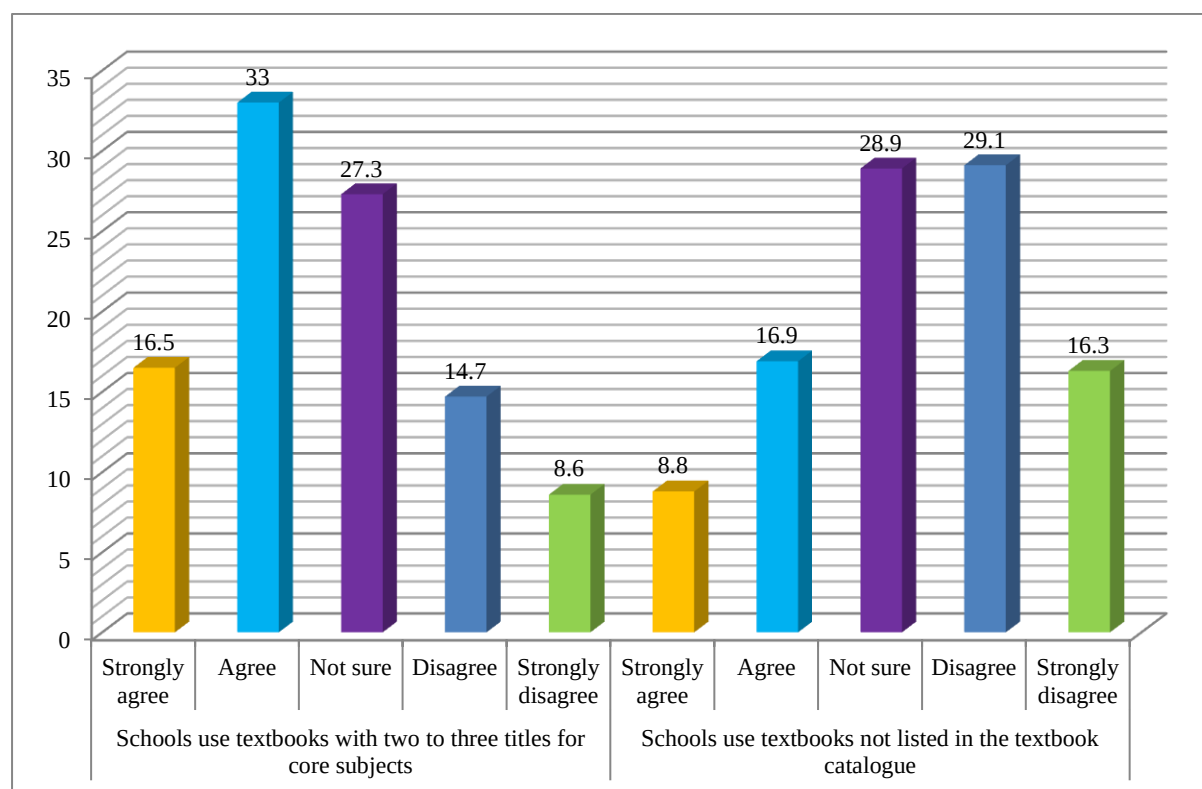


**Figure 12: The usage of textbooks with two to three titles for core subjects**

Responses presented in Figure 12 show that about half of the participants agreed that schools were using textbooks with two to three titles for core subjects from the textbook catalogue.

One of the teachers shared the same sentiment; the teacher's extract from the interview is presented. Surprisingly, 27.3% of the participants were not sure.

*"For example, if you have three titles, 'Let's Do', 'Platinum', and 'Excellent', just five textbooks each, for the same subject, you cannot give learners all these different textbooks. Even though they have the same content, you confuse them. A teacher is supposed to have lots of textbooks as a resource to choose the content from which you give to the learners. For example, in 'Let's Do,' the content is well explained; you make copies from that one and give them to the learners, or instead of giving them that textbook to share."* **Teacher II**

On whether the schools were using

textbooks that were not listed in the textbook catalogue, 45.4% of the participants disagreed, with only 25.7% agreeing and 28.9% not sure.

### 5.8.2 The use of learning materials in teaching Foreign Languages

Participants were asked whether schools teaching foreign languages (German, French, and Portuguese) were continuing to use relevant learning materials as selected by the schools themselves in consultation with NIED in addition to the textbooks. Furthermore, researchers

wanted to know if schools had rules in place to ensure that learners used textbooks appropriately. Responses to these statements are presented in Figure 13.

