

# **Towards a framework for education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector**

by

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## Declaration

I, **Kelello Alicia Rakolobe**, declare that the thesis, ***Towards a framework for education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector***, submitted for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy in Education Policy Studies at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work.

All references that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that this work has not previously been submitted by me at another university or faculty for the purpose of obtaining a qualification.

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# Ethical Clearance



## GENERAL HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

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Dear Mrs Rakolobe, Keleho KA

### Ethics Committee feedback

Research Project Title:

**Towards a framework for education policy implementation in Lesotho**

With reference to your application for ethical clearance for your research: Had attached the letter and decision from the CHREC meeting.

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To whom it may concern

This is to state that the Ph.D. study by Kelello Alicia Rakolobe titled *Towards a framework for education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector* has been language edited by me, according to the tenets of academic discourse. The final responsibility to implement any suggested language changes resides with the student.

Annamarie du Preez



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14-04-2022

## Abstract

Policies are developed as mechanisms that address and solve specific societal problems when implemented. Although education policies are developed and implemented to address education-related issues, they are often not considered to be scientific. This may be because education policy implementation is a complex exercise, although it is an essential precondition of schools, academic institutions, and global education systems.

Policy implementation is an essential phase in the policy process, which denotes the realisation of policy directives. Even the best-developed policies have no impact if they are not implemented successfully. This study seeks to answer the question: **What framework can be developed to enhance education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector?**

I used the constructivist paradigm and complexity theory as the primary lens for framing this study in addressing this question. I also adopted a qualitative approach, coupled with a literature review, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The purpose of the latter was to establish the context within which education policy implementation occurs in general, and in Lesotho specifically.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with participants comprising two members of the Education Planning Unit, two members of the Education Teaching Council, two school secretaries, two executive committee members of teacher trade unions, three school principals, three school teachers, two members from different NGOs, two members from print media and two members from audio media. The aim of these interviews was to determine their experiences regarding education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

The study's main finding is that education policies are not effectively implemented in the Lesotho education sector. The reasons for this include factors such as politics, stakeholder engagement and policy dissemination, amongst others. The implication of poor policy implementation in Lesotho education, is that policies then cannot solve the problems they were formulated to address. To ensure effective policy



implementation in the Lesotho education sector, the study develops a framework meant to enhance policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

**Key words:** *dissemination, education policies, education policy implementation, Lesotho education sector, framework, politics, stakeholder engagement*

## Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my father-in-law, (Seeiso Magnus Ramaili-1940-2021) who passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021. It was his big dream to see his daughter-in-law graduate for a PhD, unfortunately that did not happen. Continue to Rest in peace Mohlakoana.

I also dedicate this work to my parents ('Nyane Ezekiel and 'MakelelloTselane Telekoa- Rakolobe) for their love and support.

To my husband Khotso Abednego Ramaili for being my pillar of strength.

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## List of acronyms

AU	African Union
BOLESWA	Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland
CAP	Curriculum and Assessment Policy
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
ECOL	Examinations council of Lesotho
EFA	Education for All
GOL	Government of Lesotho
IECCD	Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development
LEG	Lesotho Education Group
LESHAP	Lesotho Education Sector HIV and AIDS Policy
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OAU	Organisation of African Union
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference.
TVT	Technical and Vocational Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

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# CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

## 1.1 Introduction and background to the study

It appears as though, education policy has often been disregarded and perceived to be immaterial. However, education policy is currently regarded as a critical concept on the agendas of many governments universally (Olssen, Codd & O'Neill, 2004:3). This is partially because education has the potential of being a beacon of hope for economic growth and the improvement of the lives and livelihoods of people (Ramappa & Jagannatham, 2010:10). For any policy to have an impact and to serve as a beacon of hope in people's lives, it needs to be implemented. As such, the significance of education policy and its implementation in present-day education and societal development should not be under-estimated.

It is the view of Khan (2016:5) policy implementation is a relatively new phenomenon in research, that is regarded as an essential stage in the policy cycle. Furthermore, Vienette and Pont (2017:11) suggest that

Embedded within the concept of [policy] implementation is the idea that the policy that gets to be implemented effectively changes the education sector. For example, implementing a new curriculum at the school level mainly implies changing schools and teachers' practices, beliefs, and material.

Implied in the notion of policy implementation is the assumption that it will bring about a change and, more specifically, an improvement of practice. Policy intentions must therefore be clearly and adequately communicated to relevant stakeholders. A policy could therefore be regarded as a beacon of hope that is supposed to bring about positive changes to the people's lives at which it is aimed. It is against this background that the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) aims "[t]o enhance the system that will deliver relevant and inclusive quality education for all Basotho effectively, efficiently and equitably (Ministry of Education and Training", 2016:22).

The Lesotho Constitution informs this vision, as it states that:

Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at securing that education is directed to the full development of human



personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Section 28(a)–(e)).

The stipulation by the Lesotho Constitution (1993) appears to be clear and all-inclusive in guiding policy development and policy implementation processes in the Lesotho education sector. However, I maintain that the realisation of this Constitutional imperative through education depends on an education system that is not only focused on developing and adopting education policies, but also on the effective implementation of these policies. In this regard, I argue that a poor or lack of a clear policy implementation plan or framework negatively impact the implementation of such policies, and the realisation of educational aims and objectives envisioned in the policies. It will also negatively impact on addressing and realising the particular social aims and objectives of Lesotho.

## **1.2 Research interest**

It is my contention that even the most nuanced and well-developed policies are not worth much if they are not correctly implemented. This is because "policies must be appropriately executed [implemented] for the society to benefit from them" (Khan & Khandaker, 2016:539). In addition, Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2013:35) also point out that governments are always formulating policies in response to particular societal problems, especially concerning the objectives of growth, national development and wellbeing of citizens. There are, however, usually wide gaps between formulated policy goals and achieving those goals, usually because of ineffective implementation.

In Lesotho, it seems that this is also the case. An analysis by the Lesotho Ministry of Development Planning in 2014 established a gap in policy and practice in the education sector. The study revealed that despite the efforts by the Ministry of Education and Training (hereafter MoET) to develop policies to curb specific problems, those problems persisted. For instance, that study found that despite the development of the Education Act of 2010, which aims to introduce free and compulsory primary education in Lesotho, the retention rate of learners in primary schools is still poor (Ministry of Development Planning, 2014:4).

Before developing the Education Sector Plan 2016-2026, the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho embarked on a needs analysis. This analysis identified several challenges affecting the Lesotho education sector. These challenges include, amongst others, high inefficiency of the education system, 'HIV and AIDS, and poor school governance' (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016:20). In one way or another, these challenges are all related to policy implementation, or the lack thereof. For example, recent Lesotho demographic health survey statistics rank Lesotho as the country with the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest HIV/AIDS prevalence at 25% (Ministry of Health, 2014:13). Policy implementation plays a significant role in managing HIV and preventing further infections (Republic of Kenya, 2013:3). Therefore, the opposite is also true, namely that a lack of policy implementation could increase HIV infections.

A recent study (Rakolobe, 2017) found that although the MoET adopted the Lesotho Education Sector HIV and Aids Policy (*LESHAP*) in 2012, this policy seems not to have been widely communicated, disseminated or discussed with teachers, principals and school board members. In many Lesotho schools it is subsequently not implemented at all. Olowu (2014:6321) similarly opines that the Government of Lesotho has tried to respond positively to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. However, most of their efforts remained at the stage of policy statements and have never actually been practically implemented. In a similar vein, Tlali and Jacobs (2015:86) claim that policy implementation in Lesotho in general is frustrated by a lack of logistical support.

School governance is primarily concerned with the development, adoption and implementation of education policies. Fukuyama (2013:3) suggests that governance is the ability of the government to develop and implement rules (policies) to deliver services. Therefore, it is assumed that school governance challenges, as was identified in the needs analysis of the Ministry of Education and Training (2016:20), could also directly be linked to difficulties experienced with or during policy development, and / or policy implementation. My contention in this study is that the effective implementation of education policies will, to a large extent, enhance and improve the effectiveness of the Lesotho education sector in addressing its various challenges.

Amidst numerous other challenges, the Lesotho education sector seems to be faced with difficulties regarding the implementation of its policies. Ndua (2013:8) reasons

that policy implementation studies have, for a long time, strived to give explanations on gaps observed in policy implementation. It is with the above in mind, and in search of answers to explain and to address the perceived gaps in policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector to, that I ask the following question:

**What framework can be developed to enhance education policy implementation in Lesotho?**

Informed by my overarching question, the following subsidiary questions arise:

- What is the nature and extent of education policy implementation in Lesotho?
- What is the context within which the implementation of Lesotho education policies take place?
- How do perceptions and realities shape and inform understandings about policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector?
- What could be the nature of a possible framework to enhance policy implementation of Lesotho education policies?

The study therefore aims to:

***Develop a framework that will enhance education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.***

To achieve this aim, the following objectives were pursued:

- To examine the nature and extent of policy implementation in the education sector in Lesotho.
- To determine the context within which the implementation of Lesotho education policies take place.

- To investigate perceptions and realities that shape and inform understandings about policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.
- To develop a framework that could assist in enhancing policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

### **1.3 The rationale for the study**

While doing research for my Master's degree (2016/2017), I struggled to obtain a copy of the LESHAP (2012) from the Ministry of Education and Training. Although the policy was aimed at guiding the education practice – thus schools' response to HIV and AIDS - none of the schools participating in my study had a copy, or was aware of the existence of such a policy. They subsequently did not implement the policy. At the time, MoET apparently also did not have a functional policy unit, where one could have expected to get information on this or other policies. After a long struggle, I managed to get a copy of the LESHAP (2012) from a staff member at the Education Facilities Unit (EFU). This unit is tasked with building and upgrading school infrastructure. As I conducted my research in schools, I discovered that the policy seemingly had not been disseminated to some schools. I also tried to get hold of the Public Service HIV and AIDS Policy 2010 to look for intertextuality with the LESHAP (2012), but I was never able to get it. Understandably, I also found that the LESHAP (2012) had not been implemented in many of the schools involved in my previous (2016/2017) research.

Being a teacher in Lesotho, and having experience of teaching within the Lesotho education system and the challenges teachers and schools face on a daily basis, I became curious about the nature and extent of policy implementation in Lesotho education. Upon reflection, I realised that, as a teacher, I had never been trained on or invited to any training session on the implementation of a new policy. I was also not aware of any colleague who had been trained on or invited to a training session on the implementation of any particular policy. I also realised that I had never worked with or handled any education policies in the schools where I taught. My interest in policy implementation led me to conduct a preliminary literature study, which suggested that no study whatsoever has ever been done or published on the implementation of policies in the Lesotho education sector. Most Lesotho education policy-related research focused on the effectiveness of education policies and advocacy of policy

formulation (cf. for example Sekese, 2012; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015; Selepe, 2016, Chabana, 2017, Rakolobe, 2017; Mefi, 2020). The perceived lack or absence of policies in Lesotho schools (despite indications that such policies might have been developed and adopted by MoET), and the apparent lack of context-specific research on the topic, therefore sparked my curiosity and interest in the implementation of policies in Lesotho schools. Hence, with this study, I attempt to contribute to enhancing the implementation of education policies within the Lesotho Education Sector. This I hope to do by suggesting a framework that could assist the MoET with effective policy implementation.

## **1.4 Research methodology**

Research methodology is defined by Achari (2014:21) as a systematic way to solve research problems, and may be assumed to be a scientific way of studying research. Moreover, methodology refers to the framework within which research is conducted. It includes decisions such as participant selection, appropriate methods for data collection and analysis, who the researcher will be, and that researcher's role in the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013:32). Stokes and Wall (2014:131) are of the opinion that the essence of understanding methodology is the need by the researcher to understand the concepts of epistemology and ontology, and the subjective and objective issues that relate to them.

On the one hand, ontology is concerned with how we view the nature of reality (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:27). The word ontology was derived from the ancient Greek word *on*, whose meaning is to 'exist'. Hence, in the social world, the concept ontology means "things that exist" (Dieronitou, 2014:3). On the other hand, the word epistemology is derived from the Greek word 'episteme', which means knowledge. In research, the concept epistemology is used to depict how we construct knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017: 27). So, where ontology is concerned with our reality, the concept epistemology concerns our construction of knowledge about that reality. McNutty (2013:525) views epistemology in a qualitative study as 'the theory' of knowledge, whilst ontology in qualitative research is concerned with studying what is present in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:711).

There is general agreement amongst researchers that there are three research methodologies, namely quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods (Creswel, 2014:4). Quantitative research makes use of “measurement, experiment and statistical analysis to answer research questions... qualitative researchers prefer interviews, and content analysis [while] mixed method research represents a middle ground between qualitative and quantitative methodology” (Long, 2012:428). In this study, I used the qualitative research methodology. For Creswell (2014:np), qualitative research is a form of research that deals mainly with words and a comprehensive understanding of phenomena. It is further the opinion of Daniel and Sam (2011:19) that the “[q]ualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour.” Marshall and Rossman’s view (2016:np) is that qualitative research studies social phenomena. From the preceding, I would thus deduce that a qualitative approach deals with assessing people’s lived experiences as seen through their eyes, and how they construct meaning from those experiences. In this study, the lived experiences of various participants, as it relates to education policy implementation, were investigated.

As part of the lived experiences of people, education is differently experienced by different people, and people attach different meanings to education and how they experienced it. I therefore propose to use a qualitative design to undertake a study rich in description, which seeks to give depth to the meanings and experiences people attach to education as a social phenomenon.

Therefore, a qualitative research approach seemed to lend itself best to the study of education in general, and the implementation of education policies to.

#### **1.4.1 Paradigm: Constructivism**

In seeking answers to my research question, it is imperative to acknowledge (as is indicated in 1.4) that methodology is concerned with a view of reality (ontology) and the nature of knowledge (epistemology). These two concepts are directly related to my research paradigm.

A paradigm is a way in which people view and understand the world around them, and how they interact with each other and their environment (Brantmeier & Brantmeier, 2016:235). Moreover, Waring (2021:17) describes a paradigm as representative of the

conceptions that a person has regarding the nature of the world and their position in it, and the future interactions with the world and its fundamental parts. In addition, for Ling (2017:20) the term research paradigm refers to

a world-view or a set of assumptions and understandings about critical aspects of the research: the nature of reality or truth (ontology); the intent, ethics and value of the researcher (axiology); the understanding of nature of knowledge and how it may be known (epistemology); the way the information is obtained (methodology); and the nature of the research outcomes.

The essential principle underpinning constructivism is to understand people's realities and meanings as seen and understood from their perspective (Denicole, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016:32). Moreover, in the constructivist paradigm, the researcher and the participants construct meaning together (Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins & Peng, 2014:87). As a result, within a constructivist framework, the role of the researcher should be to endeavour to comprehend the complexity of the world-view as seen from the perspective of those who have lived it (Mertens, 2015:16). That is to say, the research process is a joint venture between the researcher and the participants, where the researcher does not assume to know everything. Instead, in collaboration with the participants, the researcher tries to make meaning of the participants' lived experiences.

According to Mari and Meglio (2013:295),

the constructivist scholar's belief about the nature of reality (that is, ontology) are that realities are multiple, and they exist in people's minds ... (epistemology) is that 'the results of inquiry are always shaped by the interaction between the inquirer, and the inquired into.

In an attempt to understand how people experience the world they live in, I will employ constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm assumes that the researcher and the researched are part of the inquiry process, and that the findings are a product of the interaction between the researcher and the researched (Glenn, 2014:114). In addition, the epistemological position of constructivism is that knowledge can be individualistic, that is, personal, or it can be inter-subjective, which means it can be constructed socially (Tan, 2016:84). The researcher does not assume the position of expert, but instead he or she understands that the participants know the issue under

investigation and, as such, can contribute towards making meaningful findings. Concerning this study, I believed that the participants have an understanding of the Lesotho education policy context as it relates to policy implementation, and that through their experiences, they would make a meaningful contribution to my study.

This study followed the constructivist paradigm as it assisted me in constructing knowledge together with the participants, some of whom I believe are more knowledgeable than I am in terms of the realities of policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. Informed by the above, I propose to use complexity theory as the theoretical framework within which this study would be framed.

### **1.4.2 Complexity Theory**

A theoretical framework could be regarded as "a set of analytical principles or statements designed to structure our observation, understanding and explanation of the world" (Nilsen, 2015:2) Another way to state this is as a "roadmap that informs the direction of the study, based on a particular theory" (Green, 2014:35). In essence, a theoretical framework is not only a basis for research, but it is the essential belief that guides the researcher in the study.

The theory that guided this study is complexity theory. Complexity theory is regarded as a relatively new scientific paradigm, and is widely used in the study of public policy and policy-making (Geyer & Rihani, 2010:6; Room, 2011:116). Complexity theory centres on the principles of a complex system of the interaction of people, aspects and issues refining the implementation of organised communities (Hansen, 2017:4).

In addition, complexity theory assumes that we focus on the system as a whole and not only on the individual parts (Carney, 2012:346). It requires us to zoom in on the network of factors that influence the policy implementation process instead of only on the individual parts of the process. Complexity theory was further regarded as helpful for this study because "policy processes are complex not only because policies are social constructions but also because the natural processes that public policies interact with are also complex" (Morcol, 2012:21). My choice of complex theory was informed by my conviction that the MoET "does not recognise the complex nature of [its] policy environment" (Carney, 2012:348), especially as it relates to the



implementation of education policies. By using complexity theory, I hoped to better understand the various factors within the Lesotho education system that, in one way or another, impact the effective implementation of education policies. In addition, I regarded this theory as appropriate in explaining policy implementation and developing a framework to enhance policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

### **1.4.3 Research methods**

Often research methodology and research methods are taken to be the same thing. However, there is a difference between these two concepts. Methodology is about the procedures used to conduct research (Hedge, 2015:19), while research methods are explicitly selected techniques and processes used to collect and analyse data (Scotland, 2012:9).

Qualitative research comprises various genres, and it typically draws on multiple methods of inquiry (Marshall & Rossman, 2016:np). In line with this, in this study I propose to make use of a literature review, document analysis and semi-structured interviews as methods of inquiry in order to solicit the information I needed to realise the aim of this study, which is to develop a framework to enhance education policy implementation in Lesotho. In the following paragraphs, I will briefly explain the relevance of each method to my study.

#### **1.4.3.1 Literature review**

A literature review is the synthesis of the writings on a particular topic that involves evaluating the available evidence and relevant theories to identify gaps in the existing literature (Pan, 2016:1). In addition, Flink (2014:3) defines a literature review as an organised and planned method used to identify, evaluate and synthesise collected scholarly works. The value of a literature review lies in its potential to give a glimpse into what other researchers in the field have achieved and the gaps they have left (Omwuegbuzie & Frels, 2016:8). Moreover, Hart (2018:197) states that for "any literature review the data for analysis are information, that is, the interpretation, understandings and arguments that others have proposed that they want you to accept as a plausible story." A literature review therefore involves studying literature to find

information that corroborates or contradicts the research problem, because the researcher has to read all works related to the problem under investigation.

In this study I reviewed relevant and recent primary and secondary literature sources. Books with relevant titles and words phrases relevant to the study were used. The library of the UFS and different search engines such as EBSCOHost, Researchgate, KovsieScholar and Google Scholar were used. Examples of keywords that were used are public olicity, education policy, policy implementation and Lesotho education, to find out what has already been written on policy implementation in education, and to identify any gaps in existing literature pertaining to the implementation of education policies in Lesotho.

#### **1.4.3.2 Document analysis**

A document is described by Altheide, Coyle, DeVriese and Schneider (2010:127) as "any symbolic representation that can be recorded and retrieved for description and analysis." Although, regarded as "largely inconspicuous in most areas of qualitative research" (Wood, Sebar & Vecchio, 2020:456), documents are important material that can assist the researcher in understanding the context within which a phenomenon (in this case, policy implementation) occurs (Grady, 1998:24).

Document analysis means examining and interpreting published and digital documents to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008 in Bowen, 2009:27). Document analysis is also defined as an organised and planned method of examining documents to find information from them (Kutsyuruba, Christou, Heggie, Murray & Deluca, 2015:6).

In this study it is assumed that documents would shed more light on how policy implementation is envisaged by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in Lesotho. In this study, I analysed the Constitution of Lesotho (1993), the Education Act (2010), the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (2013), the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (2009) and the Education Sector Plan 2016-2026. I chose these documents because they inform and guide the policy process in the Lesotho education sector, and they make particular pronouncements about policy implementation. As a result, I believed that these documents would shed light on, and inform and guide the creation of a favourable environment for policy implementation.

### **1.4.3.3 Semi-structured interviews**

Interviews are described by Brinkmann (2013:1) as a verbal exchange that happens when one person tries to elicit information from another person or a group of people. Seidman (2013:np) concurs with this view, as he states that interviewing is an essential way of finding information. The purpose of an interview in qualitative research is to gather information to understand the participants' viewpoint based on their lived experiences (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015:3). Seidman (2013:np) further points that "at the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth." I was interested in obtaining the views of relevant stakeholders regarding education policy implementation in Lesotho.

For this study, I adopted semi-structured interviews as a method of data generation. Semi-structured interviews are appreciated for their ability to cover a broad spectrum of goals and their flexibility in allowing probes as a technique to elicit appropriate and suitable responses from participants (Galleta, 2013:45).

These interviews helped me gather information from the participants about their perceptions and experiences of implementing policies in the Lesotho education sector. The use of document analysis and semi-structured interviews was essential for this study, as it will help me to obtain rich information regarding the realities of policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. This, in turn, allowed me to develop a framework for education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

### **1.4.3.4 Participant selection**

Time and resources do not allow a researcher to interview all people involved in or affected by the subject under investigation. To obtain in-depth and meaningful information, a researcher has to decide on a participant selection strategy that will help them achieve the objectives of their study (Emmel, 2013:34).

For this study, I used purposive sampling as participant selection method. Purposive sampling is a selection method where the researcher handpicks the participants, based on their knowledge, involvement and expertise in the investigated matter (Wayne, 2013:270). Furthermore, in purposive participant selection, participants are selected on 'purpose' as they are believed to know the subject being researched (Ritchie, Lewis, Elam Tennant & Rahim, 2013:113).

I opted to select participants based on their involvement in education, and their knowledge of the policy process in general and policy implementation to. I selected a total of twenty (20) participants. These participants comprised four MoET officials (two (2) from the Teaching Council and two (2) from the Planning Unit). I assumed that these people know or have experience about policies in the education sector in Lesotho, as the former has been established by the Education Act of 2010 to advise the Minister on matters related to the teaching profession, and the latter is a unit that is responsible for education policy development in Lesotho.

I also selected two (2) education secretaries because their duty is to liaise between the schools and the Ministry on behalf of their proprietors. As such, they are stakeholders in education and should have knowledge or experience about education policy implementation. I will also select three (3) school principals and three teachers (3), as these participants are supposed to be working on the ground in the implementation of education policies and, as such, are assumed to have valuable experiences and information about education policy implementation. In addition, I chose two (2) teacher trade unions representatives and two (2) representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) (one representative from each trade union and NGO). I also involved four (4) representatives from media houses (two print and two radio stations, from both independent media and state media) because the media also has a role to play in policy implementation.

#### **1.4.3.5. Data analysis**

This study adopted a qualitative data analysis method. Maxwell and Chmiel (2014:23) describe qualitative data analysis as "a process that involves classification, description and creating connections of the data." Harding (2013:4) contends that qualitative data analysis is a complex exercise that involves dismantling data and putting it back together again to try to create meaning. This view is supported by Hedges and Williams (2014:np), who argue that, unlike in quantitative data analysis where data collection and data analysis happen chronologically, in the qualitative approach, data collection and data analysis can occur concurrently, and this makes the exercise seem complex. The first step in data analysis is transcribing any verbal material into written form (Kowal & O'Connell, 2014:65). I therefore had to first transcribe the interviews before I could start analysing them.

I used thematic analysis as a mode of data analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method of data analysis that identifies, analyses and interprets data meanings using themes or codes (Braun, Clarke & Terry, 2015:95). Additionally, thematic analysis is described by Crowe, Inder and Porter (2015:2) as “a process of interpretation of qualitative data to to find patterns of meaning across data.” In using thematic analysis, I used data coding. According to Sutton and Austin (2015:231), "coding refers to the identification of topics, issues, similarities, and differences that are revealed through the participants' narratives and interpreted by the researcher." Grbich (2013:261) also explains coding as a process of using themes as labels on data to make the analysis more manageable and less complex. This explanation is reiterated by Barbour (2014:261), who asserts that data coding is an attempt to reduce the dataset and make it more convenient. This can be achieved by first developing a short-term coding frame before embarking on the actual coding.

## **1.5 Quality considerations of the study**

Hammersley (2018:23) accuses qualitative researchers of depicting the integrity of a study as being solely about getting ethical clearance from ethics committees without understanding what ethics actually entail.

In this regard, Carpenter (2018:40) points out that

[a]ll research should be undertaken with integrity, ensuring that the most appropriate methods are adopted, and all data are honestly reported and used to the maximum benefit of the individuals and communities from within which they are collected.

The integrity of a study refers to the ability of the researcher to be principled and trustworthy in conducting research through the use of sound methods, and the honest and accurate presentation of concepts, research aims and objectives (Ryen, 2016:32). Furthermore, Arrison and Nerem (2018:15) state that "research integrity is essential to the health of the research enterprise, providing the foundation for good science." In essence, research integrity is important in research. In addition to ethical considerations that should be observed, it is therefore further necessary to assure and confirm the integrity and quality of a study. In this regard, it was essential to ensure

the trustworthiness of my study. Trustworthiness is underpinned by factors such as dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability (Holloway & Galvin, 2017:309). These considerations will subsequently be explained and applied to my study.

- Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research is synonymous with validity in quantitative research, as it is concerned with the accuracy or truthfulness of the research findings (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen Irvine & Walker, 2014:442). In essence, credibility is concerned with scientifically correct research and entrenched in sound and relevant research. Hair JR., Celsi, Money, Samouel and Page (2016:331) point out that "to achieve credibility, qualitative researchers adopt a systematic and consistent process in data collection and analysis." By so doing, the research will be credible. Therefore, I ensured the credibility of this study by asking participants to verify that what was written in the transcribed interviews, is actually what they said.

- Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research is similar to reliability in quantitative research, as it is concerned with the consistency of the research findings (Spires, 2015:57). To ensure dependability in a study, the researcher can ask the participants to identify the data patterns (Mackey & Gass, 2016:232).

A dependable study is one that, if replicated by another researcher, the results will be similar to that of the initial study, if the research was conducted under similar conditions (Schwandt, 2014:np). This study cannot be replicated, as it is a qualitative study and has an element of subjectivity. The analysis of two different researchers is likely to differ based on how they interact with the participants and how they interpret the data. To ensure dependability of this study, I clearly outlined the methods of data collection, mode of data analysis and interpretation to reach my conclusions.

- Confirmability

Confirmability refers to any bias that the researcher may have. To avoid bias and prejudice, researchers should state their biases and prejudices upfront, and also how they will overcome these (Schwarze, 2014:225). In this case, the researcher needs to

be upfront about issues that may influence data collection and the way in which data analysis will take place, so that other researchers may be aware of such influences if they intend to replicate the study.

To to achieve conformability in a study, the researcher should ensure that another researcher can trace and confirm the authenticity of the data source, and come to the same interpretation or conclusion (Zuniga, O'Donoghue & Clarke, 2015:63). To ensure conformability, I avoided interfering with what the participants said, and also did not influence their responses in any way.

- **Transferability**

Transferability, also referred to as generalisation, refers to applying the findings and conclusions of a study to a situation similar to the one in which the study was conducted, and obtaining similar results (Drisko, 2013:17). Transferability can be influenced by the number of participants used in the study. However, the results can be applied to other groups. To ensure transferability of the study, I gave a thick description of study setting without compromising the ethical principle of anonymity. I also made use of a theory and paradigm for methodological soundness.

This is a qualitative study in which I conducted semi-structured interviews with relevant stakeholders to gather information. To maintain the integrity of the study, there are particular ethical and quality assurance issues that I needed to consider. What follows is a brief explanation of the various ethical and quality assurance issues relevant to my study, and an indication of how I adhered to these issues.

## **1.6 Research ethics**

Research ethics refers to a system of principles, standards and regulations set up by institutions to safeguard the research process (Simelane-Mnisi, 2018:3). Additionally, ethics is the ability to differentiate between moral and immoral, and honest and dishonest behaviour that should be observed while conducting research (Goosen, 2018:14). Ethics is also about morally correct behaviour in research (Israel, 2015:9).

Ethics in research are guided by academic bodies, and are approved on the basis that application for ethical clearance is accompanied by the principles of informed consent,

confidentiality and anonymity (Klenke, 2016:50). These principles and their relevance to this study are subsequently discussed.

- Informed consent

Informed consent is an ethical code in which the participants are given information on what the study entails and what is expected from them. This allows them the freedom to choose whether they agree to be part of the study or not (Nijhawan, Janodia & Musmade, 2013:135). It further protects both the researcher and the participant, as participants are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time if they feel uncomfortable (Kvale, 2015:93).

Regarding this study, I first applied for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State, which was granted (cf. page III). I then asked for permission from the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to conduct the research in Lesotho schools (cf. Appendix C). I also contacted and asked permission to conduct semi-structured interviews with the media, NGOs and teacher trade unions (cf. Appendix A). I informed the participants of the aims and objectives of the study, and also informed them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time if they felt uncomfortable.

- Confidentiality

Confidentiality is another aspect that should be taken into consideration when doing research. Confidentiality means that the manner in which the research results is disclosed does not compromise the identity of the participants (Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard, 2016:26). In this regard, I avoided giving details about the participants that would compromise their identity. I also ensured that raw data were kept safely, so that the identities of the participants would not be compromised.

- No harm to participants

Another important ethical consideration adopted for this study was that of no harm to the participants. When conducting research, the expectation is that there is a need to adopt a research design that intends to "...consider the potential of harm to participants, the researcher, the wider community, and the institution" (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018:211).



Moreover, the Helsinki Declaration (WMA, 1964) is the foundation of the principle of no harm to participants. The declaration stipulates that

no research should use human subjects against their will, either by force or deception, and that, even when subjects provide informed consent, research should not expose them to undue risk or harm (Hugman, Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2011:1274).

Regarding this study, I tried as much as possible to avoid harm to the participants, myself and the wider community. I informed the participants about the aim and objectives of the study. I also made them aware that they were free to withdraw their participation at any stage during the interview if they no longer felt comfortable with continuing. I briefed them before we started the interviews, and debriefed them after the interviews.

- **Beneficence**

It is the view of Pandit (2020:408) that “beneficence as a moral principle refers to the normative significance of doing good for all.” In addition, Akaranga and Makau (2016:6) opine that “it is the role of the researcher who has direct contact with a participant to explain the purpose of the study and the benefits that will accrue from it.”

I informed the participants of the purpose of this study. I made them aware that this is purely an academic study where the benefit is to the advancement of education in Lesotho. I mentioned that their contribution would help in improving our education sector. I informed them that they would not gain any financial benefit by participating in the study.

In the next section, I look at the value of the study.

## **1.7 Value of the study**

The problems encountered in the Lesotho education sector could be linked to ineffective policy implementation, which justifies a closer look at policy implementation in Lesotho. For that reason, a study on a framework for policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector could be essential, and it could potentially assist the Lesotho education sector in realising the vision of MoET. This study aims to benefit education

stakeholders, including learners, teachers, principals, school boards, school secretariats, the inspectorate of schools, and the teaching council. Stakeholders could benefit, because if policies are effectively implemented in schools, the quality of education will improve. The other beneficiary is the Ministry of Education and Training, as this framework would possibly improve the effective implementation of policies in Lesotho education.

Lastly, the pursuit of this study is of benefit to the Government of Lesotho, especially the Lesotho Planning Unit, a department within the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) that is tasked, among other things, with the development and implementation of education policies. The Planning Unit would benefit from this study because they can use insights gained in this study and guidelines laid down in it as a roadmap in their endeavour for effective and operative policy implementation.

## **1.8 Demarcation of the study**

### **1.8.1 Scientific demarcation**

Education policy has gained momentum as a force to be reckoned with in the last 30 years or so. The study of education policy, and how it is influenced by legislation, is an essential aspect for government (Adams, 2014:23). In addition, Ling (2017:167) states that "education policy is the soil in which education development thrives, and strengthening research on education policy is an important means of guaranteeing the healthy development of modern education."

Moreover, it is imperative to note that when developing policies, they should be eventually implemented. To this effect, Obodo (2016:62), laments that even very well written policies lose their value if they are not implemented. This is because policy implementation denotes "routine governmental processes of putting the government's targeted goals into action which is usually done by government agencies or its officials in accordance with the stipulations of the Law" (Yaro, Arshad and Salleh, 2016:3). The preceding stipulation thus, indicates the importance of policy implementation in the policy process.

This study will be scientifically couched in Education Policy Studies, as an independent discipline in the field of Education.

## 1.8.2 Geographical demarcation

The study was conducted in Maseru, the capital of Lesotho. Maseru is located in the western part of Lesotho and shares its boundaries with Berea on the north, Mafeteng on the south, Mohale's Hoek on the southeast and Thaba–Tseka on the east. Lesotho is a small, landlocked, mountainous country in southern Africa that is completely surrounded by its only neighbour, the Republic of South (Ministry of Education and Training, 2019:5).

The study was conducted in Maseru because all the participants are found in this district. The area also houses the parliament, which comprises the National Assembly and the house of Senate and all central government and administrative functions.



**Figure 1: Map of Lesotho sourced at <https://maps-lesotho.com/lesotho-map-districts>**

## **1.9 Research outline**

Chapter 1 is the **orientation of the study**.

In Chapters 2 and 3 I report on a literature review conducted to examine the **nature and extent of policy implementation in general**.

In Chapter 4 I report on a literature review conducted to determine **the context within which policy implementation and dissemination in Lesotho education takes place**.

In Chapter 5 I expand on **the study research design and methodology**.

In Chapter 6 I use semi-structured interviews **to investigate the perceptions and realities that shape and inform understandings about policy implementation and dissemination in the Lesotho education sector**.

The last chapter, which is Chapter 7, is aimed at **developing a framework that could assist in enhancing policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector**.

### **RESEARCH PLAN**

What follows is a schematic representation of my proposed research:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To examine the nature and extent of policy implementation in general.</li> </ul>	Literature review	Chapter 2 and Chapter 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To determine the context within which policy implementation and dissemination in Lesotho</li> </ul>	Literature review	Chapter 4

education takes place.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research methodology</li> </ul>	Research methodology	Chapter 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To investigate the perceptions and realities that shape and inform understandings about policy implementation and dissemination in the Lesotho education sector.</li> </ul>	Semi-structured interviews	Chapter 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To develop a framework that could assist in enhancing policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.</li> </ul>		Chapter 7

## 1.10 Conclusion

This study aimed to answer the question: what framework can be developed to improve education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector? In an attempt to answer this question, I proposed to conduct the study in a particular way. In this chapter I put forward the problem statement that informed my research, I proposed the methodology, the paradigm as well as the theoretical framework. I also put forward the methods I will use and the way the data will be analysed. The next chapter will be the literature review.

## CHAPTER 2:

# THE NATURE OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

## 2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was the orientation of the study. In this chapter, of which the objective is to examine the nature and extent of policy implementation, I present a review of the literature in relation to the implementation of policies in general and that of education policies. This review will be done against the background of a comprehensive analysis of prevailing local and international literature on policy and policy implementation and existing frameworks to identify the gaps, challenges and opportunities for enhancing policy implementation in Lesotho. This chapter and the realisation of the stated objective will be informed and realised through the use of both primary and secondary sources on the topic of policy implementation.

It is anticipated that the use of such sources will shed more light on policy implementation in general and policy implementation in education to. In this chapter, I will elaborate on definitions of policy and policy implementation, education policy, and different theories of policy implementation. Before I venture into the different theories which underlay policy implementation, let me first explore the meaning of the concepts “policy” and “policy implementation”.

## 2.2 Conceptualisation of policy

### 2.2.1 The concept “policy”

Public policy as a field of study emerged around the mid-twentieth century, and it has faced the critical challenge of developing theoretical approaches to guide and couch studies aimed at investigating the policy process (Weible & Jenkins-Smith, 2016:15). Based on the context of those that wish to study it, the concept “policy” is defined in various ways. Because of this, Birkland (2016:8) opines that public policy does not have a single definition.

Traditionally, policy has been perceived as a mechanism to address or in reaction to existing social or economic problems. In this regard, Birkland (2016:8) points out that public policy is developed in an effort to solve existing problems. These sentiments are echoed by Anderson (2000:185) for whom policy is a “purposive course of action followed by an actor or a set of actors in dealing with a problem or a matter of concern.” Policies therefore concern the solving of existing problems.

Different views exist as to where policy development should be located, and who should take responsibility for its development. Pillay (2006:444) holds the view that “...policy is not only made by government” and that “everyone can and does make policies”. The implication of the foregoing extract is that policy development is not confined or restricted to the government only. On the other hand, Anderson (2000:185; Dye, 2013:3) are adamant that “public policy may be viewed as whatever governments choose to do or not to do.” With this definition, both Anderson (2000) and Dye (2013) locate policy development within the sphere of government. What is furthermore evident is that policy development is also a political action exercised by the state. Rizvi and Lingard (2011:4) attest to this when saying that “policy expresses patterns of decisions in the context of other decisions taken by political actors on behalf of state institutions from positions of authority.”

This is confirmed by Gale (2003:53), who proclaims that

... permission to speak policy has been vested in the state ... [with] definitions of policy often carry[ing] references to the state or government as a way of framing what is legitimate policy and what is, or what is not of particular significance.

By situating policy and its development within the sphere of the state and government, specific authority is attributed to policy. However, it should be noted that the state is not a neutral or innocent entity that develops and implements a policy aimed at the equal and equitable distribution of goods and services – or in this case of education. Rather, Apple (1986 in Dale, 2003:11) regards the state as an “... arm of capital, one that is bound to do capital’s bidding ...” Joffe (2018:3) also views the state as “an organised political entity ...” Hence state public policy “obfuscates its reality as a highly political form because it is effectively disguised by objectives, neutral, legal-rational idioms” (Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009:772).

Similarly, policy implementation should also not be regarded as a 'neutral' or an 'innocent' activity. Instead, policy, both as text and as discourse, and its implementation, is political in nature, and as such, it is informed by political imperatives. As political imperatives inform policy, it could safely be assumed that policy and its implementation therefore pursues and serves political aims and objectives. As such, there is a need to accept that policy comprises not only written words or text. Instead, it also entails covert political agendas. This should prompt us to be critical and vigilant of the role played and the influence exerted by the state during every phase of the policy process, and specifically policy implementation. A reflection on and sensitivity of the influence of the state on policy might shed light on the entire policy implementation process and the extent to which policy aims and objectives will be realised or not.

Bailey (2016:81-82) holds the view that policy

... not only refers to written and codifies instructions or rules, such as policy documents, which are intended to guide conduct and practice, but [it] also denote complex processes of policy enactment, policy advocacy, policy influence and policy practice, in this way it is possible to explore how policy is disposed and performed in different material sites in different contingent ways.

What further seems to influence the conceptualisation of policy, is the context in which a policy is developed, the context it will be used in, and the context within which it is supposed to function. This is according to Chakrabarty and Chand (2016:8), who state that

... policy is not made in a vacuum. It is governed by socio-economic conditions, prevalent political values and public mood at a given point of time, the structure of the government and national and cultural norms. Public policy can therefore never be conceptualised without reference to these criteria.

In essence, public policy, therefore, does not just emerge from nowhere, as if there are no contextual factors that influence it, or within which it is destined to function. Instead, a policy is context-specific and a product of its context. Thus, there is always a prior history to a policy or a particular ideological, political, social or economic context that drives and influences the development, implementation and outcomes of a policy.



As a result, public policies are influenced by their political, economic and social contexts, and they are developed by the state to address particular context-specific problems. It is therefore appropriate to also view public policy implementation as an exercise that is carried out by various stakeholders which include, but are not limited to, "politicians, pressure groups, civil servants, publicly employed professionals, academic experts, journalists", and in some cases, ordinary people that the policy directives are bound to affect (Hill & Varone, 2017:5). To for a policy to address specific contextual problems, it needs to suggest specific actions.

Against this background, Khan (2016:3) describes policy as "... the guide to action and it connotes a broader framework to operationalize a philosophy, principle, vision or decision, mandate etc. which are translated into various programs, projects and actions." This view is reiterated by Hill and Hupe (2014:4), who state that "policy involves behaviours as well as intentions, and inaction as well as action."

From the above, one can deduce that policies are formed to propose certain actions (or inaction) to address or respond to specific contextual problems. Furthermore, policy also appears to be a function carried out by those in power, and more specifically by the state. As such, policy is defined as a programme of action (or inaction) developed by the state to address existing context-specific issues or problems to improve the lives of those affected by the policy. This perspective holds that in Lesotho, education policy development and implementation is aimed at addressing or responding to Lesotho-specific educational issues or problems, in the hope of improving the Lesotho educational reality, to, but the lives of the Basotho people in general.

However, I am wary of the "technocratic view" (Olssen et al., 2004:60) of policy as statements of actions that policy-developers or those in power intend to follow. This serves as a "vehicle of communication between the policy maker, the policy researcher and the policy recipient" (Olssen et al., 2004:60). My concern centres on the potential (mis)use of policy as "a practice of power" (Levinson et al., 2009:774), that could effectively be used to maintain the status quo by reproducing inequality, hegemony, and subordination. More so, the technocratic view of policy also re-affirms the possibility of policy being used for political aims and objectives.

In what follows, I will present particular views in which policy is framed as text and as discourse with particular policy effects. This I do because there seems to be a “mistaken idealistic assumption about both the nature of intentions and the nature of language itself” (Olssen et al., 2004:60). These assumptions play a significant role in the way policies are interpreted and defined by different stakeholders. This results in various interpretations or reading of a policy, which subsequently also impacts the implementation thereof.

### **Policy as text**

Now that I have given a cursory view of the concept ‘policy’ in which various conceptualisations of the concept were highlighted, I find it necessary to further expand and elaborate on various meanings of the concept policy. Policy can be understood as both text and discourse. Attached to policy are particular policy-specific effects or consequences, which cannot be ignored. In the subsequent paragraphs, I will unpack the idea of policy as text and as discourse. My view and understanding informing my unpacking of these two policy ideas centres around the belief that policy is more than simply a guide in which actions are articulated.

I regard policy also as ideological and political, and therefore not neutral. In addition, my discussion of policy as text and as discourse is also informed by my conviction that language in (education) policy is effectively used to mask “fundamental contradictions behind the rhetoric of many state policies” (Olssen et al., 2004:60). This, I believe, impacts on how policies are interpreted and ultimately implemented, and therefore also on the effect or consequences of a policy.

For Jurin and Kriskovic (2017:19), text resembles a “linguistic sign or a combination of signs based on social conventions.” Important aspects define what text is. To, text refers to what is written or spoken, and it also has a particular context within which it functions. In essence, when dealing with policy, context is an important aspect of meaning that should be conscious of. Lester, Lochmiller and Gabriel (2017:2) concur that “... text (defined broadly) have always been central to the development of education policy and its implementation in various organizational settings.” As text, policy also has a particular meaning.

For Ball (2006:44),

as text policies are representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actors' interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context).

A similar view is expressed by Bathes (in Olssen et al., 2004:62), for whom a text "is not a line of words releasing a single "theological" meaning ... but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writing, none of them original, blend and clash". The implication of the foregoing excerpts is that policy as text has multiple meanings that are embedded, coded and decoded and are open for interpretation. Similar to texts, policies consist of specific language and specific compromises that were made at various stages of the policy development process. Concerning the language used in policy texts, it is the view of Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997:15) that the words chosen for use in a policy text are "carefully selected and much revised in light of the objections of the various interests." If we concede that policy is ideological and political in nature, then one must also concede that the words chosen and reflected in policy texts have been carefully selected and much revised to create particular meanings or to enable the realisation of ideological and political objectives.

In addition, policy texts cannot be taken as being evident of what the authors intended to say, because what is said or written by policy developers is differently deciphered and understood by those who are supposed to implement the policy. What is written in policy text, can therefore not be taken as evident of what the policy author intended to express. This means that what is written, or what is read, and what is understood from the reading of a policy text, is likely to be different from what was intended, depending on who is reading the text, for what purpose they are reading it, and under what conditions it is read.

This view is reiterated by Cahill (2015:304), who calls on us to be "vigilant to the fact that interpretation or the decoding of a particular text is always subject to situated contextualisation of time, space and place." Saarinen (2007:23) refers to a particular reality within which a policy exists when stating that "[t]he text may create a reality, but that reality needs to be reflected against the reality of the political action such as decisions, legislation, and operationalisations of policies." Policy text is therefore interpreted within a specific context and not in isolation.

Furthermore, as text, policy also assumes that when written, the developers already have a specific audience in mind, and an expectation about how that audience will comprehend and accept (or understand) that particular text (Scott, 2000:20). As a result, before a policy is written, it is already riddled with connotations by those that write it, and such undertones are directed at particular groups of people for interpretation and meaning-making.

This has the effect that a policy or its pronouncements is not fixed, but is open to various interpretations. Add to this the possibility that a policy text is informed by multiple and various agendas, some of which might be contradictory and incompatible with each other. To this effect, Gasper and Apthorpe (2014:9) concede that “[all] policy writing, considered as text and subtext, is open - able to various interpretations, some of them are conflicting.” The conflicting nature of policy texts could be linked to the multiple (political) influences that are involved in the policy process.

Fimyar (2014:8) opines that “[t]he texts themselves are the products of multiple agendas and compromises.” In line with Fimyar’s observation, Ball (2006:45) also suggests that “texts are the product of compromises at various stages.” As texts, policies are therefore a result of compromises made by the different actors involved in the policy process. By the time that policies reach their intended audiences, or their implementation stage, the text is likely to have changed and been infused with the values and interests of certain groups (Prunty in Taylor et al, 1997:27; cf. also Cheek, 1997:669).

If it can be accepted that policies are the products of multiple agendas and compromises, then there is also a need to accept that policies are not value-neutral constructs. Policies are informed by and supposed to serve the interest of certain groups. As such, if one can assume that policies are developed by those in power (as was indicated earlier), then one could also assume that policy text will promote the values and the interests of those in power, or those responsible for their development and implementation.

In reading policy text, it therefore becomes important that a person should consistently and constantly explore and ask pertinent questions about the extent of and prevalence of values and meaning in the policy. It is for this reason that Taylor et al. (1997:20) regard it critical to find out “who is involved in policy-making, how processes of

consultation are arranged and whose interests they serve thus becomes critical.” By exploring these questions, one can decipher what the text really implies, which and whose interests have been favoured, and who will benefit from a particular policy and its implementation or non-implementation.

Therefore, policy analysts should be more concerned with revealing how policy agenda setting takes place, and exposing hidden interests and values within the policy text and the policy process. Taylor et al. (cited in Fimyar, 2014:10) view that policy is a “process dominated by conflict rather than consensus, whereby only certain groups of actors exercise control over policy formulation” should thus be not be ignored, as it signals the influence of dominant groups on the policy process and policy implementation.

The impact of dominant groups on the policy process finds expression in the ideological nature of policy as text. This is according to Scott (2000:19), who contends that

[a]n educational policy text is always underpinned by an ideological framework, that is, the text itself, explicitly or implicitly offers a viewpoint about the nature of knowledge, forms of child development, teaching and learning, and organisational issues which relate to these.

The impact of ideology on policy implementation is also captured by Ball (2006:44), who posits that

[a]nd the more ideologically abstract any policy is, the more distant in conception from practice ...the less likely it is accommodated in unmediated form into the context of practice, it confronts ‘other realities’, other circumstances, like poverty, disrupted classrooms, lack of materials, multi-lingual classes.

Because of the perceived impact of ideology on policy text, it therefore becomes imperative that when dealing with policy as text, people are sensitive not only to the values that the text favours and tries to promote, but also be cognisant to those values that the policy ignores and is silent about. In addition, people should also be conscious of the ideological underpinnings that guide the gestation of a policy, and which are embedded in the text and which influence its implementation. This is important because a lack of an understanding of policy as text that is underpinned and influenced by a particular value and ideological orientation may not only impact the way that a

policy is viewed and interpreted, but may also jeopardise its implementation. With this insight, this study aims to develop a framework for policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

### **Policy as discourse**

Bacchi (2000:46) holds the view that it is difficult to define the concept “discourse”, because the “whole idea of discourse is that that definition play an important part in delineating “knowledge”. However, the concept “discourse” is defined as “anything beyond the sentence” (Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton 2001:1). As such, *discourse* resembles something beyond than which is visible and written – that is the words, phrases and sentences on paper. Discourse is subsequently not only the plain text in front of us. Rather, the concept *discourse* encapsulates meanings and interpretations of words, phrases and sentences that extend further than the text. Therefore, it assumes that behind the text, and hidden in the text, the words, sentences, phrases and paragraphs have meaning and messages that are not overtly and explicitly communicated by the text.

These sentiments are confirmed by Foucault (cited in Nicoll, Fejes, Olson, Dahlsted & Biesta, 2016:98), for whom discourse “includes what is said through speech or writing, but is more than this.” Foucault’s view is reiterated by Schiffrin et al. (2001:1), who state that discourse is beyond what we see on the surface. Rather, it represents symbolic representations and it creates meanings behind what is actually portrayed and said.

Policy as discourse therefore “embody meaning and social relationships, they constitute both subjectivity and power relations” (Ball, 1993:2). More so, as discourse, policy also “get things done, accomplish real tasks, gather authority” (Said, 1986:152). As such, policy does not only guide action, rather it also accomplishes, causes things to happen, and accumulates power. In terms of the link between the exercise of power and the practice of policy, it is the view of Foucault (1994:31) that

in a society... there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses ...

Ball (2006:48) states that. “[d]iscourses embody the meaning and use of propositions and words.” Discourse is subsequently “about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority (Ball, 2006:48). Ball (2006:48) further concedes that “we are the subjectivities, the voices, the knowledge, the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows. We do not speak a discourse, it speaks us.”

Regarding policy as discourse, it is further the opinion of Braun, Ball, Maguire and Hoskins (2011:598) that “... policy discourses should not be considered in isolation. Rather, they act upon and influence one another intertextuality.” Intertextuality assumes that policies exist within a broader policy context or framework, and that all these policies inevitably influence each other. Therefore, a particular discourse found in and promoted by one policy will also be present in another policy. Through intertextuality, policy creates pervasive, persistent and powerful discourses that promote specific ideas and ideologies. Since these ideas and ideologies are prevalent in all policy texts, they become part of the language used in every policy. As such, they are taken for granted, and neither their authority nor their intention is ever questioned or critiqued.

Due to the nature of policy as discourse, the ease with which policy discourses are created and through the clever, negotiated pervasive use of words and phrases throughout various policies, Keeley and Scoones (2014:85) are of the view that “the very idea of policy itself needs to be problematized”. This will ensure that particular policy discourses are explored and examined. Ignorance of the power and potential of policy as discourse, as well as that of the discourses created and promoted by education policy, could impact negatively on and be detrimental to effective education policy implementation to, and the shaping of education in Lesotho.

A deduction that can be made is that policies represent texts and discourse that contain hidden meanings, which again form particular opinions and prompt particular actions, which could potentially lead to different interpretations of policy text or the problem it tries to address. The multiplicity of meaning within policy texts as well as the multiplicity of meanings embedded in and communicated through policy as discourse, creates an “openness” of the policy, which could potentially also impact on the implementation of the policy, and the aims and objectives it tries to achieve.



In the next section, I look at policy effects and the consequences of policy, as these have an impact on the way in which policies are perceived, and their subsequent acceptance or rejection during implementation.

### **Policy effects and consequences**

Whether as discourse or as text, or developed simply to address particular social problems, policy is intended to and always exerts a particular impact on people. Alternatively, policy always has certain effects and consequences. For Dye (2013:7), policy consequences are the impact that the policies have on people. Thus in this section, I will look at such effects or consequences, as they are likely to have a particular impact on policy implementation. To this effect, it is the contention of Ball (2006:50) that

[i]t is not that policies have no effects, they do, it is not that those effects are not significant, they are; it is not that those effects are not patterned, they are, although it is possible to think of policies that just fail to work

Policies are therefore not just the texts we read. Rather, they are utterances that have noteworthy and patterned consequences and effects that touch our lives and define the way in which they are implemented. This I derive from Bell and Stevenson (2006:12), who argue that because policy texts are open and subjected to different interpretations by different stakeholders depending on their situations, there is a likelihood that their implementation will also not be the same. More so, the extent to which anticipated aims and objections will be realised will also differ.

Irrespective of its aims and objectives, there is no guarantee that a policy's aims and objectives will be realised as anticipated. Taylor et al. (1997:17) opine that the consequences of the policy process are unpredictable. Taylor et al. (1997:29) further testify to this when stating that "given that contradictory contexts and competing interests are reflected in policies as competing discourses, policy effects are by no means certain or predictable." There is thus no way for those involved in policy implementation to know beforehand what the consequences of a particular policy will be. This is because of the complex interrelationship and interplay between different contextual factors, the unique or opposing interests of those in power, and the different actors and ideologies involved in the policy process and policy implementation.



One effect of policy is that while it may have been formulated to address a specific problem, it could create another problem in the process of implementation (Gultekin, 2014:47). This is illustrated by the Lesotho education public expenditure review conducted by World Bank in 2019, which found that “teachers in Lesotho were encouraged to improve their qualifications by the very high premium paid in obtaining graduate teacher qualifications which enable them to become senior teachers” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019:14). However, this policy created a major problem because now “Lesotho has very high levels of expenditure on education... teacher salaries, which dominate recurrent spending amount to 10 per cent of gross domestic product” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019:14). Although it seemed to be a good policy to encourage teachers to obtain better qualifications by increasing their salaries, in Lesotho this has now become problematic, as the bulk of the education budget goes to teacher salaries at the expense of other equally critical public services and national priorities.

Furthermore, not only may the inability of policy-makers to use clearly defined language lead to unsavoury consequences in policy implementation, but the context of the policy process also impacts on its implementation. Taylor et al. (1997:12) regard the language and discursive context of policy documents as equally significant features of policy-making and policy processes. Taylor et al. (1997:17) further posit that “[d]ifferent interest can give very different emphases to various aspects of the policy.” These differences in emphasis can lead to confusion, which can, in turn, impact on the interpretation of directives and pronouncements, and result in the ineffective or poor implementation of the policy.

However, policies could also have positive consequences. An example is that of the impact that the Free Primary Education Policy has had in many African countries. The policy contributed towards an increase in foreign funding in countries like Kenya. This allowed the Kenyan government to reallocate state spending to additional development projects (Owino, Juma, Rari & Monanda, 2015:56). Furthermore, the introduction of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy in 2018 resulted in an inclusive education system where children with various disabilities are incorporated into mainstream education. This move brought about positive consequences, as those learners that were previously discriminated against and were excluded, now have the opportunity to learn alongside their peers (Ralejoe, 2016:15).

In essence, policy consequences can be intended and/or unintended. Irrespective of this, what remains is that the consequences affect different people differently, as illustrated in the preceding paragraphs.

In the next section, I will define education policy, as this study is delimited within the precinct of education policy. As such, it is important to include a definition of education policy that will be applicable to this study.

### **2.2.2 Definition of education policy**

Since this study's primary focus is on education policy, it is imperative at this juncture to explain what education policy is and how it is conceptualised within this study. The term policy has already been explained earlier in the study, and certain definitional ideas of policy have been put forward (cf.2.2.1).

As a field of Education, education policy used to be viewed as unimportant because it was regarded as not scientific enough (Trainor & Graue, 2014:267). However, the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw a change in the status of education policy, and it is now taking central stage on government agendas globally (Olssen et al., 2004:3). The focus it currently enjoys stems from the fact that "... education has become a high-stakes, big budgets policy arena" (Honig, 2006:1).

Bolaji, Gray and Campell-Evans (2015:57) define the concept education policy as "... the collection of laws and rules that govern the operation of an education system." Caldwell and Spinks (1988:41 cited in Delaney, 2017:3) define education policy as "a statement of purpose and one or more broad guidelines as to how that purpose is to be achieved, which, taken together, provide a framework for the separation of the school or programme." Fulcher (2016:8) casts the definition of education policy within the struggle that exists between parents and teachers. Accordingly, Fulcher (2016:8) defines policy as the result of "... encounters between parent and teacher [that] can appropriately be seen as a struggle to achieve particular objectives or about how to achieve them [with] the resulting decision and subsequent action."

Vienette and Pont (2017:20) regard education policy as a concept that "...can be formally understood as the actions taken by governments in relation with education practices, and how governments address the production and delivery of education in

a given system.” It should also be noted that education policy bears the same characteristics (and critique) as any other public policy. As such it is not shielded from the pronouncements I made earlier about policy (cf.2.2.1). Education policy is therefore also political, it is ideological, it contains and promotes certain discourses and it is text.

Thus, since it is political and ideological in nature, education policy is open to (mis)use, manipulation and the creation of subjectivities and unequal power balances. As a result, it should therefore not be taken for granted, or viewed as innocent and sincere attempts by the state to ‘improve education to the advantage’ of the populace. This is confirmed by Apple (1986:174), who define education policy as important ideological constructions that need to be seen as constitutive elements of a particular hegemonic project. For this reason, Torres (in Olssen et al., 2004:3) argues for an application to (education) policy of a critical theory of power that will interrogate the role of various bureaucratic organisations interlinked to a theory of the state. Whilst the political nature of policy was well discussed in the previous section (cf. 2.2.1), the idea of (education) policy as political symbolism should not be disregarded. Jansen (2001:200) maintains that education policy is best described as a struggle for the achievement of a broad political symbolism. This symbolism, he argues, is harmful for education, as it does not result in any significant transformations of education in general or in schools or education quality to. Instead, it maintains the status quo.

The conceptualisation of education policy I adopted for this study views education policy as a highly political and ideologically-infused text that is (mis)used to create certain discourses aimed at maintaining the status quo.

### **The nature of education policy**

Education policy is a primary prerequisite for the smooth and effective functioning of education systems and schools. It is my view that the lack of or failure to understand education policy issues and agendas by those working within these contexts may lead to poor or a lack of proper implementation of policies, which might negatively impact the development and progress of education. Education policy should thus be regarded as a central element to ensure the successful management and governance of schools and institutions of learning.

Additionally, education policies are meant to act as a measure that ensures that the quality of education is maintained at all times. Ling (2017:162) confirms that education policy is the “soil in which educational development thrives and strengthening research on education policy is an important means of guaranteeing the healthy development of modern education.” This sentiment is echoed by Kosor, Perovic and Golem (2019:27), who opine that “one of the main objectives of educational policy is to improve educational outcomes.” As such, education policy in general but also processes related to education policy implementation should not be neglected by those interested in education matters. The improvement of education as the main duty of education policy is to ensure that quality education is provided and sustained.

Similar to policy as alluded to earlier (cf. 2.2.1), education policy is not restricted to official and written documents. In this regard, Fulcher (2016:6) maintains that education policy is anything ranging from official legislation to the daily decisions taken by the teacher in the classroom, including teaching methods. Therefore, education policy is not restricted to documents produced by the state only, but it also entails what teachers choose to do or not to do in their respective classrooms. This makes education policy even more complex, as what each teacher does in their classroom is likely to be different from what happens in the next class or in the rest of the school.

The view of policy and education policy formulated in this chapter forms the basis for this study. Also contributing towards a better understanding of the policy implementation process, is a scrutiny of the literature on policy development. I contend that such scrutiny will help me place the policy implementation process in its broader and proper context. More so, Carr (2007:4) argues that the link between education policy development and policy implementation is integral to understanding the educational experiences of students and educators.

In the next section, I will be deliberating on the policy process with particular interest in the linear and cyclical models of policy development. This I do with the aim of placing policy implementation within the realm of the policy process.

## 2.3 Policy Development

### 2.3.1. The policy process

In the previous section, I focused on the contextualisation of policy and education policy, with the aim of giving a sound conceptual underpinning to the literature review. This study aims to develop a framework that will enhance education policy implementation in Lesotho. There is therefore a need to place the policy implementation process in the broader policy environment. This is done to establish and understand the relationship between policy implementation and other stages or phases of the policy process. An understanding of how and by whom power is exercised during the policy development phase, or who is involved in policy agenda-setting, will shed light on reasons for possible challenges experienced during policy implementation.