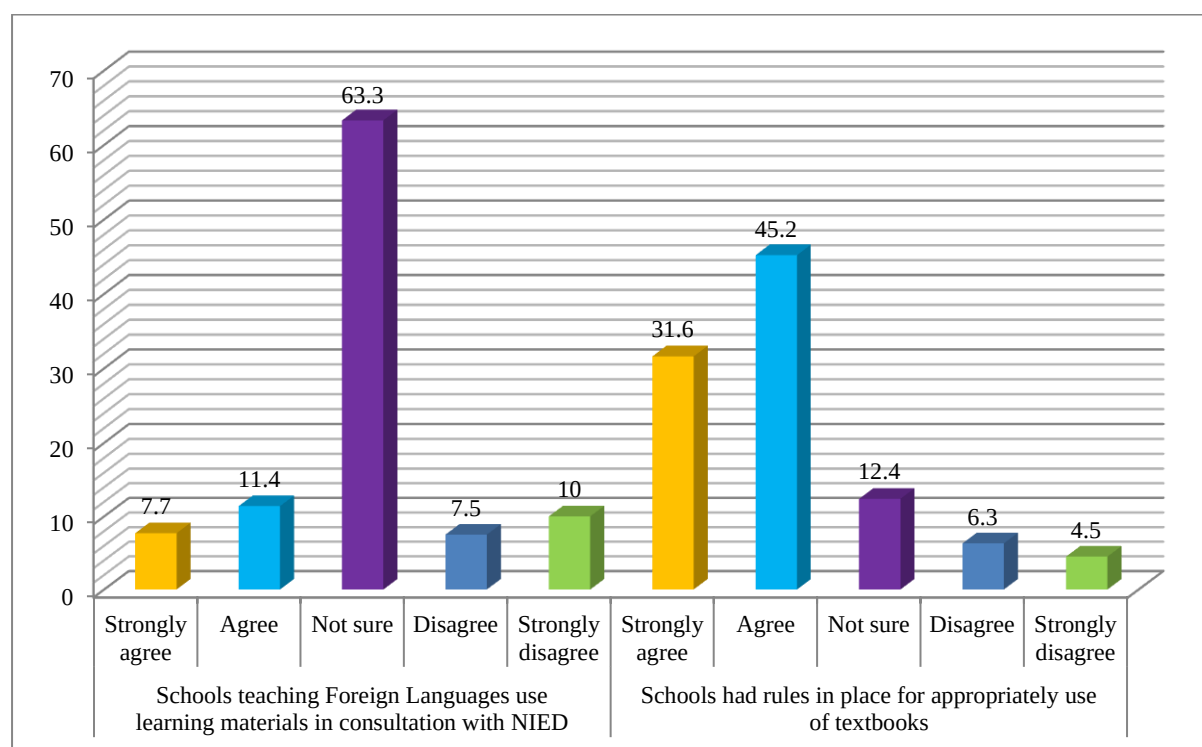


**Figure 13: The use of learning materials in teaching Foreign Languages**

As shown in Figure 13, the majority of the participants (63.3%) were not sure whether schools teaching foreign languages (German, French, and Portuguese) were using relevant learning materials in consultation with NIED. Only 19.1% and 17.5% agreed and disagreed with the statement, respectively. On the other hand, the majority of the participants (76.8%) indicated that schools had rules in place to ensure that learners used textbooks appropriately.

### 5.8.3 Lack of textbooks in relation to poor learners' performance

This section presents the responses on whether learners were only taking notes during the lesson due to a lack of textbooks and if a lack of textbooks was the main contributing factor to poor learners' performance in schools.

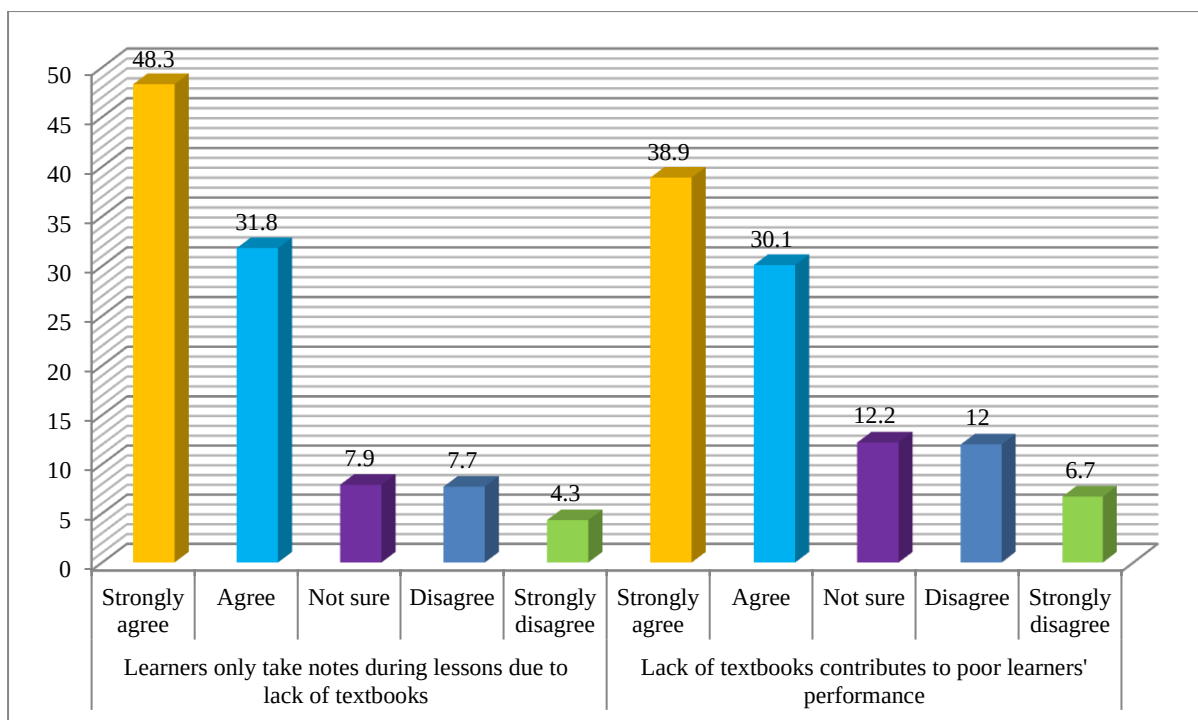


**Figure 14: Lack of textbooks in relation to poor learners' performance**

Participants (80.1%) indicated that learners were only taking notes during the lessons due to a lack of textbooks in schools. And 69.0% of the participants agreed that a lack of textbooks was the main contributing factor to poor learners' performance in schools. On the contrary, some participants indicated

*"We use the little textbooks that we have so in some subjects you might find only less than five textbooks. So, we give these textbooks to the learners to share but in case where learners need information like pictures, we make copies and write summaries on the chalkboard for all the learners to have the same information."* **Teacher 34**

*"To give quality education to our learners, we usually don't rely on textbooks all the time. We usually use the Internet and make copies or get pictures that are relevant to the syllabus/competences. Also get notes from colleagues from the other schools, through Internet and then we make copies, so we give the notes to our learners because some textbooks don't give enough information based on the basic competences, so we search to help us in teaching."* **Teacher 16**

during the interviews that despite the lack of textbooks, they relied on making copy papers and writing summaries on the chalkboard. For the schools with Internet connectivity, teachers search for relevant information in relation to the basic competencies and to enrich their subject contents when teaching.

## **5.9 Modes of operation in achieving a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects**

This section aimed to identify the modes of operation that were used in schools to achieve a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects.

### **5.9.1 Textbook selection committee and strategic plans in schools**

Figure 15 provides participants' responses to whether schools had an active textbook selection committee that coordinates and monitors the textbook operation process and if

schools had strategic plans in place on how to achieve a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects.

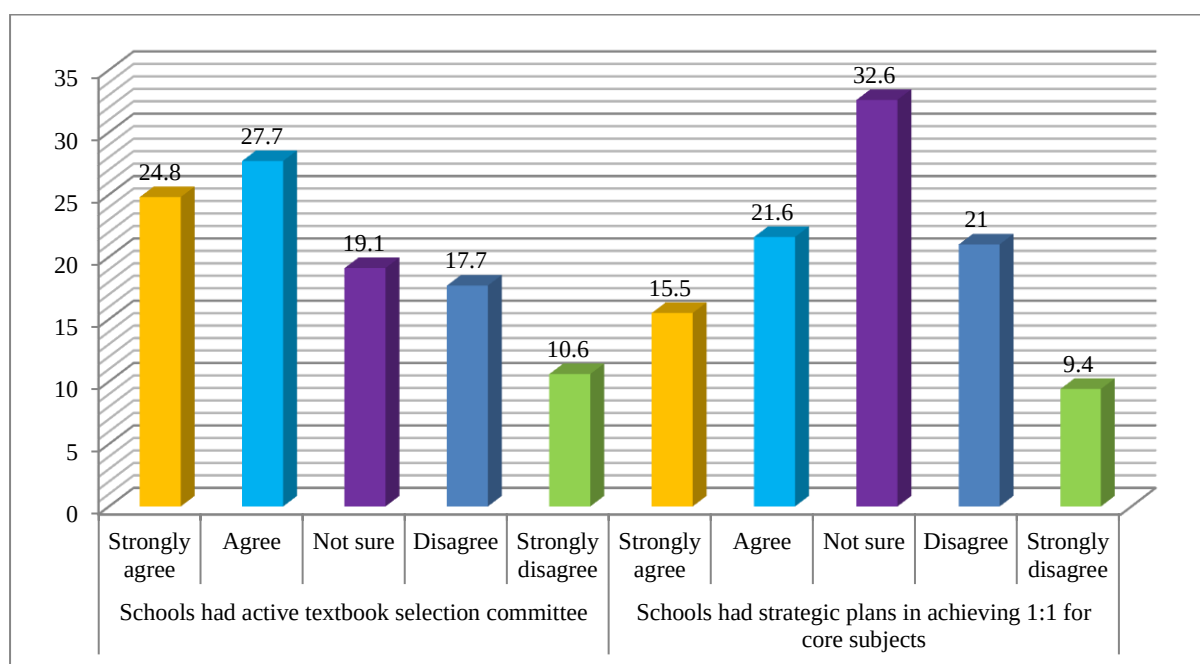


**Figure 15: Textbook selection committee and strategic plans in schools**

As displayed in Figure 15, 52.5% of the participants indicated that schools had an active textbook selection committee that coordinates and monitors the textbook operation process.

However, participants (32.6%) were not sure if their schools had strategic plans in place on how to achieve a 1:1 learner-

*"We do have a textbook selection committee in our school, just on paper; unfortunately, it's not operational. Yah... everybody does their own thing when it's come to textbooks, you record all the textbooks you distribute. We don't really monitor what's going on, when it comes to the textbooks."* **Teacher 21**

textbook ratio for core subjects, as compared to 37.1% and 30.4% who agreed and disagreed, respectively, with the statement. The

extracts above are part of the interview discussions, whereby some participants indicated that they don't have an active

*"At the moment we don't have the selection committee since we don't use to receive textbooks. Yah... we see no use of a textbook selection committee. Image only receive two or three textbooks, maybe the maximum of five textbooks after some years and we don't distribute textbooks to the learners. So, we find no need for such committee to be in existence as it just does nothing."* **Teacher 11**

textbook selection committee in place at their schools. At some schools, the committee was only on paper but not active, whereas at

some schools there was no textbook selection committee at all. When it

*"We don't have such a committee and we felt that it is good to come together, as a school, so that when we order textbooks together. We discuss together and favour one title of a textbook and we decide on which textbook to buy."* **Teacher 55**

comes to the selection of textbooks' titles, the whole staff members gather together and do selection under the guidance of the school principal.