Because policy implementation is regarded as one of the phases of the policy development process, in this section I will look briefly at two policy development processes. The first is policy development as a cyclical process, and the second is policy development as a linear process. I do this with the purpose of locating policy implementation within the broader policy development process, to come to a better understanding of factors influencing policy implementation.

The act of policy-making is described by Goodin, Rein and Moran (2006:21) as being

a matter of choice under constraint. But not all the constraints are material, some are social and political, having to do with the willingness of the people to do what your policy asks them or with willingness of electors to endorse the policies that would-be policy makers espouse.

This confirms previous views alluded to in this chapter regarding policy-making as a process that takes place within a particular context, and never in isolation. It should be noted that there are several models of policy-making. These include but are not limited to the linear model, the incremental model, the mixed scanning model, policy as arguments model, policy as social experiments model, and policy as interactive learning (Kyagera, 2013:2).

Judged against the various models aimed at explaining policy development, one could assume that policy development takes different forms. These models provide ways of

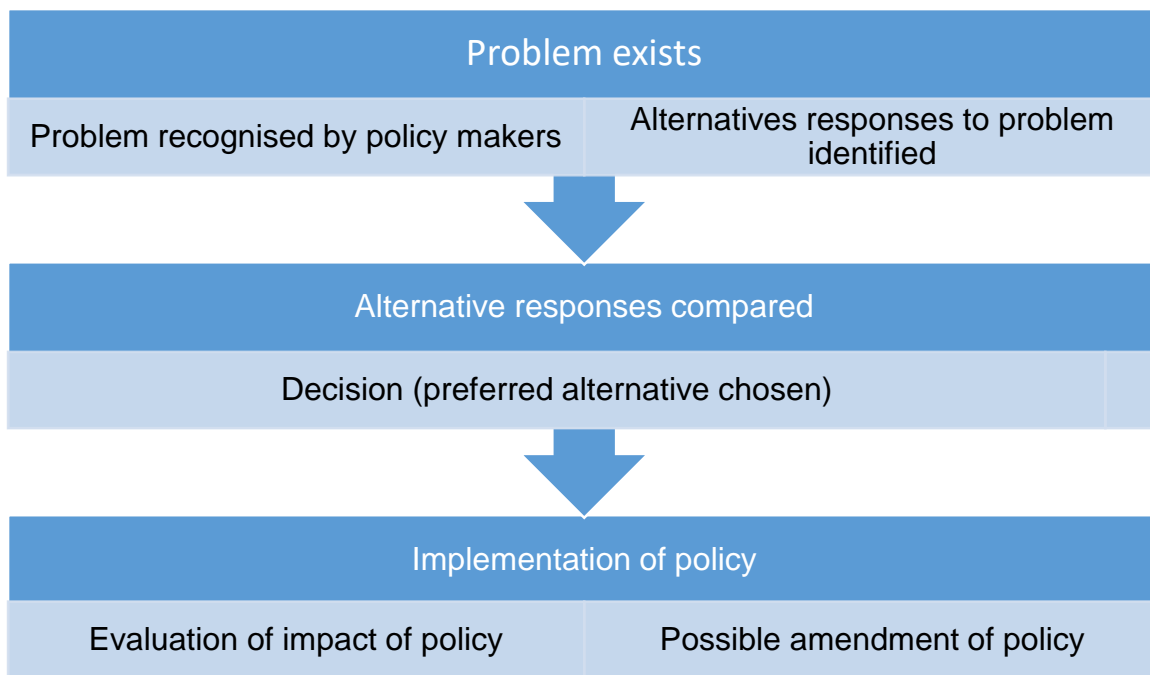
understanding how the policy process unfolds. However, because this study does not focus on policy processes per se, and also due to the limited nature of this study, I will not dwell on these different models. Rather, I will give a brief explanation of the linear and cyclical models. I have chosen these two models as they have more or less similar phases/stages, while the other models use a different approach to policy-making.

It is imperative to note that some models comprise four stages: problem identification, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. Other models are more comprehensive, as they comprise seven stages, namely problem identification, the establishment of evaluation criteria, identification of policy options, selection of policies, implementation of policies, evaluation of policy outcomes and revision or replacement of policies (Scott, 2017:1).

How comprehensive the policy process is, depends on the context in which the process is grounded. This is according to Little (2011:502), who argues that “[h]ow policies are generated, and whether they take root, depends to an extent on the contours of the contemporary political and policy environment.” However, irrespective of the models, it appears that the policy process fundamentally comprises of the following stages: ‘agenda setting, policy shaping, decision making, implementation and evaluation’ (Buonanno & Nugent, 2013:101).

Pegels and Becker (2014:38) also refer to agenda-setting, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation as constituents of the policy process. A brief outline of these stages is subsequently provided. However, since the focus of this study is on policy implementation, and the remainder of the chapter will be devoted to unpacking what policy implementation is all about, only the concepts agenda setting, policy formulation, and evaluation will be discussed. Let me give a brief overview of the linear and cyclic policy processes.

*The linear policy development model*



*Figure 2: Linear model of policy process. Adapted from Meier, 1991*

According to Hardee, Feranil, Boezwinkle and Clark (2004:23), the linear model of policy development was developed by Lasswell in 1951 and adopted by Meier in 1991. This model distinguishes between four interrelated steps taken in policy-making. Smith and Larimer (2009:32) maintain that the linear policy process consists of linked stages that reflect a rationalist perspective. A problem is identified, alternative responses are considered, the 'best' solution is adopted, and after evaluation the policy is continued, revised or terminated. Sutton (1999:9) describes the linear model of policy-making as a "problem-solving process which is rational, balanced, objective and analytic."

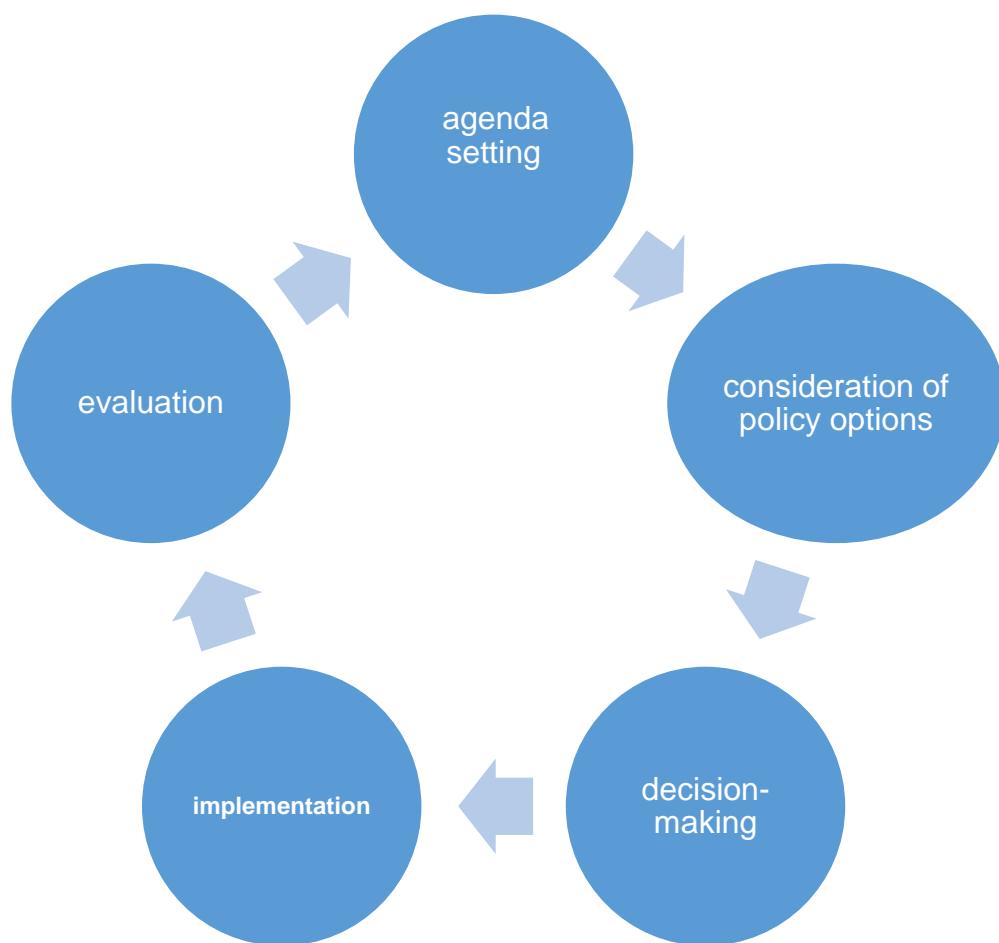
However, this model is criticised by Lesia (2015:23), who argues that "the model is purely grounded on top-down approach and does not give the opportunity for the public to participate in policy decision-making process." This model is subsequently also criticised by Savard and Banville (2012:2), as it follows a fragmented approach. These views are reiterated by Cattaneo (2018:12), who argues that the steps for agenda setting and policy formulation do not necessarily take place in a linear manner. Rather, they sometimes happen simultaneously.

Additionally, Oakley, Pesta, Ciftci and Blomberg (2013:2) also opine that the linear model is highly disjointed, and as such complicates the policy process. The linear

model is also critiqued for being a misleading model, because policy-making may be disrupted or hampered at any stage (Jabeen, Jadoon & Salman, 2016:20). Despite being commonly used as a policy development process, the linear policy development process seems to be highly criticised and regarded as problematic.

The perceived limitations of the linear model led to the development of the cyclical policy development model. This model is discussed in the next section.

### *The cyclic policy development model*



*Figure 3: Cyclic model of policy process. Adapted from Jordan and Adelle, 2012*

Following criticism of the linear model, the policy cycle model was developed, adopted and refined by Brewer (1974), Jenkins (1978), Brewer and De Leone (1983), and further refined by De Leone (1999), (Freeman, 2013:1).

For Anderson (2015:ix), the cyclic policy model represents the process of policy-making as a sequence of activities that happen, starting from the stage of identifying



the problem to the evaluation of the policy, and may even result in modifying or terminating a policy.

Dorey (2014:13) is of the opinion that

[i]nstead of assuming that policies proceed through stages with a clear beginning and end, they are better understood in terms of an ongoing cycle, whereby the problems they were intended to tackle often re-emerge at some point and thereupon necessitate either new policy or modifications of the original one.

Therefore, for Dorey, policy development is not a linear process, with a specific beginning and an end. Instead, it is a recurring cyclical process. Additionally, Anderson (2011:5-6) is of the opinion that the cyclical policy approach has several advantages. Firstly, the cyclic approach centres attention on the officials and institutions who make policy decisions, and the factors that influence and condition their actions. Secondly, the sequential nature of policy-making helps one to capture and comprehend the flow of action in the actual policy process. Thirdly, this approach is flexible and open to change and refinement.

Conversely, Cairney (2012:42) argues that the view of the policy process as cyclic is

... descriptively inaccurate because the stages often run in different order and it is difficult to distinguish between them [as]... it has a top-down bias, it is largely designed to track how well choices made at the top are carried out at the bottom.

This view is echoed by Sabatier (cited in Mauda, 2016:17), who states that the cyclic policy model is “not being scientific, casual theory, which takes a top-down approach, neglecting the interaction of actors, power dynamic, institutions, as well as interaction between different stages.”

This section dealt with policy development models because they are important for analytical purposes. In this regard, Dye (2005:31) stipulates that “it is often useful for analytic purposes to break policy-making into component units to to understand better how policies are made.” As such, the purpose of this section is to form a better understanding of the policy process. I believe that such an understanding will enhance my conceptualisation of education policy implementation in Lesotho, which is what this study aims to achieve. In essence, the cyclic policy development approach, just like the linear approach, has its shortfalls. The purpose of looking at

these approaches was mainly to give an overview of how education policy could potentially be developed.

Now that we have explained the two policy development models, I will give an overview of the phase/stages that these models (cf. Figure 1 and Figure 2) comprise. These phases are agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation. This I will do to give an idea of what these stages entail, with the purpose of elucidating possible factors and processes that will influence education policy implementation in Lesotho.

### **2.3.2 The policy development process**

In this section, I will give an overview of the four stages of the policy-making process, namely agenda setting, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. This I do to delineate policy implementation within the realm of the policy-making process.

Schultz (2004:324) is of the view that “policy design is one step in the policy-making process that encompasses agenda setting, policy formulation and design.” The first stage that I will review is agenda setting.

- **Agenda setting**

Agenda setting is a crucial step in the policy-making process. Agenda setting takes place when there is a problem that needs to be addressed, and this can be achieved through various sources. These include publicising societal problems, expressing demands for government action, participants, mass media, interest groups, citizen initiatives and public opinion (Dye, 2013:34). During this stage, the issues to be discussed and reflected on in the policy are tabled, and the relevant actors are identified to discuss the identified issues (Joachim & Dalmer, 2016:369).

Maddison and Denniss (2009:124) also hold the view that “... the transition from problem to policy occurs during the stage in the policy process known as issue identification or agenda setting.” For Birkland (2011:171), the process of agenda setting also resembles the stage “by which problems and alternative solutions gain or lose public and elite attention.” Authors such as Janssen and Heilbig (2015:5) view problem identification and agenda setting as the same stage. In this study, I will adopt their use of this concept.

Policy agenda setting is a “deliberative planning process through which policy issues are identified, problems defined and prioritised, support mobilised and decision makers lobbied to take appropriate action” (Cloete & Meyer, 2013:87). It is a stage that is executed by several actors that include, but are not limited to, “political officials (executives), legislators, bureaucrats (administrators), judicial functionaries, interest groups, special commissions/panels, international organisations, etc” (Vambe & Tafida, 2013:49).

Althaus, Bridgman and Davis (cited in Maddison & Denniss, 2009:127) maintain that for an issue to be considered for inclusion on the policy agenda it must meet at least four conditions. Firstly, there must be agreement on a problem. A problem only exists when significant interest agrees that there should be a change in current circumstances. To achieve this agreement will usually require a coalition of voices from both inside and outside government. This supposes that various interest groups and stakeholders should be involved in and consulted during the process when the policy agenda is set or when defining the policy problem. Whilst it was indicated earlier (cf.2.2.1) that policy development is the responsibility of the state, it would thus be inappropriate for the state to solely and exclusively determine and define the policy problem.

Secondly, there must be the prospect of a solution. It is generally assumed that policy-makers prefer issues to which there appears to be a plausible solution. Unless intentional, few policy-makers and politicians show interest in issues that promise inevitable failure. This is because policy is political and ideological, and is intended to ensure political or ideological gains for the state.

Thirdly, the issue must be appropriate for government expenditure. Policy development and effective policy implementation requires funds. Therefore, it is crucial that during the agenda-setting stage, policy developers also consider the financial implications of solving a particular problem.

Lastly, it is essential to determine for whom the issue is a problem. An investigation as to who is involved in defining the problem is relevant, because the government's ideology may influence ministers' decisions on whether they want to deal with an issue or not.

Since agenda setting involves a wide range of stakeholders, it requires that policy developers and governments be vigilant and receptive to ideas from a variety of sources (Cairney & Zahariadis, 2016:21). This assumes that policy developers put aside their own interests to get relevant information to form the basis of sound policy agenda setting, policy formulation and ultimately policy implementation. Agenda setting is not restricted to the identification of the problem and putting it on the agenda. It goes further into ensuring that the problem remains on the agenda until a decision is made about it (Sumida, 2017:381).

Agenda setting and deciding which and whose problems are attended to, is not a straightforward and unfettered exercise. Instead, it is a process imbued with biases and prejudice, in which dominant voices and values are preferred and promoted. In this regard, is it also the view of Simon (2016:84) that “some individuals and groups may be consciously or subconsciously viewed as less deserving of the benefits of public policy than are others.” Under such conditions, it is inevitable that particular policy agenda issues are disregarded and viewed as not worthy of government attention. This also result in issues that are not necessarily beneficial to those the policy is intended to serve being put on the agenda, at the expense of other, more relevant and vital issues and voices. This is despite the expectation that in democratically elected governments, the electorate has a voice in agenda setting. For this reason, Osee (2019:3) argues that agenda setting is a policy process that is marred by controversy.

By virtue of it being the first stage of the policy-making process, the agenda-setting stage informs the other stages in the policy-making process. In the next section, I will look at the policy formulation stage of the policy-making process.

- **Policy formulation**

The second stage of the policy development process is policy formulation. When the agenda has been set and (hopefully) agreed upon by the relevant actors, the process of policy formation needs to take place. Policy formation deals with the articulation, debating and drafting of the items on the agenda into a policy or law (Hardee et al., 2004:14). This process entails “setting the objectives, identifying the cost and estimating the effect of solutions, choosing from a list of solutions and selecting policy instruments” (Cairney, 2012:33). Wilson and Epelle (2018:176) also confirm that policy

formulation comprises goal formulation, problem identification and delineation, agenda setting, seeking out policy alternatives and weighing their consequences, and making the policy choice in the form of decrees and directives, laws, acts and guidelines. Similarly, for Jordan and Turnpenny (2015:10), the policy formulation process also comprises the conceptualisation of the problem, problem characterisation, problem evaluation, specification of the objectives or clarifying policy objectives, and policy design.

Schultz (2004:327-328) contends that

Policy formulation occurs when policy makers try to develop alternative proposals or strategies for addressing public problems... Numerous actors are involved in the process of policy formulation, such as the public bureaucracy, legislators, interest groups, think tanks, and the presidential commissions and task forces.

Dye (2013:34) similarly confirms that policy formation is carried out by various actors, including “think tanks, president, executive office, congressional committees and interest groups.” However, these actors are not at liberty to formulate or adopt policies as they please. Rather, authoritative decision-making bodies, such as the legislature and cabinet, should provide rules and procedures to ensure that one option is preferred over another (Bevan & Jennings, 2014:19). Chapman, McLellan and Tezuka (2016:3) stipulate that “once a policy proposal (or proposals) has been formulated, it is presented to the decision makers, usually the cabinet, ministers and parliament, for consideration prior to implementation.”

It is important to remember that all actors involved in the policy process have particular and sometimes conflicting interests. Each of them attempts to influence policy decisions to suit their interests. Policy formulation, therefore, requires expertise and the ability to interpret and put in perspective the identified problem. In addition, it also requires that the processes engaged in when preparing for the formulation and shaping of the policy document be comprehensive (Munguma, 2018:69). Since policy formulation and subsequently also policy implementation is affected by the extent to which policy problems are investigated, it becomes important to pay attention to Howlett (2009:161), who warns that “attempting to deal with wicked problems without appropriately investigating or researching problem causes or the probable effects of policy alternatives” also adversely affects policy formulation.

Although Sabatier and Mazmanian (in Hill & Hupe, 2014:49) distinguish between policy formulation and policy implementation, they acknowledge that these two processes are interrelated, as they build on each other and are informed by the feedback generated from each other. As such, policy implementation and policy formulation cannot be divorced from each other. Once the policy has been formulated, it needs to be implemented. The next section will be a brief overview of policy implementation.

- **Policy implementation**

In this section, I will not give a detailed exposition of the policy implementation process, as that is the focus of Chapter 3. At this stage, I regard it sufficient to state that after its formulation, the adopted policy needs to be implemented to ensure that it can counter and address the problems for which it was developed (Kusnandar, 2018:130).

However, it is also important to note that policy implementation remains a disregarded phase in the policy cycle (Khawaja, 2013:108). This might be due to its complex nature, as Birkland (2011:277) points out that “for policy makers and public managers, policy implementation is one of the most difficult aspects of the policy process, and policy failure is one of the most frustrating parts.” It is subsequently possible that policy implementers are deterred from embarking on policy implementation, as they cannot be sure what the outcome of the policy implementation will be. Various aspects and factors related to effective policy implementation will be dealt with in Chapter 3.

When policies have been developed and implemented, there is a need to evaluate their progress to see if they are indeed serving their purpose. Following the implementation of a policy is the evaluation of that policy.

- **Policy evaluation**

Policy evaluation is considered a crucial stage in the policy process (Li, 2016:116). Khan and Rahman (2017:174) define policy evaluation as a phase “concerned with learning about the consequences of public policy.” For Bell and Aggleton (2016:2), policy evaluation concerns appraising if the policy directives have been implemented effectively or not with the aim of restructuring them.

Howlett and Ramesh (2003, cited in Mwije, 2013:7) define the term policy evaluation as something that “refers to the process by which the results of policies are monitored by both state and societal actors, the outcome of which may be a reconceptualization of the problems and solutions.” A policy is also evaluated with the purpose of “knowing

its achievements, judging its quality, making futuristic decisions of the program [and] determin[ing] the how of implementation and the outcomes” (Juma & Onkware, 2015:839).

To this effect, the policy evaluation process is important as it gives feedback on the success and effectiveness of a policy. This feedback is important, because policies are generally developed and implemented to address specific societal issues. Therefore, the evaluation of the policy after its implementation gives insight into the extent to which the policy achieves its intended purpose.

However, policy evaluation also creates the opportunity to highlight any unintended consequences of a policy. The insight generated through policy implementation is therefore intended to make important decisions about the future of the policy. Decisions need to be made regarding its continued implementation or the changes that need to be made to ensure that the policy’s aims and objectives and prescripts are aligned with the identified problem.

Despite its perceived significance in ensuring policy success, the evaluation of policies seems to be a phase that is ignored. This is according to Khawaja (2013:117), who opines that “one of the most neglected fields in policy cycle is ... evaluation.” Failure to evaluate policies, therefore, means that policy developers and implementers may not know if the policy is addressing the identified problems, or whether it is bringing positive or negative changes to those for whom it was developed. Therefore, the evaluation of a policy after its implementation gives insight into the extent to which the policy achieves its intended purpose.

Nonetheless, policy evaluation can also fail. This happens when there is a “lack of learning due to lack of, ineffective or inappropriate policy monitoring and/or feedback processes and structures” (Howlett, 2009:161). In other words, policy evaluation is likely to fail if no lessons have been learnt by those doing the evaluation. Policy evaluation is therefore not a task that should be ignored, instead, it should be regarded a significant step in getting feedback on the effectiveness or not of a policy after its implementation.

My intention with this study is to develop a framework for education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. This section was meant to give a brief

overview of the policy process, and its most common phases. This was done with the aim of locating policy implementation within the policy process.

In the next chapter I will present information on policy implementation. This will assist me in understanding in more depth what policy implementation really entails, as well as what underpins it.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The main objective of this chapter was to unpack the nature and extent of policy implementation in general. A literature review was used to achieve this objective. Literature on the conceptualisation of policy and policy development was interrogated and scrutinised. In a nutshell, this chapter concludes, based on literature findings, that the policy process is a complex and nuanced process. In the next chapter, I give a detailed account of the policy implementation process.



# CHAPTER 3:

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented a review of the literature on the conceptualisation of policy and the policy development process. In that chapter, I defined the concept of policy and I gave a general overview of the policy development process. This I did to locate policy implementation within the broader context of the public policy process. The aim of this study is to develop a framework for education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. In this chapter I will therefore look more closely at what policy implementation entails. I will scrutinise primary and secondary literature on policy implementation, to come to a sound understanding of what it involves, and what the factors are that influence effective policy implementation. In this chapter I also look at theories of policy implementation, and I strive to conceptualise the concept of policy implementation. In addition, I review levels of policy implementation, factors influencing education policy implementation, and challenges of education policy implementation.

### 3.2 Theories on policy implementation

In this section I will explore some theories of policy implementation to come to a better understanding of policy implementation, and how it fits into the broader policy development process. An exploration of various theories of policy implementation is necessary because, as Nilsen (2015:1) observes,

Poor theoretical underpinnings make it difficult to understand how and why implementation succeeds or fails, thus restraining opportunities to identify factors that predict the likelihood of implementation success and develop better strategies to achieve more successful implementation.

An exploration of the theoretical underpinning of policy implementation is also important to explain and understand the possible reasons behind policy failure or

success, and to come to a better understanding of what informs policy implementation as one of the processes within the broader policy development process. However, before I explore the various theories that explain the policy implementation process, let me first briefly explain what the concept “theory” entails.

Sabatier (2007:321) defines a theory as “... a logically related set of propositions that seeks to explain a fairly general set of phenomena.” For Nye and Welch (2017:65), theories represent declarations related to how the world works. These declarations are temporary, and are derived from paradigms. As belief systems, paradigms serve to give meaning to our reality. Rehman and Alharthi (2016:51) concedes that paradigms are “our way of understanding the reality of the world we are studying.”

Theory is an integral part of policy, and the two are intertwined. For Pressman and Wildavsky (1984:xxiii), “policy imply theories. Whether stated explicitly or not, policies point to a chain of causation between initial conditions and future consequences.” More so, in making sense of the policy process, theories also “...help us analyse and explain complex policy processes” (Cairney, 2012:23). Theories on policy implementation will therefore assist us to come to a better understanding of the policy implementation process, because theory serves the purpose of providing “coherence and organization to our thought about myriad causes and help us avoid random guessing” (Nye & Welch, 2017:77).

Theories are therefore formulated to guide us in the ‘accumulation, precision, guidance, connectedness, interpretation, prediction and explanation’ of phenomena (White, 2005:70-75). As such, theories explain phenomena so that these phenomena become easier to comprehend and to appreciate. It therefore provides for a particular way to think, of doing things and of explaining and making sense of reality. In terms of its relevance to this study, is it my conviction that an exploration of various theories of policy implementation will assist me in making sense of the Lesotho education policy implementation process. The aim of this is to put forward a framework that could enhance policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

It is therefore both the interrelatedness of policy and theory, as well as its potential to shed light on complex policy implementation issues, that makes it relevant and necessary to a study that aims to develop a framework for education policy implementation.

In what follows I look at different theories that explain policy implementation. These theories include the top-down, the bottom-up and the hybrid theory. There are more theories to explain policy implementation, but my choice of theories was informed by the literature review, which suggested that these theories are commonly used in explaining policy implementation. It is on the strength of the above that I will discuss these theories with the aim of coming to a better understanding of the policy implementation process in Lesotho.

### **a) The top-down theory**

The top-down approach to policy implementation is the brainchild of analysts from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and particularly the 1960s (Zafarullah & Huque, 2012:244). Studies that led to the development of the top-down theory had been informed by what these scholars termed the ‘implementation deficit’.

For Raadschelders (2003:266) the top-down approach resembles policy implementation where “... policy and decision making are considered from top-down perspective in which implementation is the only administrative consequence of political action”. This approach starts from the perspective of decision-makers, and it assumes that those developing the policies should be the ones that direct and steer the policy implementation process (Stachowiak, Robles, Habtemariam & Maltry, 2016:26). Policies are therefore regarded as the outcome of a political process, with the subsequent implementation of a policy. Policy decisions, which include the identification and definition of a problem, what policy will best respond to the problem, who will implement the policy, and other decisions related to the policy, are in essence political decisions taken by those in power, with little to no input from people at grassroots level.

Within this approach, “the elites are at the top of the pay legislation and comments of people is not involved in decision-making” (Gholipour, Jandaghi & Fallah, 2012:1). For Cerna (2013:18) this approach to policy implementation sees the policy developers as central to the policy process. As a result, the focus and attention are on factors that can be influenced and manipulated at the central level, by the decision-makers or those in power. This theory aims to “provide policy makers with a better understanding of which systems they needed to put in place to minimize ‘gaps’ between aspiration and reality” (Buse, Mays & Walt, 2012:131).

As a result, those at the top of the policy-making hierarchy provide the context in which street-level bureaucrats are expected to “exert discretion” (Imamura, 2015:17), and implement the policy. In this approach to policy implementation, those responsible for the actual implementation of a policy are silenced, as their views and inputs are not considered. Furthermore, this approach emphasises clarity, rule promulgation, and monitoring. For Matland (1995:148) this represents bureaucratic policy-making, where independent decisions are made based on merit and technical criteria.

Birkland (cited in Cabbage, O’Laughlin & Peterson, 2017:111) views the top-down approach as proceeding from particular assumptions. These assumptions entail that there are clearly defined goals against which performance can be measured, that there are clear policy tools to achieve the goals, that the policy is based on a single statute or statement, that there is a policy implementation chain that traces how it should be implemented, and that policy designers have sound knowledge of the capacity and commitment of the implementers. However, the danger of assumptions is of course that they are not necessarily based on a clear and certain understanding of an issue, which might subsequently lead to incorrect conclusions of the policy implementation process.

According to Song (2018:86), “the top-down approach also assumes that actors in the policy formulation stage are only accountable for making decisions, rather than implementing them.” As such, there is a belief that the top-down approach views policy formulation and implementation as independent phases of the policy process, and are therefore unrelated. Of course, we know that such a view of the policy process is erroneous, because what happens in the policy development process has a direct impact on the policy implementation process. For example, the exclusion of certain role players during policy development will influence the extent to which the policy will be implemented.

The value of this approach lies in the opportunity it creates to differentiate between failure and success in the implementation of a policy, and to ensure a timely intervention in the case where things go wrong. It therefore provides valuable guidance as soon as it is needed (Buse et al., 2012:131). Moreover, the top-down approach also emphasises the importance of policy clarity, as well as the control from policymakers to systematically implement policy (Donohue & Bornman, 2014:7).

The top-down theory explains the process of policy implementation as one that is guided and steered from the top – that is from the policy-makers - with little regard for the inputs and voices of those at the bottom responsible for the implementation of the policy. Simon (2016:104) defends this approach by stating that it follows a top-down approach because of its “particularly [concern] with reducing ambiguity in goal formation”. Whilst this might be true, my contention is that the very perception that problems are best defined, and more effective policy responses are put in place by those at the top or in power, results in the exclusion of certain stakeholders. This, I argue, inevitably results in a misinterpretation and an erroneous definition of a potential problem, and a potential ineffective policy response to the problem. More so, it also holds the potential of negatively impacting the implementation of a policy.

Despite its perceived benefits, the top-down approach seems to attract a fair amount of criticism. For Signe (2017:13), the top-down theory of policy implementation is “a delusional model” because of its tendency to “... neglect prior context and political aspects, as if implementation were only a matter of administration, depending only on availability of resources.” Russell (2015:18; also, Suntharasaj, 2013:19; Anderson & Holcombe, 2013:17) is further of the opinion that the top-down approach of policy implementation does not take into consideration the views and opinions of the policy implementers and other stakeholders, that it ignores local needs, and that it excludes vulnerable stakeholders that could be affected by the policy.