### 5.9.2 Textbook inventories and guidelines in handling textbooks

The responses to whether schools had textbook inventories in place to record all the textbooks that were procured and/or received are presented in Figure 16. In addition, the answers to whether the schools have guidelines in place to ensure that textbooks are handled well and taken care of by the learners are also provided.

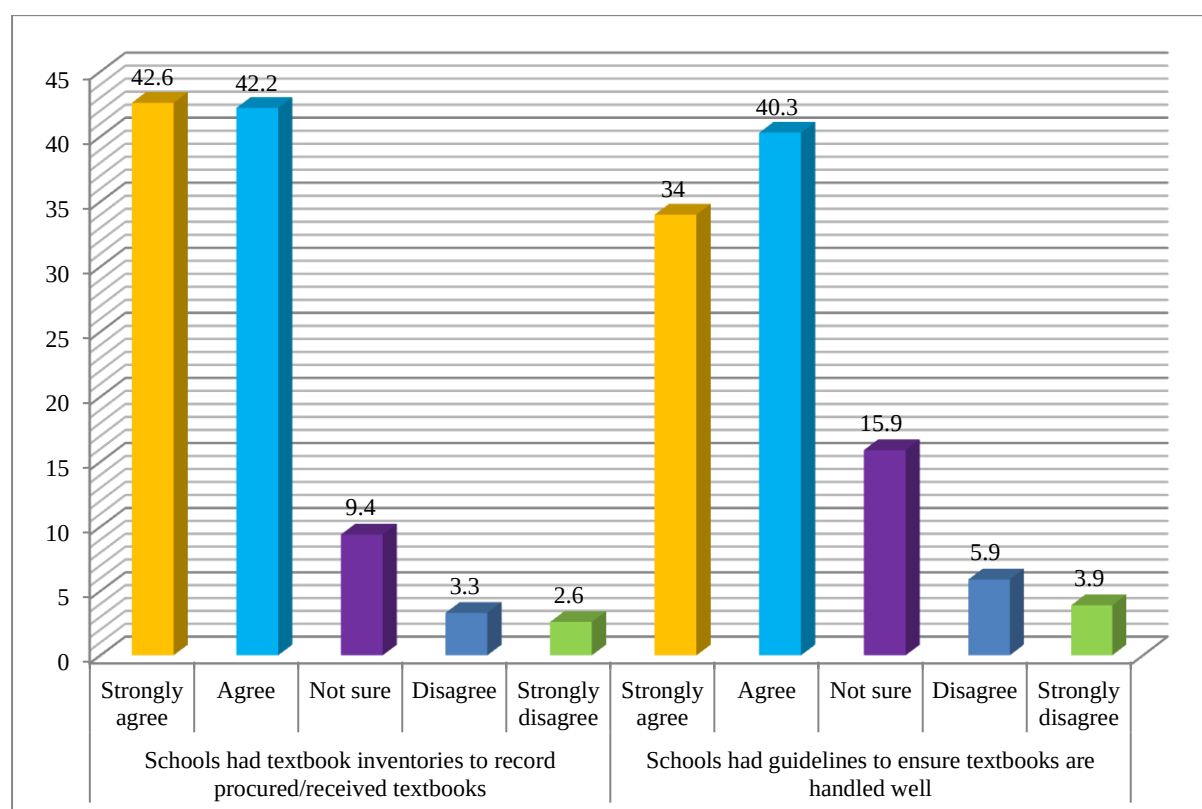


**Figure 16: Textbook inventories and guidelines in handling textbooks**

Figure 16 shows that the majority of the participants (84.8%) and (74.3%) agreed that their schools had textbook inventories to record all the textbooks that were procured and/or received, and there were guidelines in place to ensure that textbooks were handled well and taken care of by the learners, respectively.

### 5.9.3 Teachers' textbook inventories and channels of communication

Figure 17 provides responses to whether schools had textbook inventories in place for all teachers per subject and phase to record all the textbooks issued to the learners and if there was clear communication between the schools and the Regional Education offices regarding textbook procurement, distribution, and use.