This makes the top-down policy implementation theory flawed, because it regards policy implementation as an activity that happens in a vacuum. In other words, the proponents of the top-down theory fail to acknowledge the impact of specific factors that may lead to policy implementation failure. Furthermore, exclusion from the policy process of those most affected by a policy, and particularly from the policy implementation stage, may result in a lack of interest in the implementation of a policy, and may subsequently impact on its effective and successful implementation.

The top-down approach proceeds from the assumption that for policies to be effectively implemented to realise its aims and objectives, the policy implementation process should be centralised or managed from the top. In terms of the centralisation of policy processes, it is the view of Andrews, Boyne, Law and Walker (2009:59) that

“a centralised organization will typically have a high degree of hierarchical authority and low levels of participation in decisions about policies and resources.”

It seems from the preceding that the top-down theory is not sufficient for successful policy implementation because of certain shortcomings. It is against this backdrop that the bottom-up theory was developed.

### **b) The bottom-up theory**

The bottom-up theory was developed in response to criticism against the top-down theory, as referred to above (cf. 3.2(a)). This theory was developed towards the end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's (Pulzl & Treib, 2007:52).

The bottom-up approach starts from the premise that a policy is made at the local level (Cerna, 2013:18). As a result, it recognises and validates the influence and involvement of other and local actors in the policy process. The bottom-up approach posits that policy goals are often ambiguous, that the goals may conflict with other policies and the norms of low-level bureaucrats, and that there is not a single defined policy, but rather a set of laws, rules, practices and norms that shape the way government and interest groups address problems (Birkland cited in Cabbage et al., 2017:111).

The bottom-up approach starts by identifying policy targets, after which it works backwards to identify which implementers and policy structures might affect a change in existing behaviour (Koontz & Newig, 2014:419). It is also premised on the idea that “policy is dependent upon the interaction among actors in the local sphere” (Mthethwa, 2012:39). As such, it regards “street-level bureaucrats” (Hill & Hupe, 2014:51) such as civil servants, the police, teachers, and other governmental employees as the most important actors in the implementation of policies. This is because these actors are able to exert considerable influence on policy implementation, and to ensure its effectiveness.

Moreover, instead of relying on one entity for the implementation of a policy, the bottom-up theory subscribes to policies that are implemented through the engagement of several stakeholders (Hall, 2009:6). These stakeholders are generally situated outside of the government sphere, and include business, public, private and non-governmental organisations. This view is echoed by Zafarullah and Huque (2012:244),

who stipulate that the bottom-up approach incorporates the contributions of various stakeholders, such as junior officials at the local level, as well as relevant non-state actors.

As a result, the bottom-up approach appears to be more democratic and inclusive, and it draws from various people and stakeholders during policy formulation and implementation. The value of such wide consultation and inclusion lies in its potential to ensure the effectiveness of policy implementation, and the resultant success of the policy.

Darling-Hammond (cited in Abuya, Admassu, Ngware, Onsomu & Oketch, 2015:3) echoes this sentiment when stating that, with the bottom-up approach, the main concern is how beneficiaries of the policy and ground actors such as 'teachers, pupils, principals and board members' experience the consequences of the policy after it has been enacted. Paramount to this approach is therefore the involvement of those that will be affected by the policy and who will be responsible for its implementation. This makes policy implementation through the bottom-up approach "fast and dynamic because it is built on the partners' needs and interests" (Suntharasaj, 2013:20).

Policy decisions and their implementation are therefore not forced on people, as could potentially be the case with the top-down approach. Rather, people affected by the policy and those who will be responsible for its implementation, are considered, included and regarded as equally important and active actors in the entire policy process. This includes policy implementation. They are therefore not merely passive recipients of policy decisions made elsewhere, by people who will not necessarily be affected by the implementation of a policy. As a result, this approach appears to be particularly sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the people who will be affected by the policy. It therefore also requires an understanding of the needs of these people.

However, Matland (cited in Jakab, 2015:12) highlights two critiques of the bottom-up approach. First, the discretion of the street-level bureaucrats usually ignores existing policy goals and overestimates personal goals towards the target group, while making local agencies unaccountable. Second, these bureaucrats usually pay particular attention to local authorities and less attention to the central government. Also, the bottom-up approach tends to focus too much on the work of the actual implementers (Liedl, 2011:8). The problem posed by this approach is that those implementing a



policy may sidestep those that formulated the policy, or even evade accountability, thereby creating implementation problems in the process.

To overcome the challenges created by both the top-down approach and the bottom-up approach, a third and more inclusive theory of policy implementation, called the hybrid theory, was developed.

### **C) The hybrid theory of policy implementation**

The word hybrid means “having two different types of components performing essentially the same function” (Merriam-webster.com/dictionary, 2017:np). The hybrid policy implementation theory integrates elements from both the bottom-up and the top-down theories and other theoretical models of policy implementation (Knill & Tosun, 2012:158). As such, this approach integrates the features of these two approaches into one new approach, which is believed to be more effective than either of the two on their own.

The hybrid approach was developed by researchers such as Elmore (1985) and Goggin, Bowman and Lester (1990) in an effort to blend the top-down and the bottom-up approaches, as they realised the two could complement each other (Pulzi & Treib, 2007:95; Gholipour et al., 2012:3). Pulzi and Treib (2007:90) also maintain that “hybrid theories try to overcome the divide between the other two approaches by incorporating elements of the top-down, bottom-up and other theoretical models”.

The hybrid approach is a fusion of the bottom-up and the top-down theories. It subsequently utilises the strengths of both theories to ensure effective policy implementation (Kaboyakhosi & Marata, 2013:314; Hottenstein, 2017:29). But it also taps into the weaknesses of both theories and turns them into opportunities for improved policy implementation. For instance, instead of using one group of actors over the other, with the hybrid approach policy implementation comprises both central and local actors (Chan, 2014:3). As a result, everyone involved in the development of a policy, and those who are affected by a policy, are involved in the implementation of the policy.

In this way it acknowledges that policy implementation takes place because a wide range of the stakeholders interact at different levels, which makes both central policy-makers and local implementers on the ground necessary for successful



implementation (Cerna, 2013:19). By being inclusive and collaborative in nature, and by creating space for collective interaction, the hybrid theory allows bottom-level communication and the need to be heard, while it also allows for top-level governance, control and activities (Russell, 2015:17).

Khan and Khandaker (2016:540) claim that in the hybrid theory, both the central and the local level of policy implementation influence the way in which policy implementation takes place. It further tries to be impartial regarding the roles played by stakeholders in policy implementation, so that it becomes effective and efficient. As such, this theory of policy implementation is more likely to fully capture the complexities of the execution and implementation of state policies (Mbokazi, 2015:25). The value of the hybrid approach therefore lies in the opportunity it creates to use the strengths of both the bottom-up and the top-down approaches, and to mitigate the impact of their specific weaknesses on policy implementation.

Its strengths include, but are not limited to, inclusivity, collaborative interaction, use of both central and local level policy implementation and involvement and interaction of a variety of stakeholders at different levels of implementation. This allows the hybrid theory to be regarded as a more appropriate theory to ensure a more effective implementation of education policy.

In the next section, I will investigate the conceptualisation of policy implementation, which in essence is the focus of this study.

### **3.3 Conceptualisation of policy implementation**

#### **3.3.1 Policy implementation: a definition**

As indicated in the previous chapter (cf. 2.3.2), policy implementation is one of the stages in the policy-making process. Not only is it a crucial stage of the policy process, but it is also a critical aspect of policy development. This is because policy implementation concerns the actual application of policy directives to see if they indeed respond to the identified need. It is therefore imperative that those involved in the development of policies should be aware of the internal and external dynamics that influence the policy-making process, including policy implementation (Warwick, 2006:35).

Obodo (2016:62) warns that policies that are well-written lose their value if they are not effectively implemented. A policy should not merely be a paper document. Rather, a policy needs to be implemented for it to be of any value. Irrespective of how well it is written, and how good its intentions are, a policy that is not implemented effectively is of little or no value at all. Policy success relies on the capacity of a governance structure to implement policies effectively and efficiently (Turok, 2010:45). Cerna (2013:17) is also adamant that approving policies does not guarantee success if the policy is not well implemented. In addition, it is in the interest of every country and every governance structure that public policies are effectively implemented. Mugambwa, Nabeta, Ngoma, Rudaheranwa, Kaberuka and Munene (2018:212) posit that poor policy implementation means that resources such as time and expertise utilised in the development of such a policy have been wasted, resulting in damaging the reputation of the leaders involved in the exercise.

A question at this juncture could be, what is policy implementation all about? Policy implementation refers to the actual effecting of the policy, where relevant stakeholders work together to achieve the set goal and objectives (Khan & Khandaker, 2016:540). For Yaro, Arshad and Salleh (2016:3), policy implementation represents “routine governmental processes of putting the government’s targeted goals into action which is usually done by government agencies or its officials in accordance with the stipulations of Law.” Anderson (2006:3) views policy implementation as that which is done to carry into effect or apply adopted policies. Taylor et al. (1997:16) view the policy implementation process “as the link between policy production and policy practice”. This supposes that once developed, policies should be put into action.

Policy development and policy implementation are therefore intertwined, as their goals are interrelated to the envisaged outcomes (Li, 2016:2). In policy implementation it is stated who should act, what action should be taken and what directives are necessary to make the implementation operative. In addition, policy implementation also enables us to identify policy failure (Wallner, 2008:422). This is because only after the implementation of a policy can the extent of its actual success be determined.

Policy implementation is not necessarily a linear process. It appears to be a rather dynamic process, taking place at various levels of government, and with the involvement of various actors. To give effect to this, Brynard, Cloete and De Coning

(2013:135) define policy implementation as "... a multifaceted concept attempted at various levels of government and pursued in conjunction with the private sector, civil society and NGOs." Furthermore, policy implementation appears to be a rather political process, where issues of power are at play. This is according to Malen (2006:85), who describes policy implementation as "a dynamic political process that affects and reflects the relative power of diverse actors and the institutional and environmental forces that condition the play of power."

It is within a context where power is at play and where policy processes are influenced by those in power, that policy implementation creates the opportunity for allocating benefits to other groups while at the same time sanctioning other groups (Sidney, 2007:84). This is because policy development occurs in various political, social, cultural, and economic settings, where several issues of power come to the fore, that not only affects how policies are developed, but also how they are implemented (Hardee et al., 2004:4).

The political nature of policy implementation stems from the fact that it involves conflict and struggle amongst individuals and groups, officials and agencies who all hold conflicting ideas, interests, values, and information on policy issues (Anderson, 2006:5). One could therefore expect that within this environment, negotiation, the exercise of power, bargaining, compromise, bribery and deception all become integral to the policy implementation process.

In addition, policy implementation also warrants the close cooperation of various stakeholders. Bayat (2006:10) posits that policy implementation requires a cooperative partnership between politicians and officials, who, ideally, should always bear in mind the practical implications of any policy. This cooperation and a sensitivity to the interests of all actors is important, because "the ability of political actors, such as interest groups, to effect methods of implementation may determine the policy's ultimate outcome" (Evans, 2010:26).

Grindle (1980:9) states that

[e]ducation policy... is executed by a large number of individual decision makers dispersed throughout an extensive geographic area but usually belonging to a single bureaucratic organization. Ultimately, each school

director might be envisioned as an implementer of whatever programs are designed.

This sentiment is echoed by Ahmed and Dantata (2016:63), who opine that the content of a policy, its implementers, the context in which it will be implemented and the policy environment are significant determinants of the extent to which a policy will be implemented. When it comes to policy implementation, the alignment of policy aims with the vision of different stakeholders can therefore play a significant role in the failure or success of a policy.

In the next section, I will discuss education policy implementation.

### **3.3.2 Education policy implementation**

Whilst the context within which the implementation of Lesotho education policies takes place is discussed in Chapter 4, this section is meant to give a general overview of education policy implementation as a particular and crucial stage of the policy process.

For Young and Lewis (2015:4), the study of education policy implementation is complicated because educational scholars draw from a wide range of theoretical traditions such as political science, diffusion of innovation, evaluation, organisational leadership, professional development, curriculum reform, institutional analysis, network theory and critical theory to explore implementation. Poor theoretical grounding of education policy implementation may therefore adversely impact the implementation and success of education policies. This is confirmed by Arop, Owan and Ekpan (2018:49), who state that “education policy implementation [is] a complex, evolving process that involves many stakeholders and [it] can result in failure if not well targeted.”

It is the view of Suleiman, Yat and Iddrisu (2017:172) that, by virtue of being one of the fundamental human rights, education is important. As such, governments should see it as a need to formulate sound educational policies to ensure the quality and access of such education to all its citizens. The mere fact that policies are formulated, does not guarantee their implementation - let alone their effective implementation. Therefore, to protect, promote and respect the right to education, governments should not only formulate, but also ensure the effective and unfettered implementation of

education policies. It therefore becomes important to also briefly explain what education policy implementation is.

For Ekpiken and Ifere (2015:40), education policy implementation is the “process of carrying out educational objectives or plans of action.” It represents the stage of the policy development process where formulated policies are tested to establish their value. Additionally, for Viennet and Pont (2017:9), education policy implementation refers to different realities for different people. Educators and students may experience and view education policy implementation as the changes it brings to their everyday practices of managing schools, teaching, and learning.

On the other hand, for national education policy makers, implementation may refer to what needs to be executed to affect the changes at schools and other levels of education. This is confirmed by Maluleke (2015:357), who posits that “local educators (and other stakeholders) interpret policies in light of their local vision.” This ultimately results in a situation where only those policies that fit local (or individual) visions and aspirations are endorsed. Those that are not aligned with these visions and aspirations, are either opposed or revised accordingly.

This further implies that because multiple stakeholders are involved in education policy implementation, and that it affects various people at different levels of the education fraternity, people are likely to have different experiences and conceptions of what education policy and implementation entails. These varied conceptions are based on and influenced by their realities and their circumstances. Also, the features that inform education policy implementation should always be considered, since implementation often goes hand in hand with a change in behaviour, especially in the case of education professionals (Heck, 2004:72).

In terms of the effective implementation of education policies, it is the view of Johnstone and Chapman (2009:131) that a centralised education administration, coupled with inadequate resources and the detachment between central management and schools, remains a paradox to education planners. This is especially the case with regard to how these institutions can effectively be developed and encouraged for the effective implementation of policies in schools, especially at the classroom level.

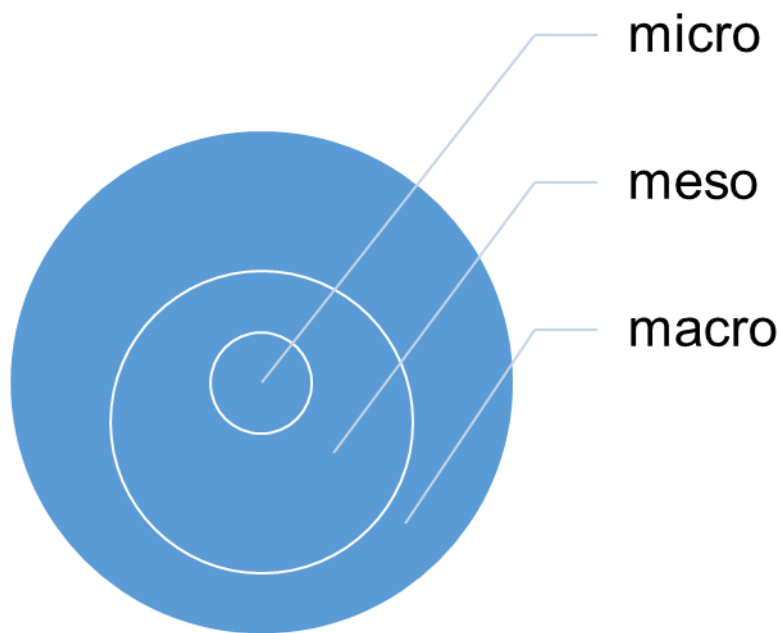
Moreover, Seidel, Moritz and Tadesse (2009:106) comment that “... a precondition for successful implementation of the education policy is a sufficient number of quality

teaching aids.” Tereza (2019:093) also holds the view that factors such as “design of the policy, policy justification, policy logic, feasibility, the stakeholders and their engagement, the institutional and societal context and the implementation strategy” should at all times be considered to ensure effective education policy implementation.

Education policy implementation is therefore a rather complex exercise, taking place at different levels. As such, it needs to be executed with caution, some degree of understanding, and a recognition of the factors influencing effective policy implementation. Before I explore the factors influencing policy implementation, let me first reflect on the different levels at which policies are implemented. This reflection is relevant as it, coupled with the factors, gives us a sense of what factors could be prevalent at any particular level of policy implementation.

### **3.4 Levels of policy implementation**

Policy implementation takes place at different levels, namely the macro implementation level, meso implementation level and the micro implementation level. Conteh (2013:23) stipulates that “understanding policy implementation, requires making a distinction between three levels of analysis - the macro, the meso and the micro levels.” Cushing (2019:426) also confirms that education policy implementation takes place at the micro level (i.e. teacher), the meso level (i.e. school management), and the macro level (i.e. government). In addition, Brynard et al. (2013:145; Mthetwa, 2012:38) opine that “a national education policy may operate at the national, provincial and local levels.”



*Figure 4: Levels of policy implementation*

It is important to make this distinction because levels of policy implementation can affect education policy implementation in that “levels of educational systems might constrain or enable implementation” (Datnow, 2006:107).

This is because,

in order to increase the likelihood of successful policy implementation, it is crucial to address elements at micro level (human decisions and actions) as well as the wider context in the meso level (the organisation in which the humans interact) and the macro level (national policy) (Gjestesen, Wiig & Testad, 2017:2)

The inference from the above excerpt is that levels of policy implementation ease the process of implementation in that they allude to division of duties among different stakeholders. This could be helpful, as stakeholders’ efforts in policy implementation will not be duplicated, thus, making policy implementation effective.

According to Van den Boom and Zuylen (2013:103), “activities at macro level (government-level), at meso level (school-level) and at micro level (educational learning-level) need to be well balanced to achieve sustainable implementation of global awareness as a theme in education.” The macro level stakeholders are the central actors and the micro level comprises local actors (Knill and Tosun, 2012:155).

At the school or education context, Leech (2012:56) states that

the macro level relates to the whole school perspective with its view of staged introduction of each subject, the position of cross-curricular schemes, and the relationship to the school culture and ethos [while] the micro level relates to the work of the individual National Curriculum subject, which in Secondary schools is operated through an individual subject department.

With regard to Lesotho, her policy documents are silent regarding the levels of policy implementation, or what should be done and by whom it should be done on each level. One could, however, assume that the micro level represents policy implementation at school level, the meso level represents policy implementation at district level, and that macro policy implementation represents policy implementation at nation level – that is at the level of the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training.

### **3.5 Factors suggesting policy implementation**

Policy implementation is one of the factors that directs and regulates the failure or success of policies (Hudson, Hunter & Peckham, 2019:1). According to Cerna (2013:17), policies are effectively implemented when “agencies comply with the directives of the statutes, agencies, are held accountable for reaching specific indicators of success, goals of the statute are achieved, local goals are achieved or there is an improvement in the political climate around a programme.”

For Ikechukwu & Chukwuemeka (2013:62), effective policy implementation takes place when and if the “designed and planned development goals and objectives are realised.” This view is reiterated by Tereza (2019:095), who posits that for policy implementation to be successful, there is need for “effective administrative structure, effective financial management, clear procedure and appropriately trained manpower.” The implication is that the presence of these factors is an indication that policy implementation will be effective and efficient.

In the next section, I will look at factors influencing education policy implementation, since this study is about education policy implementation.



### **3.6 Factors influencing education policy implementation**

It is worth noting that no single policy is implemented successfully across the board. A policy will succeed in one area but be unsuccessful in another (Honig, 2006:2). Policy implementation might therefore be effective in one place, whilst it may fail in another place. The success of policy implementation depends on different factors that are either inherent of the policy, or to be found within the context in which the policy is supposed to be implemented. A wide variety of factors therefore influence policy implementation. Putting policies into practice, thereby ensuring their effective implementation, subsequently requires an awareness and sensitivity of various factors. Taylor et al. (1997:16) opine that policy implementation takes place within a highly complex environment, “with official policy agendas seldom intersecting with local interests.”

Through the review of literature, I have established that policy implementation is a rather multifaceted, multidimensional and complex process that involves several actors with different expectations, characteristics and roles. This inherent character of policy implementation attracts factors that affect it either negatively or positively. It is for this reason that this section will be dedicated to such factors, and their impact on policy implementation. While I acknowledge that a multitude of factors influence the effective implementation of any policy, in this study I will consider specific factors which I deem to be relevant to the Lesotho education policy context. These factors include policy implementation gaps, donors, politics, policy dissemination, bureaucracy, and actors/stakeholders and resources. As indicated, my discussion of these factors does not imply that they are the only factors to play a role. Rather, for the purpose of this study, I regard them to be more relevant and significant to the Lesotho education context.

#### **3.6.1 The policy implementation gap**

It is the view of Buckner, Spencer and Cha (2017:449) that gaps in the implementation of policies are a common occurrence in the education environment. Funke (2015:149) maintains that there is often a gap between the policy formulation stage and the implementation stage, which leads to certain policy implementation limitations. Ndua (2013:14) also regards the gap between policy goals and envisaged outcomes as one

of the main challenges facing policy implementation in developing countries, such as Lesotho. An implementation gap commonly occurs when there are unsatisfactory or fragile systems, which lead to poor implementation of policies, causing policy failure in turn (Leipold, 2016:41). Within the context of Lesotho education, many such fragile systems could possibly exist.

Buckner et al. (2017:449) ascribe the existence of a policy gap to the bureaucratic and political challenges that education policies encounter as they move from the national level to schools. It therefore seems that during the transfer of a policy from its developers to the implementers, some meaning is lost, which negatively impacts on the implementation of a policy, widening the implementation gap.

However, my earlier reference to a mismatch between policy intentions and personal visions and aspirations could, of course, also result in policies being deliberately misinterpreted to frustrate, disrupt or delay the policy implementation process. It is not only at the implementation level that education policy can be derailed by negative influences. Bureaucratic red tape and politics also seem to impact on the implementation of education policies, thereby contributing to a perceived policy implementation gap. The latter is not surprising, as education, in essence, operates in a socio-political context. It is therefore not immune to political interference and hidden agendas.

It appears that within the context of Lesotho education, a gap between policy development and policy implementation is common. A study conducted by Khoboli, Kibirige and O'Toole (2013:153) found that in Lesotho, "inconsistency of implementation indicated the probable existence of a policy gap between ... developers (Ministry of Education and Training) and implementers (teachers)." Evidence of the existence of a policy implementation gap in the Lesotho education sector could explain some of the policy implementation challenges that Lesotho education is experiencing.

### **3.6.2 Politics**

Politics is the study of people and the way in which they live and interact with each other (Bhattacharya, 2013:430). Norment Jr. (2009:19) describes politics as "the

study of who gets what, when, where and how.” But politics could also be referred to as “... the struggle for exercise of power, authority and influence in a society” (Nnoli, cited in Ekpiken & Ifere, 2015:38). The implication of this is that politics are closely related to power and authority. Politics is concerned with the distribution of resources and the exercise of power. It is therefore inevitable that politics will also impact on and influence policy implementation. This is because policies are significant tools used in the distribution and the allocation (or not) of resources, or in this case, educational resources.

Against this background it could possibly be inappropriate to discuss politics and not also consider the significance of political will (or the absence thereof) in the effective implementation of a policy. This is because political will is meant to demonstrate “genuine aspirations of political leaders and significant stakeholders to check perceived causes or effects of corruption at a systemic level in society” (Ugoani, 2015:73). This role of political will is of course also applicable to the extent that political leaders and significant stakeholders demonstrate a genuine willingness to ensure the effective and successful implementation of a policy.

Post, Raile and Raile (2010:654) dissuade us from discussing political will in a casual manner. Rather, they (2010:654) opine that the concept of political will

is too important to abandon to the realm of hollow political rhetoric. That would be unfortunate fate for a concept standing at the crossroads of politics and policy and implicating the most political parts of the policy process like issue framing, agenda setting and persuasion.

In essence, political will needs to be considered within the framework of politics as an important determinant of effective policy implementation.

For Chakrabarty and Chand (2016:11), a policy “is always politically contrived.” If it could be accepted that the policy process is politically charged, then it could also be accepted that the policy implementation process is also politically charged. One could then equally claim that political will is an equally important factor in the implementation (or not) of a policy. As such, policy cannot be divorced from politics. More so, the entire policy process in general and the policy implementation process in particular, could therefore be regarded as a product of politics. Schultz (2004:332; Birkland, 2016:17) concedes to this by stating that,

although the formulation of policy can be non-partisan, it inevitably has political connotations in the sense that policy decisions affect the distribution and burdens of the modern state and necessarily are value-ridden.

The political nature of policy implementation in particular, stems from the close involvement of and the dominant voices of politicians in the making (and the implementation) of policies (Gale, 2003:55). This stance is echoed by Jann and Wegrich (2007:45), for whom the identification of problems and the agenda-setting phases of the policy processes are highly influenced and directed by politics. In terms of education policy, it is the view of Ukpong (2017:103) that

politics greatly influence the funding of educational programmes, planning and administration of education, provision of infrastructural facilities in educational institutions and subsequently the implementation of educational policies.

This confirms that politics not only influence education policy development, but also impact on education policy implementation. Delaney (2017:11) confirms this by stating that “education policy is highly politicized today, and if a policy is not acceptable to the relevant power groups, its successful implementation is in jeopardy.”

Another reason why it is impossible for education policy and its implementation to escape political influences, is the context within which policies operate. Policies “do not exist in a vacuum, [but they] reflect underlying ideologies and assumptions in society” (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 2016:7). These ideologies and assumptions could be those of political parties. Policy implementers should therefore acknowledge the role and influence of politics in policy implementation, and acknowledge these as influential in policy implementation. This is even more important because a mere understanding of policy-making as an analytic exercise is not enough (Ramesh, Howlett & Fritzen, 2018:3), and could lead to a superficial understanding of the stakes involved in policy implementation. Rather, policy implementation requires an understanding of the political dynamics underlying and influencing all policy and related activities.

So significant is politics in policy implementation that D’hurst, O’Sullivan and Scheiber (2016:7) declare that “there is no policy that can be successfully implemented without political interference”. This is because, policy, particularly public policy, is directly related to and prejudiced by the activities and practices of the politics of the

government of the day. These events include both internal and external dynamics (Juma & Onkware, 2015:831). Hanekom (1987:11) also concedes that public policies often reflect the political ideology and political values of the government in power. For this reason, policy-making is not a neutral, value-free and unbiased practice. Education policy implementation is equally not a neutral, value-free and a-political practice. Rather, education policy is used as a means to build on the future votes of politicians, and to score political points. Policy implementation (or lack of implementation) can also be used for political advantage by those in power (Welsh, 2014:404). In this regard, it is the view of Hill and Varone (2017:8) that, “[a]ny discussion of the policy process needs to be grounded in an extensive consideration of the nature of the power in the state.” So closely related is policy to politics and power that Imurana, Haruna and Kofi (2014:196) refer to “[t]he politicization of public policies”.

The close relationship between politics and policy creates a conflicted and volatile environment (Ansell, Sorensen & Torfing, 2017:475). It is because of the above that I contend that the politicisation of policy, especially in Africa in general and in Lesotho , has led to the formulation and implementation of overambitious policies by governments, solely with the aim of winning political capital and scoring political points. Verger (2014:21) echoes these sentiments by stating that “policy-makers are more inclined to adopt policy solutions that fit the ideology of the government for which they work or that they represent.” Brynard et al. (2013:147) also maintain that government’s ability to commit towards the implementation of a developed policy is of paramount importance, as it is the driving force to policy success. However, it is also important for political success and to ensure that (political) power is maintained.

The impact of politics on policy implementation is not only confined to power exerted by governments, but also by the extent to which government changes happen. Ekpiken and Ifere (2015:45) maintain that incessant government change also negatively affects the effective and efficient implementation of policies. As a result, it also has an impact on education change. These sentiments are supported by Paudel (2009:49), who points out that political uncertainty such as military threats, domestic violence and political regime change is an endemic condition to policy-making and implementation. This is particularly true for developing countries, whose governments

are sometimes unstable due to conflicts. Lesotho is of course one such country where government changes are the order of the day.

The challenge that political uncertainty poses to policy implementation is that it creates a context within which policy “implementation...proceed through inevitable changes in political regimes, government structures, economic conditions, and social environments” (Mthethwa, 2012:41). These frequent regime changes more often result in new policies and new implementation challenges.

Political instability caused by frequent government changes result in governments developing policies that are superficial and not necessarily implementable. In other words, these policies are symbolic in nature. Symbolic policies are described by Anderson (2000:190) as having the illusion that they are superfluous. Such policies are therefore not necessarily developed and implemented with the intention to have a positive impact. Jansen (2002:201) also refers to policy symbolism as a pretence by politicians (or governments) to give attention and offer support to the development of policies. However, in reality, these politicians (or governments) are not actually interested in how a policy will be implemented, as they do not even care to offer a clear outline and road map that will guide such implementation (Jansen, 2002:201),

Anderson (2011:16) further comments that

Public policies may also be described as either material or symbolic, depending upon the kind of benefits they allocate. Material policies provide tangible resources or substantive power to their beneficiaries, or impose real disadvantages to those who are affected.... Symbolic policies, in contrast have little real material impact on the people. They do not deliver what they appear to deliver, they allocate no tangible values, such as...social justice.

Faas (2015:41) similarly contends that the goals and outcomes advanced by symbolic policies are elusive, which makes goal monitoring difficult. Jansen (2002:271) rightfully poses the question,

What if the policy stated was not in the first instance intended to change practice? In other words, what if other primary motivations lay behind the generation of the new policies rather than transform realities of the teaching and learning in the classrooms?

Of course, policy symbolism and the development and implementation of policies that are in the first place not intended to have any tangible impact, makes one wonder about the political will of governments as developers of public policies. Levinson et al. (2009:771) are of the opinion that just as much as there needs to be a “will to policy – a will to make policy - that is institutionally chartered, there need to be a will to implement policy.” Vargas-Baron (2016:32) has this to say about political will:

Often leaders of ministries or other organizations do not openly express their lack of political will. A minister may mouth words of support, while behind scenes she / he may undermine ... policy planning or the adoption process.

In the case of Lesotho, Mosia (2014:305) laments that

Two crucial policy documents in Lesotho have passed a flawed perception of inclusive education to the country’s education professionals...there are differences between integrated and inclusive education practices but the two policy documents make no distinction between the two terms.

So, even if governments have the will to develop a particular policy, they might lack the will to implement the said policy.

In essence, symbolic policies are merely policy ‘illusions’ created by policy makers and governments, so that seems as if they are committed to combat identified educational problems, while they are not. The ‘policy’ just serves a symbolic purpose. It is therefore important to differentiate between material policies and symbolic policies. In this regard, Anderson (cited in Ongenchuk, 2009:11) views material policies as those that provide tangible and obvious benefit to people, while symbolic policies are (merely) an appeal to people’s values.

Overall, the preceding paragraphs seem to suggest that policy and politics cannot be separated. As such, policy implementation will always be affected by politics in one way or another. In the following section I look at colonisation and how it affects policy implementation, especially in countries with a colonial past such as Lesotho.

### **3.6.3 Colonisation**

One of the factors that have become popular in 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa is the decolonisation of education. Decolonisation is expected to happen in countries that have previously



been colonised. To clearly analyse and explain decolonisation, there is a need to briefly look at colonisation and its impact and influence on education policy formulation and implementation in Africa.

Horvath (cited in Ziltener & Kunzler, 2013:291) views colonialism as a “form of temporally extended domination by people over other people”. As such, it represents the universal domination, subjugation, oppression and exploitation of groups of people by others. Nthomang (2004:418) describes colonisation as a system that represents a set of values and belief systems held by the colonisers. The values of colonising powers are subsequently regarded as superior over those of others, and their culture, and political and economic systems are imposed on those that are colonised. In this way colonialism adversely affects the politics, economy and culture of the countries and people that are colonised (Bulhan, 2015:240). Lesotho is a country that was colonised by the British, and as will be indicated in the next chapter, the legacy of colonialism is still visible in Lesotho today.

As something that impacts the social and cultural aspects of the colonised society, colonisation also impacts on education, its aims and objectives, and the policies that inform education. As a result, education policy developed and adopted during the colonial rule of a country, was in general intended to create semi-literate clerks and messengers who would assist in the administration of the colony and in spreading the gospel, which was a very important duty that had to be achieved (Westley, 1992:356). Education policy that served as a driving force that made it possible for the fostering and the promotion of Western culture in Africa (Mosweunyane, 2013:51), was subsequently developed and implemented.

It is also the view of White (1996:18) that policies developed and implemented during colonisation reflect a “strong belief in a Christian-based system of education [especially] in the British colonies.”

Shizha (2013:7) concludes that

[i]n Sub-Saharan Africa, curriculum, both in content and pedagogy continues to teach students a foreign culture and a worldview in a foreign language that inhibits learning experiences of students. [More so when] policies that continue to perpetuate cultural imperialism in African education systems are negating the narratives of the natives that are told and retold in African histories, literature and



popular culture. [This should thus spur Africa into action since] a redefined and transformed education system should aim at reclaiming and commemorate the African cultural histories.

In most African countries, education during the colonial era was managed by missionaries. This led to education in schools being influenced by the religious inclinations of the churches that owned the schools (Tan, 1997:212). It is important that African people know their colonisers had a huge impact on their education (Nkoane, 2006:50). A reflection on the impact of colonisation on education in Lesotho will enable the Lesotho government and the Basotho to confront this reality with clear minds, and to envision a unique education system informed by education policies that are an outcome of policy processes that are grounded within the needs of the Basotho, and whose implementation reflects the realities of Lesotho.

Contrastingly, even at the dawn of their independence, many African countries persist with the education legacy of their colonisers. This appears to be because “the so-called elite wanted only to replace the former rulers [colonisers] and govern in the same way, using the same laws and institutions” (Bulhan, 2015:243). Western and colonial influence therefore still seems to dominate education and education policy-making in Africa, even in the absence of colonisers.

Education systems in Africa, to those in sub-Saharan Africa, appear to still demonstrate features of outdated colonial systems. This is cause for concern, as it can be expected that such education systems, including their policies, cannot bring much positive development to their communities, even though claims to this effect are made. In this regard, Shizha’s opinion (2013:7) is important regarding the direction that the Africans should adopt if they desire to own their education and education policies. In the next section, I will therefore look at the concept of decolonisation and its impact on education policy implementation.

### **3.6.4 Decolonisation**

I am of the view that discussions about colonisation of education and education policy cannot take place without also considering its decolonisation. This is very important, since colonisation had a lasting impact on education and education policy in Africa in general, and on Lesotho education. In his research on decolonisation, Shizha (2013:1)

maintains that, “despite the advent of decolonisation that started in the 1960s, African education systems mirror colonial education paradigms inherited from former colonial governments.” African education systems appear to still be in the clutches of colonialisation. Current policy processes in general and policy implementation could therefore also still be influenced by colonial paradigms.

This is possible because decolonisation is regarded by its detractors as a programme that was not carefully planned and executed, and that was “forced upon governments by pressures exerted by local politicians in the colonies, the exigencies of metropolitan politics and increasingly international relations” (Chamberlain, 1998, Darwin, 1999 & Spinghall, cited in Christopher, 2002:213). At this juncture, I would like to explain what decolonisation is and what it entails in relation to education and education policy implementation in Africa in general and Lesotho in particular.

For Chukwuere (2017:232), decolonisation refers to the action of “changing from colonial to independent status.” In terms of decolonisation in education, it is the view of Higgs (2011:38) that decolonisation means that “all educational curricula in Africa should have Africa as their focus, and as a result be indigenous-grounded and oriented.” What is taught in Africa should therefore originate from Africa and her people, and should be relevant to Africa and her people. But more so - it also implies that education policies should emanate and originate from Africa and should be relevant to Africa. The borrowing and transfer of policies from foreign countries with different realities, as well as the continued influence that donors exert on the education systems and policy processes of countries, are therefore an antithesis to decolonisation. Rather, it could be viewed as a different form of enslavement. It is for this reason that Chukwuere (2017:234) contends that to remove the traces of colonisation through the process of decolonisation, it is important to totally shift from the current mode of thinking and start thinking of ‘Africanisation.’ What is therefore suggested here is that there should be a paradigm shift in the way that Africans think to for them to be able to decolonise education and education policy. Such thinking, to my mind, would also involve other – or more specifically African - ways of thinking about policy implementation within the African context.

### 3.6.5 Policy dissemination

The concept dissemination refers to the spreading, circulating, promulgating, communication, sharing and raising responsiveness regarding specific information (Southwell, Gannaway, Orrell, Chalmers & Abraham, 2010:57). For Lewis, Proctor and Brownson (2018:229), dissemination is an active approach of spreading evidence-based interventions to target audiences via determined channels using planned strategies. Policy dissemination also connotes how people communicate to create awareness on the existence of policies through the distribution of information about them (Canary & Taylor, 2016:4).

The aim of this study is to develop a framework towards policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. It subsequently also looks at the factors that may affect policy implementation. One such factor may be poor policy dissemination - a phenomenon that should not be ignored for granted in the field of Policy Studies. This is confirmed by UNESCO (2015:35), who regards policy dissemination as an important step which should ensure that all relevant stakeholders “know, accept and develop a sense of ownership and buy into [policy] implementation.”

Knowledge of the policy by those that will be affected by it, as well as those who are tasked to implement the policy, is of essence. This knowledge is gained through policy dissemination, which not only entails the physical distribution of the actual policy, but also communication about the policy. Regarding policy communication, the OECD (1996:3) opines that “citizens have a right to know policies and activities of their own government”. The OECD (1996:3) continues by stating that in “a well-functioning democracy, the government provides reliable and timely information to the public.” As such, a responsibility therefore rests on democratic governments in general, but also the Lesotho government, to provide its populace with reliable, relevant and related policy information well in advance.

One way of ensuring that communication about a particular policy does indeed exist and that it is effective, is to create a two-way communication system. Within such a system, progress of the policy implementation should be reported from the centre, and responses should go back from the centre to the implementation agencies (Hudson et al., 2019:11).

Additionally, Masango (2001:141) contends that “dissemination of information constitutes a basis for public knowledge and opinion, since one’s knowledge and opinions are based on the information at one’s disposal.” Policy-related information should therefore be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders. This will ensure that sound decisions are taken, which could potentially improve policy implementation. Knowledge of policies gained by means of policy dissemination goes hand in hand with proper policy communication. This is supported by Gelders, Bouckaert and Van Ruler (2007:327), who suggest that “... in all phases of the policy-making process communication should be analysed and managed [and] not only in the phase of the announcement of new policies.” It is therefore important to note that policy communication not only entails communication about the actual policy. It also entails the ways in which “issues rise to the level of awareness and concern to create policies about them” (Canary & Taylor, 2017:4).

Quah (2016:44) maintains that effective policy implementation requires the proper communication of policy standards and objectives to the policy implementers. Moreover, Canary, Hansen, Reinehart, May and Barlow, (2015:117) also stipulate that “policy communication requires a high degree of openness, clearly explaining every phase of the process, and being open about expectations by developing relationships based on mutual trust.” Poor policy dissemination or a lack of communication on some education policies, may have a negative impact on policy implementation, and subsequently on the performance of the education sector.

Within the framework of this study, three formats of policy dissemination are regarded as important conditions for effective policy implementation, if they are adhered to. They are “dissemination for awareness, dissemination for understanding and dissemination for action” (Southwell et al., 2010:57). These formats of policy dissemination are important, as the stakeholders need to be aware of the existence of a policy, and understand the policy aims and objectives, as well as the directives pronounced in the policy to ensure that the policy is effectively implemented (Mu, Li & Fu, 2018:4-5). It is the view of Wenner and Settlage (2015:503) that policies pass through a series of “gatekeepers with decisions occurring at every single step.” With this in mind, the odds are relatively high that a lack of information will easily result in a (perhaps deliberate) misinterpretation of a policy, its pronouncements and its aims and objectives. Proper

communication about a policy is very important for effective and successful policy implementation.

Ajolor (2018:1512) is of the view that when policies are poorly communicated to the people, they are usually rejected by the affected people, even where such policies could have brought positive changes to their lives. Manganyi (2001:32) maintains that “[i]mplementation may be unsuccessful largely on account of the fact that the policy in question was poorly conceived.” Effective policy implementation therefore requires constant interaction between those that are developing a policy and those that are expected or task to implement the said policy. Such communication is important to ensure the appropriate conception of a policy. Therefore, when policy communication is thwarted, policy implementation is at risk of failing. As such, the way that policies are presented to a large extent affects their effectiveness and their implementation.

### **3.7 Actors involved in policy implementation**

Apart from various factors which influence policy implementation, actors who have particular interests in a particular policy, also have an impact on the extent of policy implementation. I already referred to the impact of politics and political interests (cf. 3.6.2) on policy implementation. Different interest groups are involved in policy implementation. The roles played by these actors in policy implementation and in education policy implementation should therefore not be taken for granted (Yaro et al., 2017:2). In this section, I will look at bureaucrats, non-governmental organisations, the media, teacher unions and donors as significant actors in policy implementation.

#### **3.7.1 Bureaucrats**

Bureaucrats are non-elected government officials that are described as “essentially civil servants primarily established to help in the formulation, and implementation of government policies” (Aminu, Tella & Mbaya, 2012:58). These bureaucrats form a strong layer which is responsible for putting in place various rules that serve as the administrative machinery of government (Heywood, 1997:341). The roles of bureaucrats within the policy process involves advising politicians or elected government officials. However, these bureaucrats are in a powerful position, to the

extent that the concept “bureaucracy” also commonly refers to the rule by government officials (Heywood, 1997:341).

As non-elected officials, bureaucrats stay in office for longer terms than elected officials do. They are well conversed with the rules, regulations and processes of the departments and units to which they are affiliated. They usually also possess substantial knowledge and information about policies and policy-related issues. As such, bureaucrats play a pivotal role in the development and implementation of policies. This is confirmed by Knill and Tosun (2013:1), who state that “... bureaucrats are not only involved in policy implementation but also policy formulation due to their procedural and specialist knowledge.” Their extensive knowledge of government business, including policy-related government business, puts them in an advantageous position in their role of policy formulation and implementation (Rahman, 2018:578).

By virtue of being central actors in government, bureaucrats have knowledge which they can potentially use to their own advantage, to realise their own aspirations. Their central position within government or a particular department or unit enables bureaucrats to be intentionally and actively engaged with the public. These engagements are used to build supportive coalitions, to gather information, and to facilitate (or hamper) policy implementation (Moffitt, 2014:29). As actors that serve in government for a relatively long period, bureaucrats can establish networks with which they can exercise a significant influence on policy implementation. Bureaucrats can also dominate policy-making activities because of the resources they have access to, the expertise they are able to mobilise, and the policy advocacy they are able to manage. This is specifically the case in African countries, where policy-making, and policy implementation, are activities that are essentially monopolised by the civil service (Orokpo, Enejo & Enojo, 2017:12).

Through their involvement in policy processes, bureaucrats can easily sabotage the implementation of certain policies, and so contribute towards their failure. Various authors pinpoint several problems that are closely tied to bureaucrats, and which in one way or the other adversely work against effective policy implementation. These problems include maladministration and widespread corruption practices, low levels

of professionalism, a lack of innovation and motivation, and poor work quality (Zauhar, 1996: 2; Dwiyanto, 2022:2).

In addition, bureaucratic systems often lack control, and this encourages inefficiency (Syafuruddin, Suratman, Nur, Alwi & Bahuruddin, 2015:71). Even though they form the “machinery which actually runs the affairs of a government ... [and which] is bound to follow certain rules and regulations” (Ahmed, Khan, Naheed, Khalid, Rehman & Khurshid, 2017:49), bureaucrats could potentially negatively impact the policy process and policy implementation.

In essence, the problems associated with bureaucrats are likely to spill over into policy implementation and negatively affect the policy implementation process. This is because bureaucrats are active in the implementation of policies, and as a result, even well formulated policies cannot produce positive results if bureaucrats hinder their effective implementation.

### **3.7.2 Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are entities that are not part of government. They are independent organisations, even though they may in some cases depend on government for funding (Block, 2018:395). NGOs are defined by Swanepoel and De Beer (1997:66) as “autonomous, privately set up, non-profit-making institutions that support, manage or facilitate development action.” Jagannathan (2003:9) posits that the importance of the work done by NGOs has “grown over the years, with many NGOs demonstrating successful cost-effective ways of addressing problems in education, whether it is to expand access to the disadvantaged or to find innovative methods to improve the quality of schooling.” Because they are primarily concerned with development, and because they operate independent from the state, NGOs are potentially important and relevant actors in the policy implementation process.

For Klugman (2000:95), NGO participation is essential to good policy-making and implementation, and NGO involvement in policy processes has been widely institutionalised. NGOs could therefore be regarded as legitimate actors in policy implementation. It is thus fitting that I consider their potential role in the implementation of education policies, especially since NGOs are increasingly involved in education



development and implementation. Although Thomas (2001:15) maintains that policy choices and policy implementation strategies are influenced by NGOs, they also play a significant role in policy development, particularly in developing contexts. Volmink and Van der Elst (2017:7) maintain that NGOs are involved in advocacy for policy change, and that they serve as platforms for community participation in policy processes.

In addition, NGOs also provide services and are well-placed, given their independence and proximity to the community, to assess and evaluate new policies and solutions to social and educational challenges. In this regard, they perform the role of policy activists. As policy activists, NGOs

“can engage with the political process or the bureaucratic process, so that policy activists can help not only to get an issue onto the policy agenda, and influence its content, but to advocate for implementation as well as influencing the nature of implementation through advocacy, operational research or other interventions that influence the bureaucracy” (Klugman, 2000:99).

Swanepoel and De Beer (1997:76) confirm that NGOs, by their nature, are closer to the people. As a result, they can timely and effectively identify community problems, and become involved in addressing those problems. This is reiterated by Shah (2001:48), who states that “NGOs may work to promote more appropriate mechanisms and procedures within public agencies.”

NGOs also serve as conduits for financial assistance from developed countries (Volmink & Van der Elst, 2017:7). Saengouthay (2015:15) also claims that “... NGOs are alleged to have been too donor-driven, and thus their policy influence relies almost entirely on donors who have better access to dialogues with high level government officials.” This could mean that the contribution of NGOs to the policy process is driven by donor mandates, and as such, the way they participate in policy implementation will be reliant on what the donors want to achieve, instead of what will benefit society. Notwithstanding this, the value of NGOs lies in their closeness to the community and their access to various resources. Volmink and Van der Elst (2017:15) maintain that NGOs are close to communities, which allows them to tap into social capital. They are therefore able to mobilise community members in support of national policies. Their proximity to communities and the potential they have to access resources such as



funds, human capital and expertise, place NGOs in an ideal position to play a significant role in ensuring effective policy implementation.

Furthermore, NGOs are taking a more prominent interest in education policy-making. This is supported by Miller-Grandvaux, Welmond and Wolf (2002:23), who attest that “in practically all cases, international NGOs have been at the forefront of trying to influence national education policy or the national education policy process.” Another significant contribution by NGOs is that of providing the much needed “technical assistance, training and capacity building in countries where there is a clear need” (Sparks, 2010:71).

In the case of South African education, NGOs are hailed for the prominent and significant role of advocating for the rights of South Africa’s people, including the right to education, during the apartheid era. Even in present-day South Africa, NGOs continue to be active in collaborating with government to ensure effective service provision (Volmink & Van der Elst, 2017:8) in various sectors, including education. However, despite the work that NGOs seem to be doing, there appears to be doubt with regard to the role that they play in education and education policies. Pillay (2010:102) opines that the role of NGOs in education advocacy and policy development is currently being debated. These debates could be linked to the argument raised by Tortajada (2016:267), who posits that “...evaluations of the programmes and project they [NGOs] implement is rare.”

In essence, NGOs can positively contribute towards policy implementation. However, like any other entity, they also have their shortcomings that can adversely affect policy implementation. In the next section, I will review the possible role of trade unions in policy implementation.

### **3.7.3 Teacher unions**

Trade unions are defined as organisations that are established by workers to “protect and defend their right and interest to their employers” (Mashaka, 2018:5). These unions do not only represent the interests of workers, but are also engaged in bringing ‘fundamental social change in society’ (Kudumo, 2011:11). These changes are presumably more effectively brought about by policies that are aimed at changing

unfavourable and unjust social conditions. Hence Ebbinghaus (2017:207) opines that “...trade unions are formally or informally consulted in the policy-making process.”

McCollow (2017:12) depicts “teacher unions as very powerful ‘special interest groups’ that have successfully exercised ‘provider capture’ of policy determination and implementation at the expense of the general public.” This power, according to Cowen and Strunk (2014:13), stems from the role they perform as political agents which act as interest groups promoting and advocating for policies that would favour themselves and their members. They display this power through their involvement in and explicit alignment and support for r political parties and political ideologies. As such, trade unions seem not be neutral role players. Rather, it appears as if their involvement in policy matters is inspired by their need to promote the interests of their members – interests that in many cases might be opposed to that which is in the public interest or public good.

In education, the rights and interests of teachers and all those working in the education sector are protected and defended by teacher unions. These teacher unions have a crucial role to play with regards to education programmes, policies and reforms (Mafisa, 2017:73), which they play through their intense involvement in education policy-related processes. For Barber (cited in Kudumo 2011:13), the roles of teacher unions are not confined to the traditional functions of improved working conditions, but it “expand to include participation in education policy. Govender (2004:280) also concurs that apart from being involved with labour relations, teacher unions are also actively involved in the broader policy domain. As we know, this domain also includes aspects related to policy implementation.

Cowen and Strunk (2014:14) confirm that teacher unions have a significant role to play in policy implementation, as they can influence how policies are received and implemented. More so, because of their close involvement in the politics of the day, teacher unions might also support the implementation of education policies that are ideologically aligned to them, or the political party they support. In the same way, they might frustrate the implementation of education policies in cases where they view such policies as opposed to their ideological position. It is therefore fair to maintain that, despite them being perceived as concerned with the protection and promotion of

teachers' rights, teacher unions also pursue their own selfish agendas, which could negatively impact effective policy implementation.

McCollow (2017:11) claims that

There are two main—and opposing—perspectives on teacher unions. One perspective portrays them as “special interests pursuing a self-interested agenda”; the other views them as “encompassing social movements advocating for public education.” As noted by several writers, in recent times the former view appears to be gaining traction: teacher unions have increasingly been portrayed as “illegitimate, unprofessional, simplistic and selfish.”

Thus, when it comes to the role of teacher unions in policy processes, it seems as if they pursue their own agendas at the expense of education development and progress. In addition, it seems as if the effectiveness of teacher unions in the policy process is hampered by their proximity to the state and state organs. This is according to Govender (2015:186) who maintain that in Africa, , the independence and influence of teacher unions is seriously compromised because of their relationship with government.

Cowen and Strunk (2014:14) maintain that the opposition of teacher unions to change could inhibit educational reforms and restrict the implementation of initiatives aimed at bringing about improvement through policy implementation. Of course, the extent to which teacher unions will oppose or promote policy implementation, is closely linked to their relative position of advantage to those in government, or those who are in positions of power and their involvement in the policy process. It could therefore be expected that Lesotho teacher unions would also be closely involved in education policy development and implementation. However, it is imperative to be mindful of the fact that Lesotho teacher unions could also use their political and legislative influence in education policy to advance those policies that would be of benefit to their members, and their interpretation of problems in education and how these should be addressed.

### **3.7.4 The media**

The media became an influential tool in the policy process during the 1930s as it was effectively used by Hitler and Mussolini to advance and spread propaganda (Babu, Aggarwal & Chen, 2017:7). Media is part of the interest groups in the public policy

process, especially in education policy, where it influences the way in which policies are presented to those tasked with their implementation, as well as those affected by such implementation (Bonai, 2000:211).

Singh and Pandey (2017:130) hold the opinion that the media and society are closely related to each other, and that it is considered as the fourth pillar of democracy. As such, the media in all its forms (written, broadcast or spoken) is a very important communication tool (Mangal, 2020:5821). It is also an important part of our daily lives that has a great influence on the way in which we conduct our day-to-day activities and exercise our democratic rights. The value of the media in the policy process lies in its prevalence and accessibility to the wider population. The media can reach many people in different places at the same time. This makes the media an important tool that should be used for policy dissemination and implementation (Olper & Swinnen, 2009:3). In addition, Kingdon (2014:57) regards the media as powerful agenda setters that affect public opinion on various policy issues. Leavy (2013:6) also points out that social media is “enhancing the transfer of evidence from research community to policy makers.”

Macharashvili, Basilaia and Tangiashvili (2015:16) maintain that when it comes to policy processes,

[t]he media are crucial because they offer other groups the means to communicate their messages to the broader public, articulate their demands to government officials, and introduce their preferences into government policies.

Furthermore, Ling (2013:786) is also of the view that the

mass media act as the supervisor of public policy. The policy effects, such as whether it complies with the public wish, whether it harms the public interest, will be announced by the mass media.

Additionally, Mwangi (2018:2) contends that

policy makers assume that the public is heavily influenced by what they read in papers or watch on television, and therefore perceive that adaptability to media would actually be responding to what they think are the expectations of the electorate, resulting in media actually having an impact on policy makers' decisions.

As a result, the media acts as a watchdog over public policy implementation on behalf of the public. In this way, the media serves as a tool that enables the public to hold the government accountable when case policies fail. In addition to this, Mickloleit (2014:3) holds the view that social media has the potential to make policy processes more inclusive, and thereby rebuild some trust between governments and citizens.

The media therefore plays a pivotal role in the policy process, because it is through the media that the public can make their voices heard and that they can contribute to policy processes. It is also through the media that government becomes aware of policy implementation failures regarding policy implementation.

Despite the perceived positive role the media could play in policy implementation, some authors are sceptical and have reservations about the extent to which the media could actually perform this role. Kingdon (2014:57) accuses the media of being volatile and unpredictable, as they sometimes cover a story for just a limited time as it is replaced by more relevant stories, without care for how it will play out, and missing the opportunity to see if it has had an impact. Oginni and Moitui (2015:161) also argue against the effectiveness of social media in policy processes and as a “fundamental game changer to bring political change and inform development of public policy process”.

Moreover, Carr (2007:5) prompts us to ask important questions about the role of the media in the policy process. Such questions include who controls the media, who has access to it and what articles, images, themes and concepts are most predominant becomes important when trying to establish what the role of the media is or will be in the effective implementation of an education policy. Answers to these questions could provide us with valuable insights into the (real) agenda of the media, and the actual role it plays in policy implementation. With the existence of fake news are indeed aligned to some ideological positions held by certain powerful groups, it becomes important to be critical about the media as well.

In essence, the media, either traditional (e.g. radio, television and newspapers) or social (e.g. Facebook, Twitter), could potentially play a crucial role in ensuring effective policy implementation. Provided that the media is also scrutinised, it could potentially be a helpful and important stakeholder in policy implementation, as it is able to reach a wide spectrum of the public.

### 3.7.5 Donors

The word donor is defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as “one that helps another with gifts of money.” Donor aid, also referred to as foreign aid, refers to money or gifts given to one country by a country that has economic interests in such country (Kabonga, 2017:9). As such, donor countries invest in other countries because they have a particular interest in that country.

Foreign aid is a practice that started a long time ago. Foreign donations can be traced to the order of the United Nations Charter, which was called the ‘functions of post-war international order’. This order encouraged donations to Europe to rebuild its economy after the two world wars. However, this aid was ultimately spread across the world to poorer nations (Gulrajani & Swiss, 2017:11), to the extent that donor aid, where countries and international institutions assist other countries in various ways, is a common phenomenon. Gulrajani and Swiss (2017:11) further hold the view that by the end of the 1960s, almost all European countries had started some sort of aid programme. Identity as a donor had institutionalised itself as a mandatory part of developed country status, and this perhaps best exemplified by the regulatory pressures on new European Union (EU) member states to have aid programmes in place. This aid extends financial aid to also include other developmental assistance, which emphasises policy development.

In this regard, Amminuzzaman (2015:211) points out that

... public policy-making ... has generally emphasized the internal and domestic activities of the state, but the reality is that the international realm is a differentiated entity and its role in policy-making must be taken into account.

The impact of donors on policy formulation and the subsequent implementation of these policies are relevant to this study. Some argue that donors give aid to “pursue their own interests” (Ali, Banks & Parsons. 2015:121). If this is the case, it seems that aid in policy development and implementation is sometimes given with certain benefits to the donor countries or institutions in mind. It therefore appears as if donor countries or institutions assist struggling countries or give aid in whatever form possible, to serve their own interests.

International aid and the influence of donor institutions on the development initiatives of so-called developing countries is rather contested, especially within the context of policy development. Asongu and Nwachukwu (2015:1) note that “[f]or over five decades, the political economy of foreign aid has been widely debated in academic and policy-making cycles.” These debates centre on the dependency on foreign aid that is created by donor funding. With regard to contributions towards Africa, of which Lesotho is part, it is the view of Farah, Onder and Ayhah (2018:9) that foreign donors have over the years contributed significantly to economies on the continent of Africa. But instead of leading to improvements, this has caused a dependence on foreign aid. This situation is more prevalent in the poorer African nations that were once colonies, as their colonial masters, even after independence, continued to support them with financial aid (Banyopadhyay & Vermann, 2013:334).

In addition, Kabonga (2017:2) confirms that foreign aid perpetuates dependency by the receiving country, and this dependency is attributed to rampant poverty in Third World countries. Farah et al. (2018:9) describe this situation as “dire and does not seem to be improving for the better”.

In terms of the role of donors in policy development and policy implementation, it is the view of Sakala and Mwitwa, (2017:2) that the main role of donors in the policy-making process is to provide financial and technical support, and to assist in building capacity in an effort to bring changes in policies. However, this support and assistance comes at a price. Verger (2014:16) attests to this by indicating that “developing countries adopt global policies because they are externally imposed on them via aid conditionality.” This suggests that developing countries are in essence coerced into adopting particular policy positions, and into implementing these policies. To this effect, the price and impact of foreign donors on policy, especially those that are regarded in their development, results in many countries adopting policies that are not necessarily relevant to their needs.

This is why Amminuzzaman (2013:233) suggests that

Donors, while putting conditionality on policy reforms, should pay attention to the political viability of the proposed changes and help the government in creating positive stimulus with added incentives. As a strategy, the donors should also take



the support of civil society and a section of public bureaucracy to form a coalition of change agents and to identify the potential drivers of change.

This is important, because in many instances donors lack knowledge of the local context and the real needs of the local people. More so, they also lack insight into the people affected by the implementation of a particular policy. As a result, donors tend to support and promote the implementation of policies that do not benefit the people they are aimed at.

Johnson and Birner's (2013:19) observation is equally relevant, as they state that "people [donors] fail to foresee policy failures because they do not understand the intricacies of policy implementation or why particular policies lack local relevance." It is therefore important, to ensure success, that relevant policies are developed and implemented by people who have knowledge of the local context, as well as the needs and aspirations of the local people.

In a nutshell, the literature reviewed in the above paragraphs indicates that donors can make a significant contribution towards policy-making, and policy implementation to.

The section was on the factors that influence policy implementation. In the next section, I will look at some of the challenges of policy implementation.

### **3.8 Challenges of policy implementation**

Policy implementation is not as smooth a process as one would expect. There is also no guarantee that any policy implementation will be without failure, or that the intended aims and objectives will be realised.

For Hill and Hupe (2014:12),

'implementation failure' or 'implementation deficit' means giving a normative qualification as a result of a comparison between what is observed and what is expected, where the latter is defined in terms of the values either of the observer or of one or more of the actors involved in the process.

Ahmed and Dantata (2016:60) point out that part of the reason behind policy failure is that "it is often taken for granted that once a policy is adopted by government, it must be implemented and the desired goals achieved." Policy implementation is particularly



important for Lesotho, because Dialoke, Ukah and Maduagwuna (2017:22) observe that one of the main problems that adversely affect developing countries is poor policy implementation.

Policy communication also supposes clearly written policies. Delaney (2017:5) states that when policies are clearly articulated, they are more beneficial to the institutions for which they have been developed. It is also the opinion of Cairney (2012:35) that “a vague policy is subject to multiple interpretations and potential bad execution.”