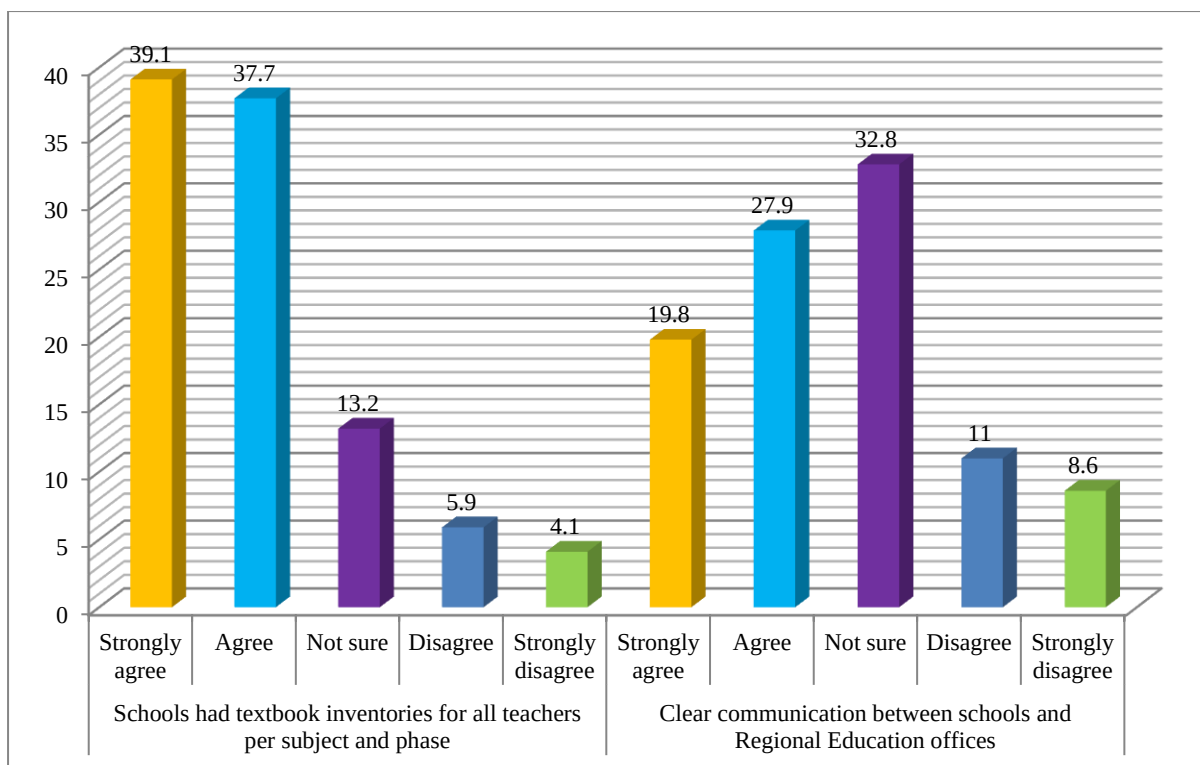


**Figure 17: Teachers' textbook inventories and channels of communication**

The majority of the participants (76.8%) indicated that their schools had textbook inventories in place for all teachers per subject and phase to record all the textbooks issued to the learners. And about fifty percent (47.7%) of the participants agreed that there was clear communication between the schools and the Regional Education offices regarding textbook procurement, distribution, and use, as opposed to 19.6% and 32.8% who disagreed and were uncertain, respectively.

### **5.10 School textbook management handbook**

This section aimed at assessing the implementation of the *School Textbook Management Handbook* in relation to the textbook catalogues.

#### **5.10.1 Clear procedures on managing and handling of textbooks**

Participants' responses on whether schools had clear procedures in place when managing textbooks and if each subject per grade phase was represented by a teacher in the process of handling textbooks are provided in Figure 18.

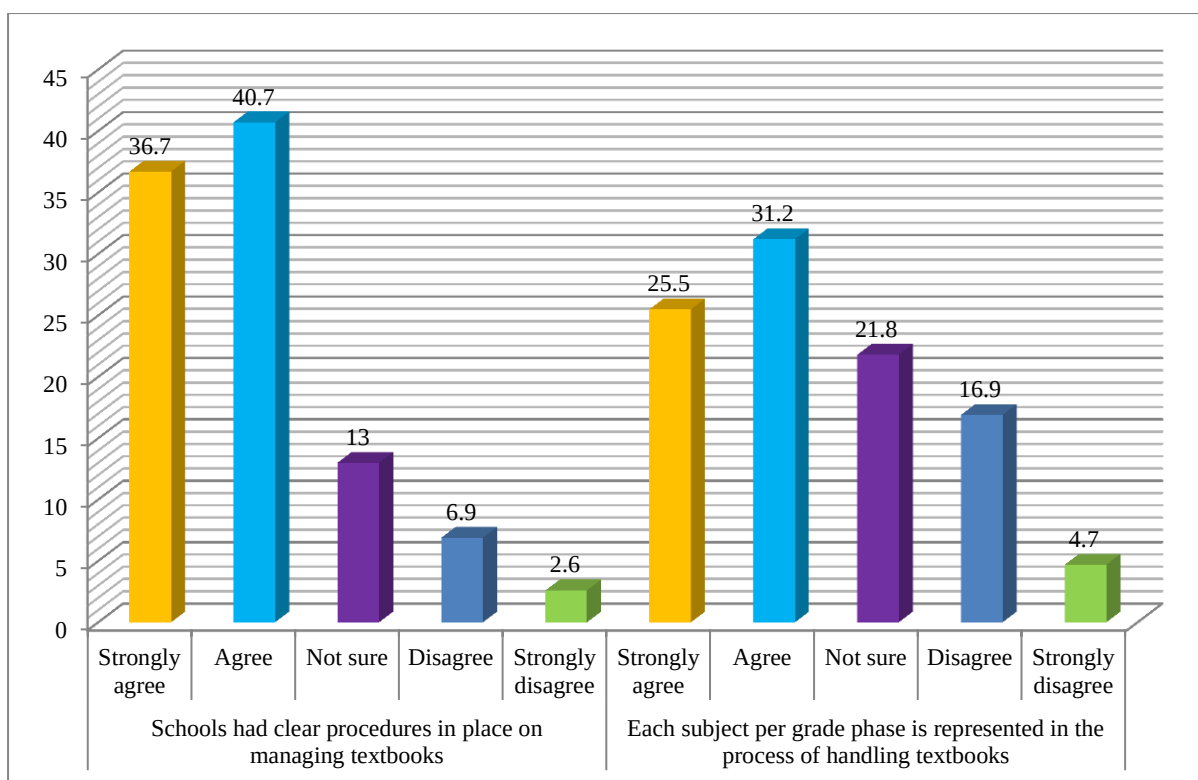


**Figure 18: Clear procedures on managing and handling of textbooks**

Figure 18 shows that about 77.4% of the participants agreed that their schools had clear procedures in place on how to manage textbooks as prescribed in the *School Textbook Management Handbook*. In

*"Eish...it's difficult to manage something you do not have. With the textbook policy, we only have it as policy but not fully utilised because we don't have textbooks... we make copies. Even how to handle the textbooks..., otherwise the policy for us is not realistic, I also know that handbook, but we don't use it. We use it what?" Teacher 09*

terms of whether each subject per grade phase was represented by a teacher in the process of handling textbooks, 56.7% of the participants agreed while 21.8% were not sure. Despite the clear procedures in place as stipulated in the *School Textbook Management Handbook*, some participants during the FGDs stated that due to the shortage of textbooks, it's unrealistic to implement what is stipulated in the document.