Furthermore, Makinde (2005:63) opines that “... implementation instructions that are not transmitted, that are distorted in transmission, that are vague, or that are inconsistent may cause serious obstacles to policy implementation.” The implication is that multiple interpretations will affect the implementation of the policy; as different stakeholders are likely to implement policies in different ways. Another issue that hinders policy communication emanates from “failing to deal with implementation problems including lack of funding, legitimacy issues, principle-agent problems, oversight failures and others” (Howlett, Ramesh & Wu, 2015:213). The implication is that this oversight by the relevant stakeholders is likely to lead to poor conception and subsequently poor implementation of policies.

Policy implementation in developing countries, appears to be mired by unique contextual factors and challenges. For the context of my study, I will discuss the following challenges: resources, globalisation, political conditions, poverty and communication. This list is not exhaustive, but I chose to focus on challenges that I regard as relevant to the context of my study, which is Lesotho education.

### **3.8.1 Resources**

Policy implementation is significantly influenced by the availability of resources. When there is a lack of resources, the quality of education and education policy implementation is affected. It is for this reason that Berkhout and Wielemans (1999:412) blame the insufficient allocation of resources to enable the efficient implementation of policy for the discrepancy between policy objectives and practice. What counts as relevant resources to ensure effective policy implementation? For Dangara (2016:28),

[a]ll materials and non-material factors that are necessary and are contributive to the attainment of goals in any institution are regarded as resources. The human component of resources interacts with certain facilities and equipment at certain time to bring about production of output).

Swanepoel and De Beer (1997:59) regard material, financial, managerial, bureaucratic and technical resources as important for policy implementation. For Salvesen, Evenson, Rodriguez and Brown (2008:280), resources required for efficient policy implementation also include clear policy goals, committed and skilful leadership, sufficient financial resources, support by key legislatures, and coordination among agencies

In a similar fashion, it is the view of Signe (2017:20) that access to available funding and resources are preconditions for successful policy implementation". Nasson and Samuel (1990:181) regard the availability of enough money and satisfactorily trained manpower as necessary resources to ensure effective policy implementation. Furthermore, Brynard (2007:564) contends that "continuous successful policy implementation often requires substantial financial, institutional and technical inputs."

African governments are regularly criticised for a lack of resources to ensure effective policy implementation. Saasa (2005 cited in Mutaru, 2013:14) claims that despite Africa being overwhelmed by numerous development policies and projects, resources to ensure the implementation of these projects or policies are "palpably insufficient". Apart from financial resources, policy implementation also requires sufficient and well-trained human resource. In addition, local capacity, and political will are also important factors in the effective implementation of education policies (Cerna, 2013:17). The availability of human resources should therefore be matched with the political will to ensure that policies are effectively implemented. The availability of human resources does therefore not guarantee the effective implementation of a policy.

So, while the availability of human resources is important, what will ultimately also be of importance is the will of those that are supposed to implement the policy, as well as sufficient human resources. This view is supported by Sabatier and Mazmania (1979 cited in Rechel, Williams & Wismar, 2019:17), who maintain that effective policy implementation also requires committed and skilful implementing officials [and] supportive interest groups.

Regarding education policy implementation, OECD (2016:72) posits that it is very important to engage stakeholders, particularly teachers, in the implementation of education policies. This is because teachers are important human resources in the implementation of education policies. This view is echoed by Viennet and Pont (2017:30), who postulate that education policies are implemented by people. Human resources are therefore central to the implementation process. Their centrality stems from their engagement and interaction with other and external factors. Within the Lesotho education context overcrowded classrooms, high student teacher ratios and insufficient teaching and learning resources are some of the factors that frustrate teachers, as they are unable to offer quality education to their learners (Kingdom of Lesotho 2019:43). I maintain that these factors adversely affect policy implementation at the micro level – that is at school level.

### **3.8.2 Globalisation**

Globalisation is defined by Yalcin (2009:1) as “an extensive network of economic, cultural, social and political interconnections and processes which goes beyond national boundaries.” For Mir, Hassan and Qadri (2014:607), globalization is a “multifaceted phenomenon which encompasses economic, social, political, technological and cultural dimensions.” These definitions seem to allude to globalisation not being restricted to the sharing of one aspect of development, but rather too many interrelated aspects. Globalisation also impacts on and makes possible the movement of education policies from one context or country to another, and in this way it influences policy processes in general and policy implementation to. Williams, Gannon & Sawyer (2016:60) maintain that just like goods and people travel across borders and over oceans, in a similar fashion, education policy also flows through boundaries and across borders.

Such movement of education policies has become fashionable because “growing economic and political interdependence among nations affects the substance and procedures of national policy-making including of course the agenda-setting process” (Majone, 2006:241). It is within the context of growing economic and political interdependence that education departments and education ministries are expected to become aware of educational and policy developments and policy agendas in other

parts of the world. This forces education systems to no longer exist in isolation, and to take into account education changes taking place around the globe.

More so, globalisation also assumes that education policy in one part of the world should reflect the interconnectedness of countries, their economies and their education systems. This is important, as ignoring this interconnectedness and interdependence, assumes a disregard for the role that globalisation plays in policy development and implementation (Azzizi & Noruzi, 2011:3). The impact of the global context on policy processes is confirmed by Mthethwa (2012:36), when he states that “policies are influenced by the contexts in which they are developed. Such contexts include historical, cultural, social, economic and diverse conceptual dimensions operating at international level.” It is the contention of Azzizi and Noruzi (2011:3) that policies should adopt a more international approach.

The policy development process, and more specifically policy implementation, is therefore also influenced by globalisation, and it is expected that local policies would reflect that influence. This means that globalisation has not only changed the way countries and governments approach policy processes, but that it also enabled the transfer of education policies from one country to and from another. Portnoi (2005:355) is of the opinion that in the globalised world, technology plays a pivotal role in ensuring that legislation and policies are easily available on the internet for use by others. The increase in globalisation is therefore also closely associated with widespread policy borrowing.

### **3.8.3 Policy borrowing**

Policy makers and governments often borrow what they perceive to be successful education policies and practices from other countries in the hope that such policies would, in the same way, solve local educational problems. Policy borrowing is not a new concept, as “... people have always learned from others’ experiences and imported and adopted ideas” (Swainson & De Loe, 2010:3).

Lao (2015:4-5) states that

policy borrowing and lending usually happens between two countries: the borrower and the lender. Policy borrowing and lending in education aim to reveal the complexity and contradictions that arise when global forces meet local factors.

For Eta (2018:37), policy borrowing is an aspect of policy transfer that deals with the transnational flow of global policies, with a focus on the local context in which a borrowed policy is introduced. Policy borrowing is also characterised by the transmission of concepts, resources and skills development offered by outsiders (McDonald, 2012:1818).

Additionally, Auld and Morris (2014:129) regard policy borrowing as a widespread practice that has metamorphosed over the years to the extent that it is now dominated by transnational agencies, consultancies, policy entrepreneurs, policy makers and the media. Policy borrowing exists because countries think that policies from other countries will suit their needs and address their problems. Again, Dale (2009:92) maintains that policy borrowing assumes that a significant level of relevant compatibility exists between the borrowing country and the lending country. However, this is not the case, as will be demonstrated in this section.

Steiner-Khamsi (2012:5) views policy borrowing as a transient phenomenon, which exists because external funding exists. I have indicated earlier that, especially developing countries, adopt global policies and programs because these policies and programmes are externally imposed on them via aid or conditionality or binding international agreements (cf.3.7.5). Policy borrowing is therefore susceptible to the relationship that exists between a donor country and the receiving country. Once the relationship sours and donor goodwill dries up, policy borrowing is also likely to cease. This is likely to negatively affect policy implementation in the recipient country, as it may not have sufficient resources to implement the policy.

Although policy borrowing can be a good practice, it is important to note that borrowed policies cannot be implemented in the borrower countries without being modified to suit the local context. In this regard, Birnbaum (2000, and Ponzi & Koenig, 2002, cited in Alderman, 2014:8) warns that “if a policy is borrowed [and] implemented without sufficient modification for the local context and is then subsequently found to be unsuccessful, it maybe be deemed as a managerial fad.”

This view is shared by Ruby and Li (2020:85), for whom the policy borrowing process is more than the acquisition of some technical knowledge. Rather, it involves the adaptation and adjustment of a policy to ensure that it aligns with and responds to the local context. This adaptation of policies is important because Romanowski, Alkhateeb and Nasser, (2018 21) also opines that “as educational policies, theories and teaching strategies move from one country to another, changing contexts, there is little doubt that epistemological conflicts surface.” These epistemological conflicts could arise due to the misalignment of and misunderstanding in the way the policy is written, or the problem it tries to address. Therefore, to ensure their success, borrowed policies should be aligned to local conditions and needs. Such alignment will increase their chances of successful implementation. Phillips and Ochs (2004:780) confirm that the extent to which a borrowed policy is successfully implemented will depend on the contextual conditions of the ‘borrower’ country.

Policy borrowing is not without its detractors. McLean (in Dale, 2009:93) maintains that policy borrowing puts the policy process out of reach of potential opponents, that politicians use it to justify pre-determined policy reforms, that it could be used as a form of political legitimation, and that it is driven by political expediency. In addition, policy borrowing that is associated with conditional donor aid is regarded problematic, as it dictates policy implementation (Eta & Vuban, 2018:82).

### **3.8.4 Poverty**

Another problem that faces policy formulation and policy implementation in Africa and other developing countries is high levels of poverty. Correa, Dumas, Jones and Mbarika (2017:18) opine that policies cannot yield successful results if a country is economically poor. Poverty inevitably result in a lack of resources, especially financial resources. For Khan (2000:3), poverty is not only a state of existence but also a process with many dimensions and complexities “... [that is] ... almost always characterised by high levels of (i) deprivation (dispossession), (ii) vulnerability (high risk and low capacity to cope) and (iii) powerlessness”. The UNDP (2002:10) defines poverty as “a state of economic, social and psychological deprivation occurring among people or countries lacking sufficient ownership, control or access to resources to maintain minimal acceptable standards of living.”

The African continent is generally perceived to be a place that is “locked” in poverty. Ajulor (2018:1498) states that Africa “has found itself at the crossroads caused by economic recession, political dislocations and upheavals, criminality, corruption and ineptitude leadership that has led to the national insecurity and poverty.” Paudel (2009:48) stipulates that poverty directly influences the implementation of policies because “the intended results cannot be achieved due to poverty in developing countries.”

According to the 2019 World Bank Report, “poverty in Lesotho remains higher than several other lower middle-income countries [also], since 2015 the economy has not grown in per capita terms from political instability” (The World Bank, 2019:16).

In the case of Lesotho, Mosia (2014:295) points out that the implementation of several policy goals envisaged in the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy was delayed due to financial restrictions. In other words, one could assume that poverty affected the implementation of this policy. This is echoed by Kaphe (2017:12), who laments that a lack of resources is the cause of the poor implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, particularly in rural areas where poverty is high. In a nutshell, poverty can constrain the implementation of policies. This implies that even good policies are likely not to bring change to society, as their implementation is likely to be hampered by poverty.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The main objective of this chapter was to unpack the nature and extent of policy implementation in general. A literature review was used to achieve this objective. Literature on theories of policy implementation, conceptualisation of policy, factors suggesting policy implementation, factors influencing policy implementation, challenges of policy implementation and levels of policy implementation were interrogated and studied.

In a nutshell, this chapter draws a conclusion, based on literature findings, that policy implementation is a complex exercise that is influenced by various factors in diverse ways. In the next chapter, I will consider the context of education policy implementation in Lesotho.





# CHAPTER 4: EDUCATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN LESOTHO

## 4.1 Introduction

As an inquisitive Policy Studies and Governance in Education student, my interest lies in education policy implementation in Lesotho. My study therefore aims to develop a framework for policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. Also, amidst the problems regarding the structure and nature of education in Lesotho, coupled with the challenges discovered by the MoET in 2015 during the needs analysis that ultimately led to the development of the Education Sector Plan 2016-2026, I developed a vested interest in policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

To realise the aim of this study, I developed the objective, which is *to determine the context within which the implementation of Lesotho education policies take place*. In this chapter, I therefore answer the question: *What is the context within which the implementation of Lesotho education policies takes place?*

To answer this question, I find it necessary to examine and scrutinise the literature on the context within which education in Lesotho takes place, and within which education policy is developed and implemented. In this regard, I will explore policies and legislation that create the legislative framework and the legislative context within which the Lesotho education policy process in general and education policy implementation to takes place. For this I will be reviewing documents such as The Constitution of Lesotho 1993, the Education Act, No 3 of 2010, and the Education Strategic Plan 2016-2026.

I will also embark on a brief overview and analysis of some selected and relevant education sector policies. These policies include the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development, 2013, and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009, as well any other policies and legislation that inform and shape the Lesotho education context. I have purposely selected these policies and pieces of legislation as they are meant to ensure and improve the quality of basic education in

Lesotho, and create the context within which education policy is implemented. As such, it is assumed that they will give an indication of how the implementation of education policies within the Lesotho education sector should take place.

Before I analyse these policies, let me first give a brief historical background of Lesotho, and a brief background of education in Lesotho. I regard such a background as necessary, because policy implementation does not take place in a vacuum. Rather, it is informed and influenced by various contemporary and historical social, political, cultural and economic factors. It is anticipated that a background overview of Lesotho and the Lesotho educator sector could shed light on the social, political, cultural and economic factors that might influence and impact education policy implementation.

Consequently, it is through a study of the Lesotho education context that the status quo with regards to the implementation of education policies in the country could be understood, and certain changes aimed at its improvement could be recommended and effected. Besides, when it comes to education in Lesotho, one of the significant issues that negatively affects education is the nature of the education system, which is a joint venture between the government and the churches (Mateka, 2014:10). Mokotso (2016:30) contends that

[t]he struggle for power in education on who should control the education system in Lesotho between the church and the government began during colonial period up until after independence in the 1980s when the education system began to be legalized as a 'three-legged pot' meaning a tripartite partnership between the Christian churches, the government and the parents.

As a result, before making any changes in schools or before implementing any policies, the government needs to engage the churches as majority stakeholders, as they own more schools than the government. This makes policy implementation more complicated. More information on the impact of the tripartite partnership on education in Lesotho will be presented in this chapter.

## 4.2 A brief history of Lesotho

### 4.2.1 Geography

Lesotho is a small landlocked Southern African country that is surrounded by its only neighbour, the Republic of South Africa (Kingdom of Lesotho: 2012:5). Lesotho covers an area of 30,355 square kilometres, of which 80% is above 1800 metres in altitude, resulting in most of the country being predominantly mountainous (International Monetary Fund, 2012:13). The population of Lesotho is relatively homogenous, as 99.7% speak Sesotho, while English, one of the official languages, is used for conducting business (Lesotho Communication Authority, 2017:2).

Administratively, Lesotho was divided into four administrative districts around 1871 to 1884 by the British to prepare for the decentralisation of government. The districts were Leribe, Berea, Thaba-Bosiu and Cornerspruit (Mofuoa, 2005:2). Currently, Lesotho is divided into ten districts that lie within two distinct geographical areas referred to as highlands, which are predominantly rural, and lowlands, where the main urban centres are located (Nkhabutlane, De Kock & Du Rand, 2019:2).

Besides the ten district, Lesotho is also divided into 80 constituencies and 129 local community councils (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2018:22). The lowlands districts are Maseru (the capital town), Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Teyateyaneng (Berea) and Mafeteng. The rural districts are Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Qach's Nek, Thaba-Tseka and Mokhotlong (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2006:5). The country is further divided into wards, overseen by principal chiefs (Lesotho Review, 2012:6).

The population of Lesotho recorded after the 2016 national census stands at 2,008,801 (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2018:18). The highest population, which accounts for 72%, resides in the rural areas. The number of males in the population is at 49.2%, while females are at 50.8%. Also 33% is younger than 15 years, and 5.4% is above 65 years, while life expectancy is at 56.6 years. It should be noted that the districts with the highest population are Maseru (the capital town), Leribe, Berea and Mafeteng, hosting 62.2% of the country's total population (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2017:19-20).

With respect to international relations, Lesotho is a member of several regional and international organisations. Regionally, Lesotho is a member of the African Union (AU), formerly known as the Organisation of the African Union (OAU). Lesotho joined

the then OAU on 31 October 1966, a few weeks after attaining independence on 4 October 1966 (African Union, 2019:5). Lesotho is also a member of SADC (a subsidiary of the AU), the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), and the Common Monetary Union between Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2017:20). In this study, I will focus on the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC), as it plays a very active and pivotal role in Lesotho. Lesotho has signed a defence pact with the other SADC countries, allowing them to intervene at the government's invitation and at very short notice, should the need arise (Hassan & Ojo, 2002:9)

Lesotho is furthermore part of a group of countries called BOLESWA. BOLESWA comprises Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (now known as Kingdom of eSwatini) (Ntabeni, 2008:38). BOLESWA has a long history of collaboration, particularly in education, and at one point these countries shared the same curriculum.

Regarding its SADC membership, Lesotho is not just an ordinary member of the SADC. Rather, it is a founding member of this organisation, which was previously called the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). Since regaining its political democratic rule in 1993, Lesotho has experienced several SADC interventions in its politics (Weisfelder, 2014:116). The main reason for SADC interventions in Lesotho is the incessant political turmoil and instability that have dogged the country from as far back as 1993 (Williams, 2019:67).

In addition, Lesotho has a fragile political relationship with its sole neighbour, the Republic of South Africa. This is evidenced by the fact that

during the post-election interventions by South Africa and SADC, almost all the past and present leaders have, at one time or other, denounced South African interference with Lesotho's sovereignty (Weisfelder, 2015:74).

The Kingdom of Lesotho, as Lesotho is fondly referred to by its dwellers, was founded by Moshoeshe I in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Rosenberg & Weisfelder, 2013:4). Moshoeshe I, also known as Morena e Moholo (paramount chief), formed the Basotho nation during the hard times of the *lifaqane* wars (the wars that took place between 1822 and 1837) that caused major political upheaval in the southern part of Africa (Mofuoa, 2015:23; Molapo, 2005:4). The uproars caused by the *lifaqane* wars forced Moshoeshe I to make allegiances. One such allegiance was with various

missionaries, who were to come to Lesotho to contribute to the development of the country. However, the arrival of Europeans in Lesotho also sped up the colonialisation of the country.

#### **4.2.2 The colonialisation of Lesotho**

As is the case with many African countries, Lesotho was also colonised. The British invaded the country in 1868 (Maliehe, 2014:31). The invasion had a great impact on the history and also the education sector of Lesotho.

At this juncture it is imperative to note that between 1870 and 1966 Lesotho was called Basutoland (meaning the land of the Basotho) (Epprecht, 1993:202). As such, in this section the name Basutoland will be used concurrently with Lesotho, as they refer to the same place.

Lesotho is landlocked by the Republic of South Africa. The founder of the Basotho nation, King Moshoeshe I, experienced antagonism from his neighbours, the Boers, residing on the plains of the Orange Free State. In an effort to bring to an end to the incessant conflicts and clashes with the Boers, Moshoeshe I invited and accepted colonial protection from the British Crown. As a result, in 1868 Lesotho was annexed to the British Crown. In 1871 it was placed under the Cape Colony (Eldredge, 2007:25). The annexation of Lesotho to the Cape Colony was to ease governance and also because of 'humanitarian, economic and moral factors' (Lelimo, 1998:168).

Lesotho, together with South Africa, was ruled from Great Britain until 1910, when the Union of South Africa (today the Republic of South Africa) was formed. Lesotho refused to be part of the Union of South Africa, and instead opted to remain a British Protectorate (Ntsoaole, 2012:7). In effect, colonisation by Great Britain was meant to protect Lesotho from being incorporated into the Orange Free State.

Missionaries present in Lesotho also contributed towards the colonialisation of Lesotho the country. The first French Missionaries belonging to the Paris Evangelical Mission Society (PEMS) were invited and welcomed to Lesotho by Moshoeshe I in 1833. The main purpose for Moshoeshe I inviting the missionaries to Lesotho was to "learn more about Europeans and their new technologies, which had been made known to the Basotho by migrants returning from the Eastern Cape" (Shillington,

2005:810). However, these were not the only missionaries that came to Lesotho. Missionaries from the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church also arrived in Lesotho in 1862 and 1875 respectively, and contributed immensely to the education sector in Lesotho (Fahlbusch, Lochman, Mbiti, Pelikan, Vischer, Bromiley & Barrett, 2003:244). Ntabeni (2010:225) confirms that the first primary schools in Lesotho were established in the 1840s by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) [now known as the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa]. These missionaries were later joined by the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in 1860s, and by the Anglican Church (AC) in the 1870s.

So, while they originally came to Lesotho by invitation so that Lesotho could learn more about European technology, the missionaries inevitably impacted on and influenced Lesotho education, and Lesotho's development. These views are conformed by Ntho and Lesotho Council of NGOs (2013:27), who content that

the history of formal education in Lesotho dates back to colonial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Under this administration, education was developed through a partnership between the government and the Christian missions, since then, the church has played a leading role in providing education services. The key role of the state has been to pay teachers' salaries and provide institutional support.

After years of being a British colony, Lesotho subsequently gained its independence from Britain on 4 October 1966 (Rosenberg & Weisfelder, 2013:6). However, the colonialisation of Lesotho was not without its problems and lasting effects, especially on education.

### **4.2.3 Basotho values**

The Basotho as a people have cultural norms and values that they subscribe to. Regarding the Basotho culture, it is the view of Marais (2012:80) that the Basotho culture is of a "hybrid nature having been influenced, among others, by French Missionaries, English Colonialisation, the South African apartheid environment, [and] a particular history of its own." To this effect, we find that the Basotho culture draws from quite diverse sources, as it had been influenced by very different cultures and events. It is also the contention of African Technology Policy Studies (2013:9) that

Basotho, like other communities, have their own unique traditional knowledge, beliefs and culture that help them raise their children, unify them as a nation and protect themselves, their livestock and crops from natural disasters and diseases and to manage their environment better in a sustainable manner. However, this knowledge is often hidden, undocumented, usually known by a few and mostly the elderly in the society.

While Basotho values are derived from various sources and influences, much of them have not been documented, which makes writing about them a difficult task. Nonetheless, it does not mean that the Basotho do not have a value system that they are proud of and that joins them together. Basotho values are based on the principles of “justice, equality, peace, prosperity, participatory democracy and mutual co-existence which underpin their way of life” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:3). These values influence the Basotho people’s engagement with each other to the extent that the Basotho nation in general regard themselves as a caring nation. For example, the Basotho take care of each other and especially widows, orphans and vulnerable children, as well as elderly members of the society. In cases where there are no relatives to fulfil this role, the chiefs usually take over this caring role. Communities would also look after each other through *matsema* (work parties) and *seahlolo* (joint farm-cropping) (Manyeli, 2007:23).

These principles are by implication not only relevant but also significant to education and education policy implementation. Their relevance and significance stem from the fact that within policy, these principles are aimed at improving the lives of people. This principle, if utilised in policy implementation, can be beneficial because it encourages people to work together.

However, research conducted by Wahab, Odunsi and Ajiboye (2012:35) in Nigeria, links colonialism and westernisation, with the erosion of cultural values, suggesting that cultural values of the African people suffered greatly due to colonialism. I indicated earlier that colonialism negatively impacted on policy in African countries, especially in previously colonised countries such as Lesotho. It can therefore be said that colonialism also influenced the value orientation of the African people. In reference to Lesotho, Ngozwana (2019:292) maintains that the change in socio-cultural norms and values is believed to be a result of globalisation. However, authors such as Basheer (2015:50) opine that



by definition globalization is the expansion of communication links between different regions whereas colonialism was the expansion of both power and territory. However, the two are similar in the sense that the powerful have an upper hand and can increase their profits at the expense of the poor

This view is reiterated by Sharma (2018:107), for whom “the concept of colonization has been substituted by the new political term globalization which has more negative impacts upon non-European than positive.”

In the next section, I will discuss the background to Lesotho education. This background is important as it can give some insight into factors that influenced and determined Lesotho education.

## **4.3 Education in Lesotho**

### **4.3.1 Background to education in Lesotho**

Although it is believed that the missionaries and colonisers introduced formal education to Africa, Africans have always had their own form of teaching and learning that was premised on its cultural norms and practices. In fact, indigenous African education is very old, and had been passed on from one generation to the next (Mosweunyane, 2013:51). It is for this reason that Mutebi (2019:27) contends that “it is delusional to assume that before the coming of the colonialists, Africa was completely without knowledge of education.” This is because, as was the case with many other African countries, education was an integral part of the local Basotho culture in Lesotho.

It is therefore imperative to note that prior to the arrival of the missionaries, and long before Lesotho became a British protectorate, education existed among the Basotho nation. Traditional Basotho education for boys and girls took place separately. Boys went for initiation to be circumcised, were taught skills on hunting, agriculture, sewing and the mending of shields, among others. Girls were given education on sexuality, submissiveness to their male counterparts, household chores and agricultural activities (Ralejoe, 2016:16). Letseka (2013:337) argues that the native education offered to Basotho youth was directed towards grooming a society whose values are



rooted in *makhabane* (virtues) that include, but are not limited to, “respect for persons, humility, perseverance, service to nation and patriotism.”

The missionaries brought with them formal education. These missionaries did not only concentrate on religion, but they also established schools in Lesotho (Fahlbusch et al., 2003:244). The main goal of their interest in education was to give the Basotho basic skills in numeracy and literacy, with the purpose of producing interpreters and clerks for administrative work in the colonial government (Selepe, 2016:2).

In addition, Pitikoe (2016:21) maintains that missionary education in Lesotho was also meant to teach European beliefs and lifestyles to the Basotho. Furthermore, formal education in Lesotho was also introduced to ease the work of the missionaries, because they found that their work of converting Africans to Christianity was difficult, as potential converts could not read or interpret the Bible. This shortcoming led to missionaries finding it necessary to teach Africans how to read and write for their work to be accomplished (Mokotso, 2017:7).

In present day Lesotho, the church still plays a very significant role in education. This is because in Lesotho, “unlike in other British colonies, the pre-independence colonial government left the ownership and control of schools in the hands of the missionaries” (Lekhetho, 2013:62). Schools remained in the hands of the church, despite attempts by the Basutoland government to take away control of the schools from the missionaries. Ntombana and Mokotso (2018:3) claim that the Cape Colonial rule did not support Basutoland in their attempts to take control of education from the missionaries, so churches maintained ownership of their schools.

In 1909, the British government made significant changes in the governance of education in Lesotho. They established a central board that had a director and representatives of government. They also established education secretaries to serve as a link between schools and the government. In addition, the British government also formulated an all-inclusive Education Act, meant to outline the roles and responsibilities of government and churches regarding the management and administration of schools and education policies (Muzwidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002:np). Although education secretaries are paid by the government, they are hired by the proprietor (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:Section 26(1)).

Lekhetho (2013:65) posits that

in the past, the educational secretaries had greater power and clearly-defined roles, which included handling of teachers' employment matters. However, in recent years their powers have been gradually curtailed by the creation of central structures such as the TSC [Teaching Service Council], and the human resource officers based in all ten district education offices of the country.

Restricting the powers of the secretaries and the church was brought about by complaints from stakeholders such as educators, parents and some community members. Such complaints stakeholders centred on confusion brought by the 'dual' management of schools. They argued that the government could not make any decisions in education without engaging in extensive discussions with the church (Lekhetho, 2013:66). The limits put on government not only pertain to policy decisions, but also to the implementation of policies.

Conversely, this union between church and state in the provision of education to the Basotho people has certain problems. In this regard, UNESCO (2006:1) stipulates that:

This partnership, however, has for many years suffered from lack of clarification of the respective roles and ambiguity over areas of responsibility and accountability. The result has been parallel management structures, with consequent ambiguity at the school level with regard to accountability ...the task of enforcing Ministry regulations and policies at the school level has proved a difficult one. Furthermore, teachers have been unclear as to whether their employee was the church or the government.

To this effect, this struggle for power adversely affected teachers, and at one point they were unable to identify who, between the government and the church, was their actual employer. In the case where teachers had grievances with their salaries, the church referred them to the government, as the state paid their salaries but the government also pointed them to the church as their employer (Ntsoaole, 2012:10). The implication here is that, at times, teachers would find themselves in a dilemma due to impasses between the government and churches in the governance, management and control of schools. More so, at times Lesotho teachers also found themselves torn between policy directives, as proposed by the MoET, and religious dogma and the conventions of the church. Typical here is the implementation of the Lesotho Education Sector HIV and AIDS Policy, 2012. In this policy, MoET proposes

significant implementation directives, which in essence were perceived to be in direct contradiction to church dogma. Of course, within such a context, effective policy implementation is severely hampered.

It is important to note that the struggle for power between the church and government started as far back as the colonial era. It was only in the 1980s that the struggle subsided a little, as the education system was legally made a three-legged-pot, also known as a tripartite, made up of the church, government and community (Mokotso, 2016:031). To try and contain the conflict between the church and government, the Education Act 1995 was promulgated. This Act brought about major changes in the governance of schools, through the inclusion of parents and community members in school boards (Ntsoaole, 2012:10). The Education Act 1995 was later repealed with the promulgation of the Education Act 2010. The Education Act 2010 maintained the tripartite character of Lesotho education, as it also promoted the inclusion of parents and community members in school boards.

Schools in Lesotho are mainly controlled by the Roman Catholic Church, the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa, and the Anglican Church. These schools are managed by secretaries on behalf of the churches (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:Part VI,Section 26). Despite churches owning most of the schools, it remains the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Training (hereafter MoET) to manage education, and to regulate and provide training in the education sector in Lesotho (Pillay, 2010:63). This suggests that churches and the government must work together for the implementation of policies and programmes in schools to be effective.

The above suggests that the structure, management and governance of education in Lesotho is a complex phenomenon which poses various challenges. One could therefore deduce that implementing policies in Lesotho schools is bound to also be a very complicated task.

#### **4.3.2. The impact of colonialisation on Lesotho education**

I indicated earlier (cf.3.6.3) that the colonial period witnessed the introduction of western education into Africa, particularly by missionaries. Lesotho is no exception to this, as the colonialisation of the country by the British also impacted its education

system. To this effect, Lesotho education still displays certain influences from the British education system (Mkandawire, Maphale & Tseeke, 2016:172-173; Daemane, 2012:166).

So strong was the impact of the missionaries on Lesotho education that at present, churches in Lesotho own and govern 90% of the schools in the country (De Wet, 2007:676; Lesoli, Van Wuk, Van der Walt, Potgieter & Wolhuter, 2015:203). The government and other private entities own the remaining 10% of the schools in Lesotho. The church, by virtue of being pioneers of formal education in Lesotho, made significant contributions to the education sector. Its contribution is “enshrined by statute in the Kingdom, which is, by choice, dependent on their buildings, administrative structures, and teachers to sustain a school system” (Potterton & Johnstone, 2007:578). To strengthen its influence on education in Lesotho, the British colonial government also made available “grants-in-aid to the missionaries to pay teachers’ salaries” (Matsoha cited in Lekhetho, 2013:55) in 1871. This development by the British in Lesotho education remains intact, even in present-day Lesotho.

Nthomang (2004:418) is of the opinion that “...colonialism is not an event but a process; it keeps marching on.” In the case of Lesotho, colonialism is not a foreign concept, as Lesotho was once a British colony. One could therefore rightfully assume that as a former colony of the British Empire, Lesotho has retained an indelible mark on the way it conducts its governance, and on education and education policy .

Regarding education, and thus also education policy, the major impact of colonisation was the production of people who do not possess sufficient skills that can help them contribute meaningfully to the economy of their countries (Gakusi, 2008:8). The impact of education that was designed to enslave is felt even today, as the Ministry of Education and Training Strategic Plan of 2016-2026 identifies “graduates with inadequate skills for the world of work” as one of the factors that have a negative impact on the development of Lesotho (Ministry of Development Planning, 2016:20).

Scholars such as Adei (2007:1052) is concerned about the slow progress of countries to change colonial ways, and ascribe this sluggishness to the “power that the colonizers wield, [through which] they imposed their image of superiority on the psyche of the colonized.” As such, the colonisers were able to maintain their superiority (also in education) by supressing the African voice, in their acquisition of knowledge

(Shizha, 2013:7). It is the impact on their minds that resulted in the colonised still believing that the practices of the colonisers are superior and worth implementing.

The status quo was maintained by the post-colonial rulers, as most of them had been schooled in church schools, as schools after colonial rule were led using the policies of the colonisers (Tan,1997:213). Post-colonial governors therefore had the same mind-sets as their colonial masters. As a result, they could not bring significant changes to the way education and education policy-making was conducted. This is witnessed in the education language policy of Lesotho, where English is viewed as a language associated with prestige. To this effect, the Admission Policy of the National University of Lesotho stipulate that “applicants must have sat for a minimum of six (6) subjects with an achievement rating of a C or better in four (4) subjects including English Language” (National University of Lesotho, 2015:7). This means that a prospective student who did not perform well in English is barred from getting an admission at the National University of Lesotho. This is despite the fact that English is not an indigenous language, and it is not spoken by the majority of the Basotho, even though it is an official and administrative language in Lesotho (Kolobe & Matsoso, 2020:378).

Another area of importance to the colonisers was that of policy-making. The colonisers ensured that they entrenched their ideology as a way of controlling the thinking of their subjects (Abawi & Brady, 2017:22). Conversely, it is therefore my view that even in independence, Basotho policy-makers, being influenced by an education system informed by colonialism, still ascribe to the same way of policy-making as their colonisers, and they are still “practising the same ways as their former oppressors” (Mohale, 2016:3). It is therefore no surprise that even after independence, the church still dominates education in Lesotho. Politicians, church leaders and the elite were all influenced by missionary education (Yamada, 2008:22-23). As a result, the way educational matters and education policy processes in post-colonial Lesotho education is handled, to my mind, show traces of colonial influence.

Lesotho has tried in vain to change its curriculum since its independence in 1966 so that it meets local needs. In this regard, Raselimo and Thamae (2018:1) posit that

the need for a contextually relevant and aligned curriculum has been a long standing issue in Lesotho, dating back to the early 1960s when the idea of

localising the O'Level curriculum was mooted. This search for a localised relevant curriculum continued in the post-independence era after 1966, with the localisation activities gaining momentum in the late 1980s, when the marking of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) was localised.

In 2009, 43 years after independence, Lesotho developed and implemented a localised curriculum to address country-specific challenges (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015:1; Selepe, 2016:4). Lesotho wanted to reform the British-inclined curriculum, as it was no longer relevant to the current issues of Lesotho. The old curriculum was blamed of producing traditional government employees in an era where jobs were becoming increasingly scarce (Dungey & Ansell, 2020:4).

In a nutshell, the education system in Lesotho seems to have been influenced by the churches and the British colonisers. I maintain that these influences are still visible in Lesotho education sector policy processes and policy implementation. Now that we have established the roots of education in Lesotho, we will consider the state of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in the next section. I will give an overview of the Lesotho Education system as it is currently structured. I regard such an overview as important to highlight the layered nature of Lesotho education, and the challenges for policy implementation that is a direct result of this. I start this section with a discussion of the structure of Lesotho education, and management and governance of education in Lesotho. Thereafter I look at the realities informing and affecting Lesotho education.

## **4.4 The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)**

### **4.4.1 Structure of the Ministry of Education and Training**

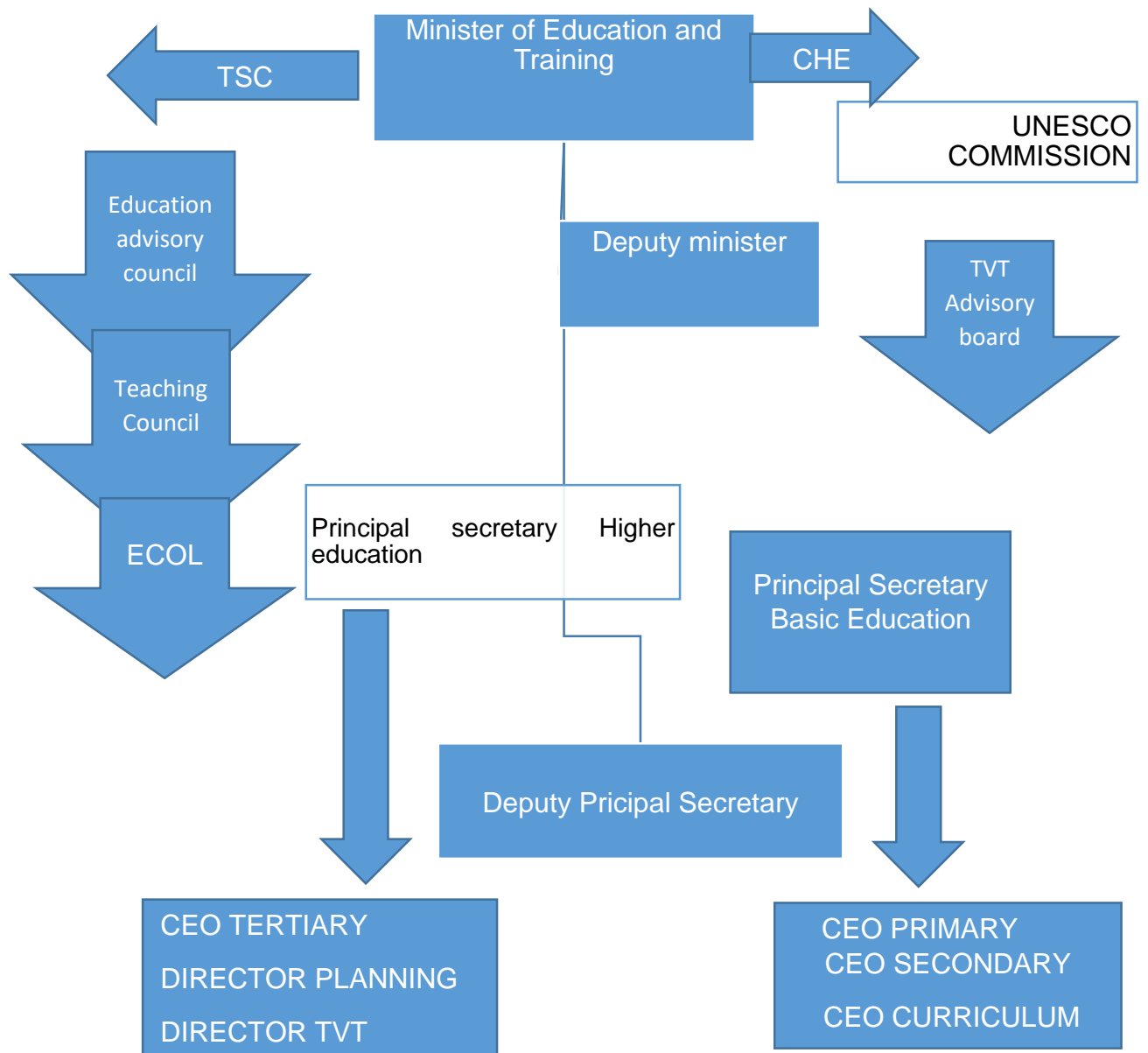
In Lesotho, the provisioning of education is the responsibility of the MoET. The Lesotho education system is highly centralised in several aspects, including “curriculum, inspectorate and financing made at headquarters in the capital Maseru [but] there is an attempt to decentralise management through the 10 administrative districts” (Moorosi, 2018:180). However, there seems to be dearth of literature regarding efforts by the Ministry of Education and Training to decentralise education. The Education Act 2010 and the Teaching Service Regulations 2002 are two pieces of legislation that inform the control of Lesotho education.

The structure of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), as stipulated in the Education Sector Plan of 2006-2016, is such that

the Ministry is organized into technical and administrative purviews which involve management at all levels. The central level of the Ministry comprises of thirteen programs which are mandated to develop, coordinate and oversee implementation of education policies and strategies. At district level, the education office oversees and supervises implementation of education. (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2014:14)

Moreover, the Lesotho education system is divided into a formal and a non-formal education sector. The formal education sector consists of five levels, namely pre-primary, primary, secondary (junior and senior secondary), post-secondary, which comprises vocational and technical schools, and higher education. Non-formal education is meant to accommodate youths and adults that for one reason or the other were unable to either enrol in or complete formal education (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2014:14).

Non-formal education in Lesotho is meant to offer basic literacy to those that could not make it to formal schools due to various reasons. The non-formal education offered is equivalent to that of standard 1-10 in formal schools, and is offered by community centres and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are mainly sponsored by donor agencies. These NGOs include the Lesotho Council of Nongovernmental Organisations (LCN), Lesotho Association of Non-Formal Education (LANFE), Lesotho Youth Federation, Lesotho Cooperative Credit Union League (LCCUL), and Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD) (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2017:34).



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**Figure 5: Adapted Ministry of Education and Training organogram**



#### 4.4.2 Management and governance of Lesotho education

The term governance is described by Fukuyama (2013:3) as “a government’s ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not.” It is also the contention of Kadir (2019:1) that governance is “the process by which government makes and implements policy decisions that influence the finance and delivery of education to citizens.” According to Joubert and Bray (2007:19), “governance deals with the process and systems by which an organisation or society operates and quite frequently, a government is established to administer these processes and systems.”

Additionally, Vymetal (2007:6) posits that governance “is an expression for the *state/government policies*. [It is also] *managerial approach*, the organisation and efficiency of the process of administration.” In this explanation, there is mention of the managerial, which is associated with management. This implies that governance and management are closely related. A look at the concept management suggest that it is about the “the action of measuring a quantity on a regular basis and of adjusting some initial plan; also, actions taken to reach one’s intended goal” (Joubert and Bray (2017:19). It also refers to the processes of “acquiring and allocating resources for the achievement of predetermined educational goals” (Ali & Abdalla, 2017:326).

In essence, governance entails the role played by government in leading an organisation, while management is about the daily operations of an organisation. In the case of Lesotho education, governance could be regarded as the leading role played by government through the Ministry of Education (teaching council, inspectorate, education secretaries and school boards and others), while management roles rest with principals and heads of departments in schools. School governance in Lesotho is complicated because of the tripartite nature of school ownership (cf. 4.3.1). The Education Act No3 of 2010 (hereafter Education Act 2010) lay down the rules pertaining to the governance and the management of schools in Lesotho. Even though education is a joint venture between the church, the government and the parents, Mokotso (2016:031) posits that

[i]t is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to develop education policy, set education standards, train, appoints, dismisses, and deploy teachers. The Ministry further administers examinations, inspects schools and regulates the opening and

At the beginning of this section, I indicated that Lesotho education is a tripartite alliance between the Lesotho government, churches and the community (cf. 4.3.1). In the governance of Lesotho schools, the government forms the first party, and is represented by the Ministry of Education and Training. The second party comprises the school secretaries that represent the church. The third party is the community, which is represented by parents. As can be expected, this alliance has its own internal tensions.

To this effect, Khama (2018:29) argues that “the post-independence period has been characterised by conflicts and power struggle for control between the government and the churches as school proprietors.” The conflicts were intensified by a lack of regulations and guidelines for the partnership between the church and government. It is for this reason that the Education Act 2010 was promulgated (Khama, 2018:18).

To make school governance effective, the Education Act 2010 Section 18(1) promulgates the establishment of an inspectorate of schools, which is tasked to

inspect the work of schools each year and report on trends, achievements and on the general implementation of policies; [and] provide advice and participate in the Ministry's policy formulation.

With this, the Education Act places a responsibility on the inspectorate to be involved in education sector policy processes. As such, the expectation is that the inspectorate will also be involved with education policy implementation. Furthermore, the Education Act 2010 also alludes to the establishment of the school secretaries. In this regard, the Education Act 2010, Section 26 instructs that “a proprietor who has more than twenty schools shall establish ... an educational secretariat which shall be headed by an educational secretary appointed by the proprietor and approved by the Minister.” According to Section 26 (4) these secretaries are supposed to

- (a) organise, co-ordinate and supervise the educational work of the proprietor that appointed him or her;
- (b) liaise with the Ministry responsible for education on matters of management of schools; and
- (c) perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the Minister (Education Act 2010:Section 26(4)(a)-(c)).

Education secretaries represent the church, and they are tasked with the governance of schools on behalf of the church.

The third part of the tripartite alliance is the community, which are represented in school boards. The Education Act 2010 (Section 23(1)) states that “a school shall be governed by a school board.” Additionally, Section 23(2) of the Act stipulates that a school board consists of the following nine members, appointed by the proprietor and approved by the Minister:

- (a) two members elected by a proprietor, one of whom is the chairperson;
- (b) three members nominated by parents, one of whom is the vice-chairperson;
- (c) one teacher nominated by the teachers in that particular school;
- (d) a gazetted chief or his or her representative under whose jurisdiction the school falls;
- (e) a member of the local council or his or her representative under whose jurisdiction the school falls;
- (f) the principal of the relevant school who is the secretary of the board and an ex-officio member.

The school board is composed in a manner that also allows for the major stakeholders, namely the church, government and community, to be represented. The implication is that in church schools, the church is represented by two members, of whom one will be the chairperson. The community is represented by five members, namely the three parents’ nominees, a gazetted chief and the local councillor.

The task of managing schools in Lesotho is placed in the hands of school principals. The Education Act 2010 (Section 21(a)) outlines the responsibilities of the principal. In this regard it states that a principal

- (a) is responsible for the organisation, management and day-to-day running and leadership of the school;
- (b) is the chief accounting officer and is responsible to the school board for the control and use of school funds;
- (h) shall maintain and enforce discipline in the school he or she is heading;

In this section, I demonstrated how management and governance in Lesotho education is conceptualised and what the responsibilities of the different stakeholders

and school principals are in this regard, through citations from the Lesotho Education Act 2010.

The above clarification was necessary because it is imperative to also note that education stakeholders are the most important clients in the education sector. Their role in policy formulation and implementation is considered essential (Yaro et al., 2016:2). However, their roles are generalised and are not specific to policy processes. There appears to be no literature on the roles played by these stakeholders in Lesotho education policy processes, particularly the roles they play in policy implementation. Having said this, in the next section I focus on factors that affect education policy in Lesotho. I believe that an overview of such factors might give some insight into education policy implementation in Lesotho.

## **4.5 The realities of education policy implementation in Lesotho**

For policies to be effectively implemented, there needs to be policy commitment and policy capacity. There should also be clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the policy process. Policy commitment goes hand in hand with political will, and participant participation. As such, Lesia (2015:39) regards political commitment as another condition necessary to determine whether or not citizens will participate in policy processes. In the case of Lesotho education, it appears that political commitment is lacking in the policy process, resulting in policy implementation suffering severely. This is clear from an example cited by Khumalo (2018:80), who protests that

despite the fact that the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) has proposed that all learners should be admitted in regular schools, the truth of the matter is that it has not hired enough teachers or erected more classrooms that could sufficiently accommodate diverse learners.

It also appears that effective policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector is hindered by a lack of resources. Pitikoe (2016:29) confirms this by stating that many schools in Lesotho, particularly those at primary level, have limited resources. It therefore seems that MoET puts in place policies and make certain policy

pronouncements without taking into consideration what would be required for their effective implementation. With regards to policy capacity, it is the view of Swanepoel and De Beer (1997:59) that “[p]olicies can only be implemented if the capacity included materials, financial, managerial, bureaucratic and technical resources. Sadly, most of these are absent in Third World Countries.” By virtue of being classified as a Third World country Lesotho is by implication also adversely affected by a lack of resources. As such, it appears to lack the important components needed for policies to be effectively implemented.

Additionally, Lesia (2015:2) laments that

[e]ven though Lesotho has national resources and an abundance of literate citizens, there is still a problem because citizens have no democratic ownership of the development policy formulation and implementation process. Instead the elected representatives/members of parliament and civil servants at the central government level have the prerogative to formulate and implement various policies. Noticeably, there are evident serious capacity constraints in carrying out their responsibilities.

It therefore also appears that ordinary Basotho and other relevant stakeholders are side-lined in policy-making and policy implementation processes. This practice can adversely affect policy implementation in education in general and in schools t. This is confirmed by Khumalo (2018:87), who states that

the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) is slow in developing a clear policy on learner diversity and inclusive education. Consequently, it is not surprising that teachers find it difficult to fully implement inclusive education in regular schools.

MoET’s apparent reluctance to develop certain policies could be detrimental to the education of those affected by the lack of relevant policies. Based on this background, it is therefore imperative that in the next sections I discuss factors that affect education policy implementation in Lesotho.

#### **4.5.1 Politics**

I have indicated previously (cf. 3.6.2) that policy and the entire policy process, which includes policy implementation, cannot be divorced from politics. It therefore becomes

important to also look at the context of Lesotho and the political climate that impacts education policy implementation in Lesotho.

Lesotho has always been caught in political conflict, which impacts its democracy. Mokotso (2019:1) argues that “[t]here is sufficiently prevailing consensus that Lesotho has never experienced a stable democracy ever since political independence.” This is because the fairly small country with a relatively homogeneous population has always experienced one form of political unrest and conflict or the other since its independence. Some of the political disturbances that have rocked Lesotho include ‘power struggle, military coups, and post-election disturbances’ (Lekhetho, 2013:56). It would therefore be fair to state that as a country, Lesotho has been divided along political lines for a long time.

It is this political instability which makes Sejanamane (2017:np) declare that “[f]or those outside Lesotho, the question has always been why so much happens in this small, impoverished country unlike the rest of the Southern African regions?” Sejanamane (2017:np) goes further, claiming that at

the heart of the problem in Lesotho has always been governments which are not focused on answering the needs of the people but answer to the needs of a small clique of politicians allied or subservient to the military.

These sentiments by Sejanamane (2017) are echoed by regional and international organisations such as the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights, on the one hand, whose main concern is police brutality in Lesotho. On the other hand, the European Union (EU) is very committed in its support for the envisaged multi-sectoral reforms that Lesotho is expected to have completed before the next elections (Letshele, 2018:3).

Additionally, it also seems as if Lesotho’s unique geographical location (being surrounded by the Republic of South Africa) renders it exceptionally vulnerable to both political and economic changes that take place in South Africa (Bureau of African Affairs, 2011:38). These changes inevitably also have an impact the politics of Lesotho.

As a Lesotho citizen myself, I concur with Sejanamane (2017), who claims that Lesotho is politically a very unstable country. Since 2012 to date, Lesotho has held

three national elections impelled by a vote of no confidence against a Prime Minister in office at that time (Institute for Peace and Security Studies, 2019:3; Mohlamenyane, 2018:36). The year 2012 saw Lesotho adopting a coalition government for the first time. Since then, several very fragile and unstable coalition governments were formed, contributing to the political instability in the country.

The implication of this instability is that it adversely affects education and education policy implementation. This is because of the incessant change of Education Ministers and Principal Secretaries. It can be expected that the continuous change in political leaders, Ministers and Secretaries will impact negatively on education and the implementation of education policies. This is because Ministers and Principal Secretaries are political appointees. As a result, when the government collapses, they are bound to leave their positions. I will discuss the issue of turnover of ministers and principal secretaries later in this thesis (cf. 4.5.3).

#### **4.5.2 Poverty and economics**

Prior to its colonisation in 1866, Lesotho was a flourishing hub that was able to supply grain to her neighbour, South Africa. However, the colonisation of Lesotho resulted in the loss of much of its fertile land to the current-day Free State, which is one of the nine provinces of South Africa, due to re-demarcation (Molapo, 2005:17). This left Lesotho with limited productive land, and a limited means of income for both the country and the Basotho nation.

In essence, Lesotho lost its affluence of being an exporter of grain to becoming an importer of grain after its independence. This had severe economic implications on the country. As a result, instead of Lesotho progressing economically and providing in the labour needs of its people, the country became a place that provided (cheap) labour to its neighbour South Africa (Chigwada, 2012:143).

Another issue that contributed to the decline in productivity in Lesotho, and to the promotion of migrant labour, was the 'Hut Tax' that the Basotho were forced to pay by the colonial rulers. The colonial government introduced this tax in Basutoland, where tax was paid for each hut a man owned. In 1871, stringent measures were put in place to ensure compliance in the payment of this 'Hut Tax'. Such measures included

denying those without hut tax certificates the passes they needed to go to the Cape and Orange Free State. Many Basotho men did not have the money to pay the tax, and they were forced to seek employment in the neighbouring South Africa. In so doing they left agriculture in the hands of women and children, which led to a decline in agricultural production (Daemane & Mots'oene, 2015:3-6). All these factors contributed to a stagnant economy that is completely dependent on South Africa, and the subsequent classification of Lesotho as a poor country. Lekhetho (2013:57) cites the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) of 2013 in which Lesotho is ranked 158 out of 186 *low human development* countries.

This claim is supported by the Lesotho Country Analysis Working Document of 2017, which identifies some of the root causes of poverty in Lesotho as including “lack of education & high unemployment, no clear policies to tackle unemployment [and] subjects taught in schools do not respond to unemployment” (Kingdom of Lesotho:2017:5).

In addition, Lesotho is marred by disparities between the rural and urban with regard to frequency in school attendance. In this regard, attendance in rural schools is poor compared to urban areas. These differences sometimes lead to other factors such as poverty, that adversely affect young people who may drop out of school to help support the household (UNDP, 2015:90).

Regarding education, Mulkeen and Chen (2008:2-3) contend that

the rural-urban disparity in living conditions is the major constraint on attracting teachers to rural areas...teachers often express concerns about the quality of accommodations; the working environment, including classroom facilities and school resources; and access to leisure activities and public facilities in rural areas.

Due to uninhabitable conditions, rural areas are more likely not to have qualified teachers. This has a negative impact on the implementation of education policies, as successful and effective policy implementation to a large extent also depends on the knowledge levels of those involved in its implementation.

Being cognisant of the impact of poverty on education, the government of Lesotho tried to curb its scourge. In this regard, the government introduced Free Primary Education and a feeding scheme in schools as a means to curtail the impact of poverty. The scheme was meant to reduce malnutrition in children, while at the same time



helping parents and local communities with some income (Morojele, 2012:37). Despite this effort, access to education in Lesotho is still a major problem due to poverty. The government acknowledges that poverty is mainly perpetrated by the misappropriation of finances and the rampant ineffectiveness of the education sector (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2007:79).

It is the contention of Thaanyane (2019:403) that

for the Lesotho's education system to truly respond to the needs of the poor and contribute to wealth creation in communities and society at large, like other countries, must take the issue of poverty into special consideration in the planning of educational services.

While poverty affects education attainment in Lesotho, it is through education that poverty can be eradicated. In other words, there is an urgent need for Lesotho to use education in its fight against poverty. One way of doing this is to ensure that education policies are developed that respond to the needs of the Basotho nation. More so, it is important to ensure the effective implementation of these policies.

### **4.5.3 Corruption**

Corruption is another factor that thwarts development in Lesotho. To this effect, Rakolobe (2019:np) contends that "Lesotho scored 42 in the 2017 Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI). This is an indication that corruption is commonplace in Lesotho's public service." According to Toeba (2018:407), "the CIP measures perceptions of corruption using a scale of 0-100, 0 being highly corrupt and 100 hardly corrupt."

In Lesotho, many schools that are in remote areas are the hardest hit by a lack of resources and poor infrastructure (Lekhetho, 2013:72). This happens despite efforts by the government to ensure that education is mainly financed by the government (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2007:6). Government's efforts to give financial support in the form of salaries to all teachers in the public schools, is clouded with corruption. For instance, George (2017:155) claims that there are "systemic inefficiencies such as delayed payment for the newly employed teacher where they can go several months

without their first payment”. These late payment of teachers, according to George, has often been associated with payment of “ghost teachers” (George, 2017:155).

Regarding ghost teachers, Kabi (2018:np) contends that

the Ministry of Education and Training has for several years failed to maintain human resources records, proper accounting reconciliation systems resulting in a situation where millions out of its M1.7 billion annual wage bill for teachers are spent on ghost teachers.

The above seem to confirm practices that give room to corruption, especially pertaining to the use of money in the Lesotho Ministry of Education. It is needless to say that “corruption inappropriately hurts the poor by diverting funds intended to provide basic services, thus promoting inequality and injustice, and discouraging investment and foreign assistance” (Lesotho, 2014:2). Corruption could seriously affect education and education policy implementation, and so hamper progress and development in education.

#### **4.5.4 HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS has been cited in the Kingdom of Lesotho Education Sector Plan 2016-2026 as one of the major factors that negatively affect education attainment in Lesotho (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:20). This view is supported by evidence from the Lesotho Demographic Survey of 2014, which reported that 25% of men and women aged between 14 and 49 are HIV positive. This is an increase of 2% as compared to 2009, when the prevalence was at 23%(Ministry of Health and ICF International, 2014:13). This is the population group that should contribute positively and meaningfully to the attainment and development of education. Furthermore, Morojele (2012:39) claims that HIV/AIDS impacts on households by leaving behind vulnerable orphans. A study conducted by Rakolobe (2017:120) found that “HIV/AIDS negatively affects the education of Lesotho and that of the Basotho children [resulting in] adverse poverty and an increased number of orphans, to absenteeism from school.”

There is a concern amongst various stakeholders in Lesotho, such as teachers and health personnel, regarding the health of adolescents, brought by the seemingly increasing HIV/AIDS statistics among this group of young people (Malibo, 2021:38),

who are expected to be the future leaders of the country. To overcome the pressure that the HIV/AIDS pandemic exerts on schools, Hlalele, Masitsa and Koatsa (2013:375) advise that MoET should train teachers on HIV/AIDS programmes, and provide them with the necessary resources to enhance their skills when dealing with the pandemic.

This view is echoed by Rakolobe and Teise (2020:42 & 44), who suggest that to control the scourge of HIV/AIDS in schools, MoET needs to train teachers on HIV/AIDS programmes, engage partners and other stakeholders during policy implementation and encourage schools to develop their own HIV/AIDS policies.

#### **4.5.5 Calls for decolonisation of Lesotho education**

The concept of decolonisation has already been described in Chapter 3 (cf.3.6.4). In this section, I will give an overview of what decolonisation means in the context of the Lesotho education sector and education policy-making, to policy implementation.

According to Lebeloane (2017:2),

One of the main aims of decolonial thinking and decolonization is to re-instate, re-inscribe and embody the dignity, equity and social justice in people whose norms and values as well as their nature and their reasoning, sensing views of life were violently devalued or demonized by colonial, imperial and interventionist agendas as well as by postmodern and alter Morden internal critiques.

This means that colonialism resulted in a loss of the dignity, culture, societal norms and own ways of life on the part of the colonised. As a result, there is a need for decolonisation for the colonised to recapture what they had lost. For Lesotho education, the process of decolonialisation implies a recovery of indigenous knowledge, paradigms, practices, and educational ways of doing. With respect to education, Adei (2007:1052) contends that, “as a critical frame-work, anti-colonial education challenges Western paradigms that guide today’s education system and social diversity by agitating for more inclusive practices to incorporate local concerns about formal schooling.”

One aspect of education that has been at the forefront of the decolonisation process is that of the curriculum and ways of knowing. Lesotho has embarked on a process of

decolonising its curriculum. Lesotho has three distinct phases that mark transitions in its education system, namely the pre-colonial education, colonial/missionary education, and post-colonial education (Khama, 2018:15). In the post-colonial phase Lesotho started to reform its curriculum with the aim of localising it to suit its context (Chere-Masopha, Tlali, Khalanyane & Sebatane, 2021:386).

The question of the language policy in Lesotho education persists, however. This is the case despite the development the Curriculum and Assessment Policy in 2009, as a way of decolonising the curriculum, and its recognition of the existence of other languages besides Sesotho and English as the official languages (Kingdom of Lesotho (2009:vii)). To this effect, English continues to be elevated at the expense of other subjects and languages in the country (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015:6). This view is echoed by Kolobe and Matsoso (2020:384), who contend that “English was privileged over other languages even after implementation of Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP).” There is therefore still a need for the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho to rethink the status of English in Lesotho. Hence there is need to relook at what decolonisation really means and apply it accordingly.

This section was on the context in which education policy implementation takes place within the Lesotho education sector. This section also created awareness on the possible challenges and opportunities that surround education policy implementation in Lesotho. In the next section, I review documents that influence education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

## **4.6 Document analysis of Lesotho legislation and policy documents**

In the previous section, I reviewed the context in which the Lesotho education policy-making process occurs. It is my contention that the reviewed environment also plays a critical role in how education policies are implemented in the Lesotho education sector.

The purpose of this section is to investigate another important aspect of this study, which is document analysis. Documents, particularly legislation and policies, will give us insight on how education policies are implemented in Lesotho.

For this study, I have purposely selected to analyse the Constitution of Lesotho, 1993 and the Education Act, No.3, 2010 as legislative laws that inform the policy-making process in Lesotho. I will also analyse the Education Sector Plan 2016-2026, as it is an important document that outlines the plans for the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), as well as its vision, mission and objectives for education improvement in the country. I will also analyse the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development, 2013 and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009. I selected these two policies purposely and intentionally because I believe they will help me get the necessary information that will enable me to achieve the aim of this study.