*"Even though we have Textbook Management Handbook, we can read it and understand it, but even though we understand everything in that book, there is nothing we can do to implement it because we do not have textbooks. We can understand all the procedures in that handbook, but without textbooks we cannot implement them. So, the shortage of textbooks is the main problem we have." Teacher 12*

#### 5.10.2 School textbook selection committee's role in managing textbooks

This section presents the answers on whether the school textbook selection committee examines the relevant textbooks before deciding on the exact textbooks to be procured and if this committee meets frequently to discuss how to manage the textbooks.

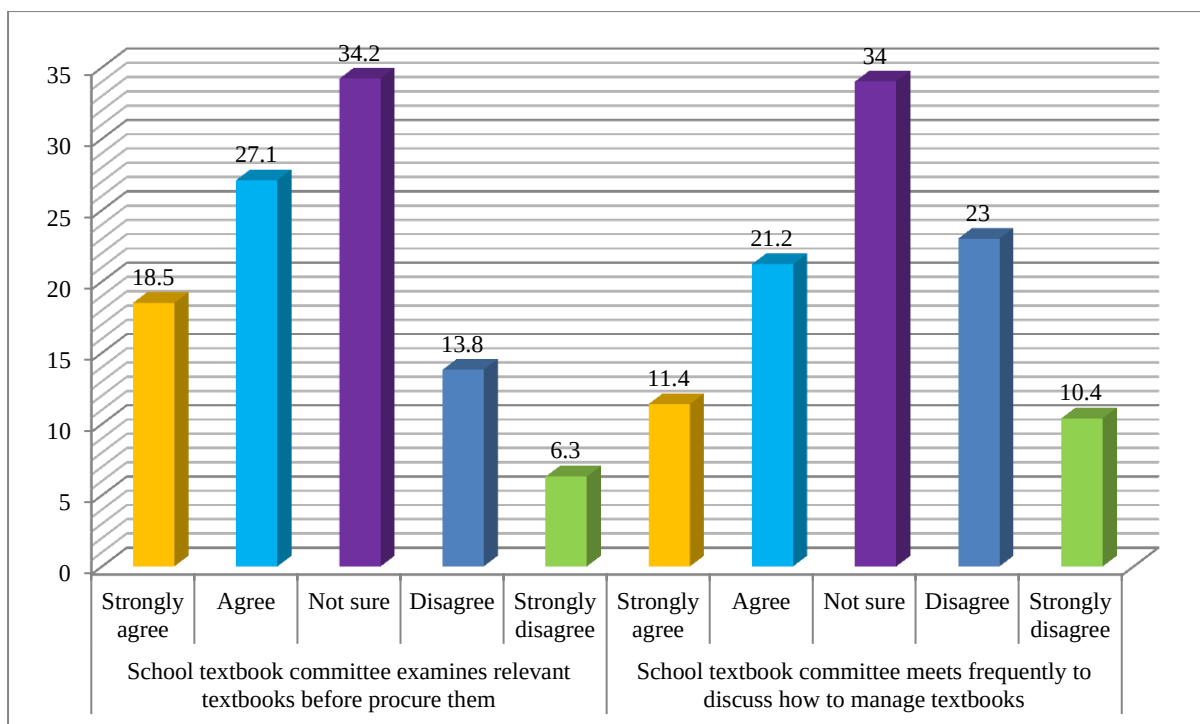


**Figure 19: School textbook committee's role in managing textbooks**

As displayed in Figure 19, participants (45.6%) agreed that the school textbook selection committee examines the relevant textbooks before deciding on the exact textbooks to be procured; however, a quite number of participants (34.2%) were not sure. Moreover, the majority of the participants (34.0%) were also not sure if the school textbook selection committee meets frequently to discuss how to manage the textbooks as compared to the participants (32.6%) and 33.4% who agreed and disagreed, respectively. When observing this bar graph, it seems that most of the participants were not aware of the existence of the school textbook selection committee or its key roles in relation to textbook management.

### *5.10.3 School textbook selection committee's role in relation to new textbooks*

This section provides responses to whether the school textbook selection committee was first making a list of the textbooks that were already in school before deciding on the urgent priorities for new textbooks, and also whether the decisions that the committee took during meetings were taken and recorded in the minute book with the signatures of the chairperson and the secretary of the committee.

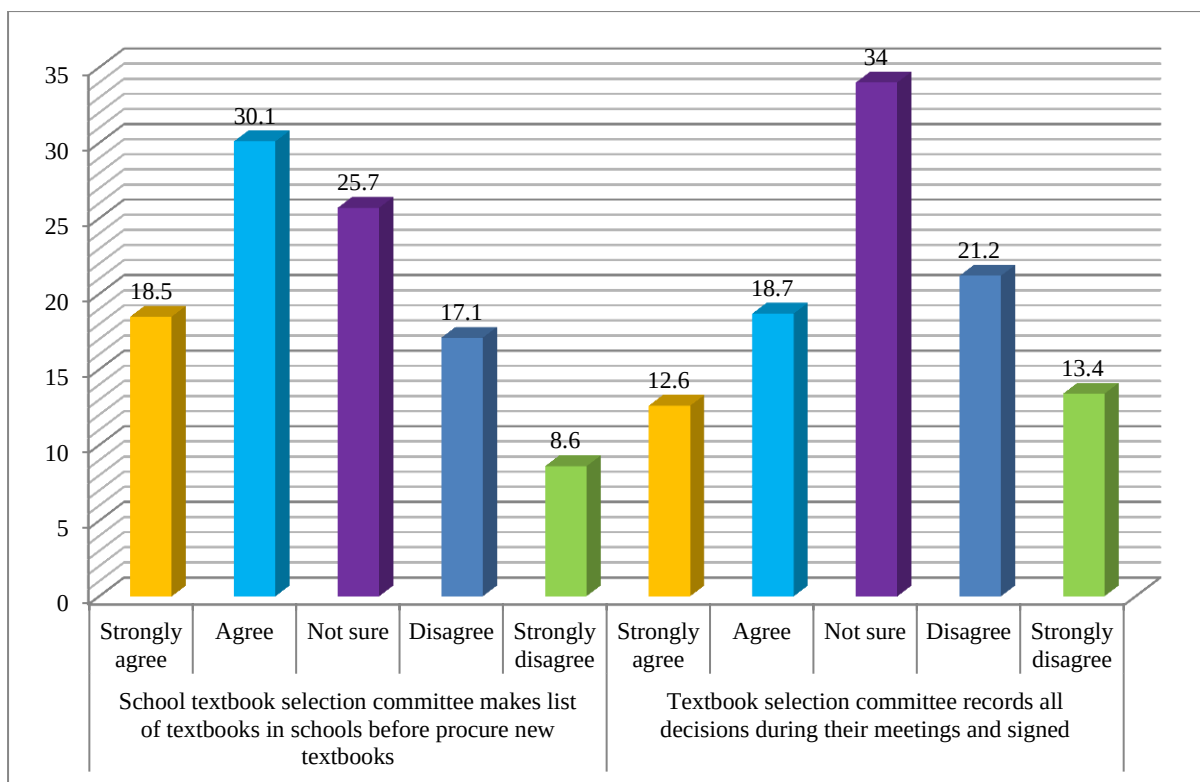


**Figure 20: School textbook selection committee's role in relation to new textbooks**

As displayed in Figure 20, 48.6% of the participants indicated that the school textbook selection committee at their schools was first making a list of the textbooks that were already at school before deciding on the urgent priorities for new textbooks, whereas those who were not sure and disagreed stand at 25.7%. In terms of decision-making, the majority of the participants (34.6%) disagreed that the decisions that the committee took during meetings were recorded in the minute book with the signatures of the chairperson and the secretary of the committee. Only 31.3% of the participants agreed to this statement, while 34.0% were not sure.

## 6. Major challenges affecting the fully implementation of the National Textbook Policy

This section provides some major challenges that teachers were faced with when implementing the *National Textbook Policy* regarding the procurement, distribution, and use of textbooks in Namibian schools.

- *Lack of textbooks*: insufficient textbooks in schools, which forced learners to share textbooks or not use textbooks at all during teaching and learning, which contributes to poor learners' performances. Lack of textbooks also resulted in some schools not having a school selection textbook committee; neither textbook's inventories were in place.

- *Time-consuming*: due to a lack of textbooks, learners were not given individual homework from the textbooks. This predicament forced teachers to write the homework either on the chalkboard or flipchart and make sure that all the learners really copied the homework into their books. This process seemed effective but time-consuming when having average learners and learners with special needs.
- *Lack of funds*: schools received insufficient funds from the government and were unable to procure textbooks to reach a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects.
- *Outdated textbooks*: the recommended textbooks in the textbook catalogue seemed outdated and/or did not have sufficient information required to cover all the basic competencies in the syllabuses. Thus, teaching becomes complicated.
- *Wrong textbook delivery*: the regional office does not procure the same (title name and quantity) textbooks that the schools selected and/or ordered. For example, Mathematics Excellent Grade 7 was ordered but was changed to Let's Do Mathematics Grade 7. In some cases, the textbooks were never delivered on time, or in less quantity than what was ordered or not at all.
- *Exorbitant cost of textbooks*: some prescribed textbooks in the textbook catalogues are too expensive, and the N\$35.00 allocated per learner by the region is not enough to buy or order even 5 textbooks.
- *Lack of legal measures or governmental policy on textbook recovery*: there is no policy or legal measures in place from the government that may enforce learners who lost textbooks to replace them. There are no guidelines in the existing textbook policy on how to recover the lost textbooks by learners. Hence, schools find it difficult to replace those books as there is nothing that enforces parents/leaners to recover the books. Normally, schools used to withhold defaulted learners' results. However, this action of withholding learners' results is prohibited by the government.
- *Poor textbook management and control*: in some schools, the register teachers are not cooperating with the school selection textbook committee in terms of textbook management and control. Hence, school management was not doing enough to ensure that teachers took care of the learners' textbooks assigned to them.
- *Lack of communication*: in some regions, participants had experienced poor communication between the schools and regional education offices in terms of selecting, ordering, procuring, and distributing textbooks.

- *Untimely delivery of textbooks:* sometimes the region does not deliver ordered textbooks on time. The regional office or central government does not procure enough textbooks or takes years in buying textbooks, and hence it hinders the realisation of the 1:1 ratio.

## **7. Recommendations for effectively implement the National Textbook Policy**

This section provides recommendations for effective implementation of the *National Textbook Policy* regarding the procurement, distribution, and use of textbooks in Namibian schools.

- *Increase the budget:* the government should allocate more funds for the textbooks in order to achieve a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio for core subjects.
- *Training required:* the school management and school textbook selection committee should be trained properly to effectively enhance their knowledge, especially on procurement and handling of textbooks.
- *School regular visits:* regional officials responsible for textbooks should visit schools, circuits, and clusters regularly to educate teachers and principals to ensure proper implementation of the ministerial policies and documents in relation to the textbook policy. Regular evaluation and feedback are crucial to identify any bottlenecks and optimise the implementation process for better outcomes.
- *Financial auditing:* schools should be audited regularly to check if the money was used purposefully.
- *Review the Procurement Act:* the process of textbooks' purchasing and delivering should be reviewed so that the textbook budget (money) is executed at school level. Hence, schools should be given a budget to buy their own textbooks rather than bought by the regional office.
- *Frequent textbook stock-taking:* subject teachers must be equally held accountable for the textbooks issued to them. The completion of textbook inventories by the teachers when the school starts and after the school closes should be made mandatory.
- *Digitalise textbooks:* migration to online learning materials by intensifying information technology in Namibian schools. This will enable Namibian learners to become ICT familiar and easily become part of the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution (4IR). A school textbook link should be created or a website where learners can access an online library of all the textbooks that they are using at school. And this measure should clear and endorsed by the government and supported by all stakeholders in education.

- *Introduction of punitive measures:* schools should introduce clear and strict punitive measures for the learners who fail to return the textbooks given to them. Learners should be held accountable for lost textbooks; this encourages learners to take full responsibility for the textbooks.
- *Ownership and responsibility:* parents and guardians should be responsible for paying for lost textbooks (lost by their kids) and not be defended by the Ministry.
- *Early delivery of textbooks:* textbooks should be delivered to schools at the beginning of every academic year.
- *Availability of the National Textbook Policy:* the *National Textbook Policy* should be made readily available in schools.
- *Prioritise farm and rural schools:* the ministry should consider procuring enough textbooks or allocate a bigger budget, especially for farm and rural schools, mostly those that already lack technological resources, to make teaching and learning easier. Hence, the community members are very poor and can't contribute to the procurement of textbooks.
- *Direct procurement of textbooks:* the Ministry should procure textbooks directly from the publishers and deliver them straight to schools to avoid mismanagement of finances and wrong delivery of textbooks.
- *Clear communication:* there should be clear and timely communication between the regional office, circuit, and schools regarding the changes brought forward or any amendments to the textbooks and curriculum reviews.
- *Timely delivery of textbooks:* the textbooks should be dispatched to schools well in advance to reach schools before school starts with the correct number of textbooks ordered.
- *Localise textbook shopping:* textbooks used in schools should be made available in local bookshops just in cases where a parent or teacher needs to get access to them.
- *Approve one publisher:* the Ministry through NIED should approve only one publisher if there are textbooks that cover all the relevant information instead of having many textbooks with different publishers and different information. One publisher should be approved if the textbooks cover all the basic competences.

## **8. Conclusion**

This study evaluated the implementation of the *National Textbook Policy* on the procurement, distribution, and use of textbooks in Namibian schools from Grades 4-12, especially

textbooks with two to three titles per subject per grade on the textbook catalogues. The majority of the teachers were aware of the *National Textbook Policy*, and the revised textbook catalogues. Most of the schools had a copy of the Policy and the revised textbook catalogues through their Regional Education office.

Most of the schools had received an official textbook catalogue with approved textbook titles to guide the school textbook selection committee. Regrettably, in some schools, there was no active school selection textbook committee, which resulted in poor textbook management and control. Despite this, the textbooks that schools were ordering and/or procuring were relevant to Namibia's educational approaches and able to last for at least five years. Conversely, in most cases, the ordered textbooks are delivered in less quantity than what was ordered and not on time or never delivered at all. This resulted in poor learners' academic performance in schools.

In a nutshell, the Policy was not effectively implemented in most schools across all levels. This was due to some challenges such as lack of textbooks because of exorbitant cost, lack of communication between the schools and regional education offices in relation to selecting, ordering, procuring, and distributing of textbooks, which resulted in untimely and wrongly delivery of textbooks to schools, and lack of legal measures or governmental policies on textbook recovery. And this also contributes to the poor delivery of quality and inclusive education and academic learning outcomes.

Thus, for effective implementation of the *National Textbook Policy*, the textbook budget should be increased, train the textbook selection committee, and review the Procurement Act in relation to the procurement of textbooks, amongst others.

## **9. The way forward**

The Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture plans to and recommends the following based on the study's findings and participants' recommendations:

- The private sector and business people should assist the community schools by procuring learners textbooks as part of their social responsibilities; this helps to meet the government halfway.
- The Ministry plans to urgently address the issue of a lack of textbooks in Namibian schools.

- The Ministry intends to shift the textbook budget to the schools rather than to the regional office and put strict auditing measures in place.
- The Ministry plans to put legal measures in place in supporting schools on how to effectively recover the lost and/or severe damaged textbooks from learners.
- In relation to the Procurement Act, the schools should comply with the Ministry's directive that they only select and order one title (textbook) per subject for the learners from the list of approved titles in the revised textbook catalogue.

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