#### **4.6.1 The Constitution of Lesotho 1993**

The Kingdom of Lesotho is a democratic country that is guided by the Constitution of Lesotho (1993) (hereafter Constitution, (1993)). The Constitution (1993) was promulgated in 1993 during the return to multi-party democracy, and was amended in 2001 to align with the proportional representation component (Baily, 2016:53).

The Constitution (1993) acts as the supreme law of the country, and all other laws and policies must be in alignment with it. Any law that does not comply is considered as null and void (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Chapter 1,Section 2). As such, in Section 4 (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Chapter 1,Section 4), the Constitution (1993) stipulates the fundamental human rights and freedoms that every Lesotho citizen and those within the borders of Lesotho shall enjoy. The overview of such freedoms, as stipulated in the Constitution, 1993 is that

every person in Lesotho is entitled, whatever his race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status to fundamental human rights and freedoms.

By virtue of living in the Kingdom of Lesotho, all people's rights are protected by the Constitution of Lesotho as the supreme law of the land.

With regard to policy formulation, the Constitution (1993) states that

Lesotho shall adopt policies aimed at promoting a society based on equality and justice for all its citizens regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion,

political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. To, the State shall take appropriate measures to to promote equality of opportunity for the disadvantaged groups in the society to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of public life (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Section 25(1), (2)) (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Chapter III,Section 26(1)).

All policies, including those that inform education in Lesotho shall therefore be underpinned by the principles of equality and justice for all Basotho. It is further anticipated that

to the state shall take appropriate measures to to promote equality of opportunity for the disadvantaged groups in the society to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of public life (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Chapter III,Section 26(2)).

The implication of this is that Basotho will not be subjected to any form of (unfair) discrimination. According to the Constitution (1993),

[i]n this section, the expression "discriminatory" means affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject or are accorded privileges or advantages which are not accorded to persons of another such description Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Section 18(3)).

Any policy developed by the MoET should therefore not treat people differently based on their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion they may have. In essence, education policies formulated and implemented should be all-encompassing, and not leave anyone behind. Moreover, the Constitution 1993 further declares that "subject to the provisions of subsections (4) and (5) no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Section 18(1)).

This pronouncement is re-affirmed by Section 25, which stipulates that

[t]he principles contained in this Chapter shall form part of the public policy of Lesotho. These principles... shall guide the authorities and agencies of

Lesotho, and other public authorities, in the performance of their functions with a view to achieving progressively, by legislation or otherwise, the full realisation of these principles.

In terms of education policy development and implementation, it is therefore expected that the education sector should refrain from developing and implementing laws [and policies] that may be considered to be discriminatory (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Section 25). Policies that are developed and implemented within the education section should therefore also not be discriminatory in nature and should promote social justice and equality. The Constitution 1993 further promises that “Lesotho shall adopt policies aimed at ensuring the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for its citizens” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Section 27(1)).

Additionally, the Constitution 1993 also makes provision for education in Section 28, as it states that

Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at securing that-

- (a) education is directed to the full development of human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- (b) basic education is compulsory and available to all;
- (c) secondary education, including technical and vocational education, is made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means and to, by the progressive introduction of free education;
- (d) higher education is made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and to, by the progressive introduction of free education; and
- (e) fundamental education is encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed their primary education (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993: Chapter III,Section 28(a)-(e)).

Other sections of the Constitution 1993 that are in alignment with Section 28 include Section 13, which states that

[e]very religious community shall be entitled, at its own expense, to establish and maintain places of education and to manage any place of education which it wholly maintains; and no such community shall be prevented from providing

religious instruction for persons of that community in the course of any education provided at any places of education which it wholly maintains or in the course of any education which it otherwise provides. Except with his own consent (or, if he is a minor, the consent of his guardian), no person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if that instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion other than his own (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Section 13(2),(3)).

These principles lay down the parameters within which education policy in Lesotho should be developed and implemented. With these principles, the Constitution 1993 aspires to level the playing field for policy development and subsequent implementation within the Lesotho education sector. It is anticipated that an education policy context within which the playing field is levelled, will ensure equitable education outcomes for all Basotho.

In the next section, I will analyse the Education Act, No.3 of 2010 as the legislation that directs education in Lesotho.

#### **4.6.2 Education Act, No. 3 of 2010**

The Lesotho education sector is guided by education legislation. This legislation articulates the rights and principles pronounced in the Constitution of Lesotho. Previously, the principal law that governed education in Lesotho was the Education Act of 1971, which saw several amendments between the years 1971 and 1992. In an effort to keep up with international conventions and to improve the quality of education in Lesotho, there was also the enactment of the Education Act No. 10 of 1995, which replaced the Education Act of 1971 and its amendments. The Education Act No. 10 of 1995 was amended in 1996, and later repealed by the promulgation of the Education Act of 2010 (MoET, 2010:203). Currently, MoET is using the Education Act of 2010.

The Education Act, No.3, 2010 (hereafter the Education Act 2010) is aligned to the Constitution (1993). The Education Act 2010 seeks to

- (a) make provision for free and compulsory education at primary level;
- (b) align the education laws with the decentralisation of services;



(c) make provision for education for all in accordance with the provision of section 28 of the Constitution; and

(d) clarify the roles and responsibilities of persons tasked with the administration of education (MoET, 2010:Section 3 (1)(a)-(d)).

In addition, the Education Act 2010 (Section 4(2)) also states that

[t]he Minister, Principal Secretary, Teaching Service Commission, proprietors of schools, teachers and school boards shall promote the education of the people of Lesotho and to ensure that a learner is provided with opportunities and facilities to enable him or her to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy, normal manner and in the conditions of freedom and dignity;

(b) ensure, as soon as circumstances permit, that a learner who is physically, mentally or otherwise handicapped is given the special treatment, education and care required by his or her condition;

(c) ensure that the learner is free from any form of discrimination in accessing education and is availed all educational opportunities provided;

(d) act in the best interests of the learner and his or her education at all times; and

(e) act in a democratic, transparent and accountable manner in the management of the education system (MoET, 2010:Section 4(2), (a)-(e))

The preceding is an indication that the Education Act 2010 aims to pave the way for the provision of education that is in line with the principles of the Constitution 1993.

Moreover, the Education Act 2010 Section 3(d) denotes that the education system in Lesotho has many and diverse stakeholders. As such, when looking at the stipulations and the directives of the Education Act 2010, I will look at the roles of different stakeholders in the Lesotho education sector.

### **a) Parents**

Parents are primary stakeholders in Lesotho education. In the case of Lesotho, parents support education by paying school fees to cover the cost of secondary education (cf.3.1). Regarding the role played by parents in the education policy

process, the Education Act 2010, Section 4(5), states that “[a] parents shall be involved in the development of the disciplinary policies of the school” (MoET, 2010: Section 4(5)). However, whilst parents seem to have an important and legitimate role to play in education policy development, the Education Act 2010 appears to be silent on the role of parents regarding the implementation of policies in schools.

### **b) School boards**

Every school has a school board, and this entity forms part of the education stakeholders in Lesotho. School boards are established in terms of the Education Act 2010, Section 23, which stipulates that a “school shall be governed by a school board” (MoET, 2010:Section 2(1)). School governance is about “... the interrelationship of a wide range of parties- central and local government, teachers, unions, head teachers, parents and, of course, governor” (Balarin, Brammer, James & McCormack, nd:9). It is also the view of Joubert and Bray (2007:19) that “governance deals with processes and systems by which an organisation or society operates.” As such, school boards are tasked to ensure that all schools are effectively governed. To ensure that schools are governed well, school boards are expected to

- (a) manage and administer the school for which it has been constituted;
- (b) oversee management and the proper and efficient running of the school;
- (g) liaise with the relevant local authority on matters related to the development of the school (MoET, 2010:Section 25 (a),(b) & (g)).

The responsibility of governing schools assumes that school boards will be closely involved with the development of policies. However, their oversight function also implies that school boards are expected to monitor and oversee the implementation of education policies in schools.

### **c) Education secretaries**

The Education Act 2010, Section 26 dictates that “[a] proprietors who has more than twenty schools shall establish an educational secretariat which shall be headed by an educational secretary appointed by the proprietor and approved by the Minister” (MoET, 2010:Section 26(1)). At the current moment, and in compliance with this section, there are three educational secretariats in Lesotho, namely the Roman Catholic Schools Secretariat, the Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa

Schools Secretariat, and the Anglican Church Schools Secretariat. It is expected that these secretariats would

- (a) organise, co-ordinate and supervise the educational work of the proprietor that appointed him or her;
- (b) liaise with the Ministry responsible for education on matters of management of schools, and
- (c) perform such other duties as may be assigned to him or her by the Minister (MoET, 2010, 2010: Section, 26 (4)(a), (b) and (c)).

In addition, the Education Act 2010, Section 27 further makes provision for the “establishment of the Government Controlled Schools Secretariat headed by the Secretary for Government Controlled Schools” (MoET, 2010, Section 27(1)). This office is similar in function to that of Schools Secretariats. The function of this secretariat “...is to supervise the administration of Government schools and community schools” (MoET, 2010:Section 27(3)).

#### **d) The Teaching Council**

The Education Act 2010 makes provision for the establishment of the Teaching Council (MoET, 2010,Section 35(1)). This is a body whose functions are to

- 36(b) regulate the teaching profession;
- (c) develop and manage a professional code of conduct for teachers; and
- (d) advise the Minister in matters related to the teaching profession (MoET, 2010:Section 36(b)-(d)).

The Teaching Council is therefore an important body as it is responsible for regulating the teaching profession. The regulation of the teaching profession can be effectively realised through the establishment and implementation of sound policies. By implication, this means that the teaching council should be involved in the development and implementation of education policies in Lesotho.

#### **e) Teacher unions**

According to the Constitution 1993, Section 16(1)

Every person shall be entitled to, and (except with his own consent) shall not be hindered in his enjoyment of freedom to associate freely with other persons for

ideological, religious, political, economic, labour, social, cultural, recreational and similar purposes (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:Section 16(1)).

In essence this means that the Basotho have a right to freedom of association. It is in the spirit of this section, and in alignment with The Constitution 1993, that the Education Act 2010, Section 64(1), states that “[a] teacher has a right to form or become a member of any teacher formation” (MoET, 2010,Section 64(1)). However, despite acknowledging the existence of teacher unions in the Lesotho education sector, and despite protecting the right of teachers to belong to such unions, the Education Act 2010 is silent on the role and value of such unions in the education sector, in general and in policy processes in particular.

In essence, the Education Act 2010 identifies particular, important stakeholders in the education sector, even though it is vague on the roles of these stakeholders with regard to education policy-making. While particular stakeholders are explicitly identified, the Education Act 2010 is silent on the involvement of NGOs or the formation of partnerships. In the next section, I will reflect on the Education Sector Plan 2015-2026.

#### **4.6.3 Education Strategic Plan 2016-2026**

The Education Sector Plan 2016-2026 (hereafter the Strategic Plan) was developed as a successor plan to the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESP), which was operational from 2005 to 2015 (Kingdom of Lesotho 2016:20). Like other legislation and programmes that guide education in Lesotho, the Strategic Plan was developed in alignment with the Constitution 1993 and Education Act 2010.

In an effort to continue from where the ESP left off, the mission of the Strategic Plan is “[t]o enhance the system that will deliver relevant and inclusive quality education to all Basotho effectively, efficiently and equitably” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:22). It is my contention that this mission will be realised through the development and the effective implementation of sound policies that are aligned to and that complement the Strategic Plan.

It is against this backdrop that the overall goals of the Strategic Plan are to:

- Improve access to quality and relevant education and training at all levels.

- Ensure that curricula and materials are relevant to the needs of Lesotho.
- Strengthen leadership, accountability and governance at all levels of the Education sector.
- Promote gender equality and ensure empowerment to disadvantaged groups.  
Ensure equivalence, harmonization and standardization of the Lesotho education (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:22).

In an endeavour to achieve these overall goals, the Strategic Plan also proposes a set of guiding principles that are aligned with the above-mentioned goals, and whose aim is to ensure that quality education is achieved. The principles, as stated in the Strategic Plan, are:

**Accessibility and Availability:** Education services shall be progressively extended to reach all communities in Lesotho. Special attention shall be given to the disadvantaged regions and underserved communities.

**Affordability:** progressive policies will be put in place to reduce burden of school fees on parents with greater attention on vulnerable groups.

**Community Participation:** Communities shall be actively encouraged and supported to participate in decision-making and planning for Education services.

**Decentralization:** In line with the Local Government Act education services shall be delivered to the people of Lesotho using a decentralized approach where local governments shall be responsible for services delivery at district levels.

**Efficiency in use of Resources:** As much as possible, resources shall be used where the greatest benefit to an individual or community is envisaged. Periodic cost- effectiveness analysis shall be carried out to identify cost effective interventions.

**Equity:** In accordance with the Constitution of Lesotho, all Basotho shall have equal access to quality education. Particular attention shall be paid to resource distribution patterns in Lesotho to identify and accelerate the correction of any disparities.

**Evidence-Based Decision-Making:** The development and implementation of education interventions programs shall be based on research evidence, cost-effectiveness and where appropriate international best practices.

**Inter-Sectoral Collaboration and Partnership:** Government and non-Government sectors will be consulted and will be involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of education services delivery using effective collaborative mechanisms.

**Political Commitment:** The GoL is committed to poverty reduction with emphasis on economic growth. This commitment will provide the critical guidance in priority-setting and resource allocation. Commitment to this Plan will be required at all levels of political, civil and cultural leadership.

**Quality:** Efforts will be made to ensure that all Basotho receive quality education services.

**Sustainability:** New and on-going programmes will be subjected to sustainability assessment (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:24-25).

These principles variously contribute towards the quality and effectiveness of education in Lesotho, and the creation of a sound policy context.

The Strategic Plan provides a SWOT analysis (analysis of the Strengths and Weaknesses as well as Opportunities and Threats) of Lesotho education. With this analysis, all factors that may influence education either negatively or positively, or the proposed implementation of education interventions or policies, are identified.

Regarding the strengths, the Strategic Plan recognises that MoET has made several positive strides. These include the presence of major policies and legislation, which informs Lesotho education such as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy 2009 and the Education Act 2010. The Strategic Plan also acknowledges the partnerships that the MoET has forged with development partners such as the private sector and non-governmental organisation (NGOs), and its ability to mobilise resources (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:26), as a strength. While these strengths seem good on paper, the challenge remains whether their actual implementation will be realised. This is because no improvement in Lesotho education will be possible unless its policies are implemented.

Contrary to these promising strengths, the Strategic Plan also identifies weaknesses that may hinder the provision and attainment of quality education in Lesotho. Amongst the prominent weaknesses identified in the Strategic Plan (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:26), and which are explicitly linked to the education policy process, are

- Limited implementation of policies and plans.
- Weak quality assurance systems within the Education Sector.
- Lack of comprehensive Education Policy.
- Education Act is not encompassing (specific to Basic Education).
- Lack of coordination with line Ministries.
- Silo working syndrome within programmes/departments
- Weak M & E [Monitoring & Evaluation] system and poor utilization of data for decision making.
- Weak implementation of decentralization.
- Poor implementation of Performance Management System, and
- Weak leadership.

These identified weaknesses, if not addressed promptly, will be detrimental to the development of education in Lesotho. They also form a barrier to the development and effective implementation of policies that will ensure that the education sector operates smoothly. This is to the detriment of the Basotho getting quality education, as is envisaged in the mission statement.

In this regard, the Ministry of Development Planning (2014:7) states that

Lesotho has done a lot of spade work regarding building productive capacities and developing frameworks to support development of key growth sectors. A lot of work is however outstanding in facilitating implementation of policies and plans.

However, the case for the education sector is not hopeless, because to a large extent, MoET enjoys considerable support from the international community. It has been noted that the international community is involved in Lesotho Education (World Bank, 2020:9). Also, the Government of Lesotho (GoL) is very committed to the education sector (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:27). The commitment of the GoL is indicated by the large annual budget allocation to the MoET. Given that the largest part of the country's budget goes towards education, questions could and should be asked about the financial input into education versus the actual outcomes and gains from the education sector. My contention is of course that irrespective of how much money is poured into Lesotho education, and how committed the GoL appears, no improvement will be realised unless policies are effectively implemented.

Even though there are encouraging opportunities that promise to help the education sector in its quest for the provision of quality education to the Basotho, there are also several threats. The sector is accused by the Education Sector Plan of its primary reliance on external consultants for the formulation of strategic documents (Kingdom of Lesotho (2016:27). Again, the sector lacks strategies to thwart losing its experts, especially the ones based in institutions of Higher Learning (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:27).

This inability to retain experts forces the Lesotho education sector to rely heavily on consultants from outside the country. Making use of foreigners to develop its (policy) documents, MoET is put in a negative position, and it places a particular challenge on the relevance of such policies. The danger of 'reliance on external consultants' is of course that such consultants might not be familiar with the vision of MoET for education, and that their interpretation of that vision is different than what is envisioned by the MoET. After this, external consultants may develop documents that are not domesticated, and lack the customary, social and political background of the country (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:28).

In essence, by using external consultants to develop its policy documents, MoET is already adversely affecting the way in which such documents will be received and implemented in schools and in the broader education sector. This is because such documents may not be in line with cultural practices. For instance, regarding the implementation of the Lesotho Education Sector HIV and AIDS Policy 2012 (a policy developed with assistance from Irish consultants), Rakolobe (2017:107) found that some church school proprietors were against the distribution of condoms in their schools, as this was against their religious beliefs. This is despite the fact that the policy promotes the distribution of condoms in schools.

The next section will be on policy implementation guidelines as articulated in selected Lesotho education policies.



## **4.7 Policy implementation guidelines articulated in selected Lesotho education policies**

It is the view of Stofile (2008:81) that “[p]olicy content is one of the critical pillars on which policy implementation is based.” In other words, the content of a policy directly affects the manner in which such a policy will be implemented. A good example of how content could possibly affect policy implementation, is given by Motsamai, Jacobs and de Wet (2011:106). They found that a financial policy in the education sector in Lesotho seemed not to have had a positive impact on the way in which finances are used in Lesotho schools. They (2011:106) attributed the failure of the policy to the deficiencies in the policy itself – in other words the content.

An analysis of the content of the Lesotho education policies that I have purposely selected, should therefore also clearly indicate what should be done to ensure that the policies are effectively implemented. All policies should contain clear directives on how the policy should be implemented, to ensure that the aims and objectives articulated in it, are realised. It is with the aim to discover what implementation plans, guidelines and strategies are explicitly articulated in the purposively selected education policies, that I will henceforth analyse the content of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development, 2013, and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009.

### **4.7.1 National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development, 2013**

Lesotho is a signatory to several international frameworks on Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD). Some of the IECCD frameworks to which Lesotho is a participant are the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, A World Fit for Children, 2002, The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) and the Dakar Framework for Action for Attaining Education for ALL (EFA) (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:27-28). As a result, in its effort to align with the stipulations of these international frameworks, Lesotho developed the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (hereafter the IECCD Policy), which was adopted by the Lesotho Cabinet in 2013. The policy serves as “a means of achieving quality IECCD services by provision of a holistic child development in education, health, nutrition,

hygiene and protection of young children from preconception to five years of age” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:37).

### **a) Features**

There appears to have been a lot of groundwork done by the MoET, before the IECCD Policy was developed, which was meant to ensure that the policy was responsive to the needs of the Basotho people as it relates to early childcare and development. It is stated in the policy that the development of the IECCD Policy comprised consultative workshops, with

parents and community, district and ministerial leaders, representatives of national and international non-governmental organisations, institutions of higher education, professional associations, hospitals and health centres, and civil society and private sector organisations (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:13).

Moreover, UNICEF (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:13) stipulates that “a situation analysis entitled *Children and Families in Lesotho* was prepared using many surveys, studies and reports.” Additionally, interviews were also held with “high level national leaders and specialists to secure their recommendations” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013: 8). This is an indication that indeed MoET was determined to develop an all-encompassing IECCD policy.

With regard to the implementation of the policy, Policy Strategy 7 of IECCD Policy states:

Strategy 7 calls for a national system for monitoring, evaluation, reporting, learning and follow-up planning. Management Information System (MIS) shall be established for quality assurance, accountability and evaluation. The system shall include monitoring and evaluation manuals, training workshops, instruments and guides. The IECCD MIS shall be linked with a Nationwide Child Tracking System beginning with birth registration and shall include all IECCD services for children. The IECCD MIS shall also provide technical and managerial support to help ensure good service quality. A national assessment of child development shall be conducted. In addition, annual plans for high priority applied IECCD research projects shall be developed (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:21).

The above is reiterated and reinforced by the stipulations of Strategy 8 of IECCD Policy, which

calls for Annual Plans for Policy Advocacy including seminars, workshops and advocacy documents. Initial advocacy activities shall include nationwide dissemination of the IECCD Policy and Strategic Plan and a special booklet on the Policy for parents and communities. Annual IECCD Forums shall be held to advocate for policy implementation and provide training workshops for IECCD services. Annual Plans for IECCD Social Communications shall be prepared, and at least 10 messages for children, parents and communities shall be selected for nationwide dissemination through visual, audio and print media, Internet, dances, theatre, posters and banners. Child ambassadors for IECCD shall also be selected Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:21).

To to achieve the stipulations of Policy Strategy 7 and 8, the IECCD Policy proposes that

upon the adopting of the IECCD Policy and under the leadership of the National Multi-sectoral IECCD Council, the Department for National IECCD Policy Implementation shall establish, train and work closely with District and Community IECCD Committees. It shall conduct annual planning and budgeting, Multi-sectoral coordination, develop and manage key projects including the IECCD MIS, and ensure all strategic activities and services are completed in a timely manner. The Department shall be located in MoET and shall collaborate closely with MoET's ECCD Unit (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:22).

The implication is that the policy does not just make mention of what should be done, but it also takes into consideration factors affecting its implementation. Such factors include when should it be done, by whom is it expected to be done, as well as how it should be carried out.

All these strategies are supposed to be put in place to ensure that the policy is successfully implemented, and that it improves "service quality and filling gaps in services as a basis for rapidly scaling up IECCD programmes" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:28).

More so, the policy also refers to the effect that

under each of the 8 strategies, activities, services, responsible organisations, indicators, timelines and budgets are presented with the aim of ensuring the full implementation of the IECCD Policy and the successful achievement of its goals and objectives (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013:22).

The above suggests that while the policy reflects an awareness of the implications for its implementation, it also reflects an awareness that for effective implementation to occur, time and financial implications of such implementation should be taken into account. It is for this reason that the policy makes reference to such factors.

However, it appears that the implementation of the IECCD Policy is not properly regulated in Lesotho, despite an elaborate implementation strategy clearly outlined in the IECCD policy. The poor regulation has resulted in some of the following critical implementation challenges, as identified by the Strategic Plan:

- Children from disadvantaged families are often unable to access quality pre-school services. Irrespective of quality, access remains uneven among urban and rural areas, and among districts;
- In-service training is inadequate, particularly for centre-based preschools which are the main providers of preschool services. In current circumstances, only about 100 teachers from centre-based preschools can benefit from some training over a year, but this pace in the delivery of training services is not in line with the size of the problem (a stock of almost 3,000 teachers);
- The quality of day-care centre services is very poor. These children suffer from developmental delays, malnutrition, chronic illnesses and even disabilities were observed;
- Lack of parenting education, despite the publication of the parenting manual;
- The need to revise the ECCD curriculum since the current Lesotho Early Childhood Development Curriculum 1998 does not include emerging issues such as HIV and AIDS, play-based learning, disabilities, and children 0 to 5 years old (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:37).

To ensure its successful implementation, the Strategic Plan suggests that the following be done by MoET:

- Expand and improve the system for pre- and in-service training for all IECCD services;

- Design and implement a structure and plan for policy monitoring, evaluation, action research and follow-up planning;
- Develop and implement annual plans for policy advocacy and social communications (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:38).

The findings from the Strategic Plan are reiterated by Davis, Miller, Mrema, Matsoai, Mapetla, Raikes and Burton (2021:14), who lament the lack of data on the implementation of the IECCD policy guidelines in Lesotho. Moreover, Kingdom of Lesotho (2016:37) also posits that despite the presence of this prestigious policy, IECCD education in Lesotho “does not have a system for quality assurance and accountability, and due to the different natures of pre-school centres, services provided experience with a varying quality.”

In the next section, I will also look at the contents of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009.

#### **4.7.2 Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009 (hereafter CAP 2009) was introduced and implemented in 2009. The main purpose of CAP 2009 was to “tackle the low performance standard revealed by recurrent surveys and assessments and to address the remaining high levels of repetition and drop-outs” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:29). In essence, the CAP 2009 was developed as a remedial policy for the problems that the education sector was encountering at that time. It could therefore be assumed that its implementation was aimed at correcting these wrongs.

##### **a) Aims of the CAP 2009**

As with all policies, CAP also has certain aims and objectives, and these are:

- Determining the nature and direction of the national curriculum and its objectives.
- Monitoring quality, relevance and deficiency of basic and secondary education.
- Aligning the assessment methods to what is taught so that there is established necessary link between what is taught, learned and assessed.
- Integrating curriculum and assessment functions so as to strike the necessary balance between the two and avoid the excessive paper-pencil nature of the examinations as is currently the case.

- Proposing a fully localized secondary education curriculum and assessment (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:2).

The above aims draw on the introduction of the policy whose resolution is to review the Lesotho curricula with the purpose of “making education... accessible, relevant, efficient and of the best quality” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:2). Based on this introduction and the aims, it seems that the CAP 2009 intends to improve the quality and provision of education in Lesotho. It is thus imperative to look at the features of this policy and assess if they support provision of quality education as envisaged in the aims and introduction.

### **b) Features**

The implementation of the CAP 2009 necessitated the restructuring of the education system in Lesotho. It suggested three stream levels, namely the academic, technical and vocational streams (Kingdom of Lesotho 2009:29).

The CAP 2009, unlike its predecessor, extended Basic Education from seven years to 10 years. In this regard, the organisation of the school curriculum for the first seven years of Basic Education are in the form of an integrated curriculum. The last three years of Basic Education is drawn from the core contributing subjects to the respective learning areas (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:17).

The stipulations of the CAP 2009 appear to be good on paper. However, it remains to be seen if the implementation can be just as good, since the policy document does not outline how implementation should be done. To this effect, Raselimo and Mahao (2015:4) posit that even though new policies can be associated with positive development, they can also bring about certain problems, which can be harmful and negatively affect the envisaged positive results. In this regard, Selepe (2016: 66) found that teachers in Lesotho schools are not effectively implementing the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009. The reason behind its poor implementation is a lack of understanding on the part of teachers on how they should implement the policy. On the same note, findings from a study conducted by Chabana (2017:112) indicate that

... it has been highlighted that teachers experience frustrations and challenges with regard to three specific issues that impact on curriculum implementation. These frustrations relate to a lack of regular workshops as opportunities for

refreshment, the provision of teaching and learning materials and administrative work that involves a lot of paper work.

It therefore seems that the lack of a clear implementation plan articulating in the CAP 2009 is negatively impacting on its implementation, which is affecting teaching and learning in Lesotho schools. In the words of Raselimo and Mahao (2015:4), the good intentions of the policy seem not to be realised, and is creating problems, instead of the envisaged solutions.

### **c) Types of interventions**

The Education Strategic Plan 2016-2026 (hereafter Strategic Plan) discovered that the challenges facing the implementation of the CAP 2009 are:

- Devising an assessment strategy for ensuring retention of learners in school for the duration of Basic Education.
- Implementation of relevant and sustainable TVET programmes that will be acceptable to the Basotho Nation.
- Development of valid and reliable assessment strategies for TVET qualifications.
- Identification of a reputable accreditation partner for TVET and A-level qualifications (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016:30).

This happens despite the rationale of the CAP 2009 clearly stipulating the need for guidelines for implementation to be effective in the education sector.

In this instance, the Strategic Plan proposes that

- A pilot experimentation is led for each important change in assessment or in curriculum;
- The reform is implemented in a progressive way, following the progression of the cohorts along the ladder. Hence, the schools and the MoET departments are aware, a long time in advance, about the conditions to meet to comply with the new organisation, both in terms of staff training and new materials and equipment (Kingdom of Lesotho 2016:32).

In this way, implementation will not be rushed. As a result, the envisaged principles and objectives of CAP 2009 will be realised. This exercise could be important, as such implementation is likely to improve the quality of education in Lesotho.

The review of the IECCD and CAP 2009 policies shed light on the contents of some Lesotho education policies, as it pertains to policy implementation.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

The objective of this chapter was to find the context of education policy implementation in Lesotho. In this chapter, I reviewed literature on the brief history of Lesotho, Basotho values, the background to education in Lesotho, the state of the Ministry of Education and Training, and factors that affect education in Lesotho. The conclusion is that there are indeed factors that affect education, and subsequently education policy implementation, in Lesotho.

Additionally, I managed to highlight the problems that affect education in Lesotho in general. This will help me in reaching the aim of this study, which is to develop a framework for policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. The insight from literature tabled in this chapter allows me a deeper understanding on some of the problems that hinder education policy implementation. As such, by the time I develop the framework I will be able to work around such problems. In the next chapter, I investigate the research methodology that informs this study.



# CHAPTER 5:

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4 I considered the context of education policy implementation in Lesotho by means of a literature review and document analysis. In this chapter, I unpack my research methodology, emphasising the research paradigm/theoretical perspective, research methods, and participant selection. I also explain the method I used during the analysis of my data, and give a glimpse of some ethical and quality aspects I had to consider during the research.

### 5.2 Research methodology

Research methodology is defined as the pathway that a researcher needs to follow to achieve the study's aim and objectives (Jonker & Pennink, 2010:31). Dawson (2002:22) also defines methodology as "...the philosophy or general principle which guides research." Methodology refers to "the theoretical foundation for the selection of research methods" (Klenke, 2016:31). The methodology, therefore, informs the research methods, and it should, for that reason, not be confused with research methods.

Unlike methods, methodology is more comprehensive as it informs the context for decision-making on a number of resolutions concerning how the research should unfold. Some of these decisions include "How can participants be selected? What methods of data collection and analysis are appropriate? Who can or should conduct research? [and] what is the role of the researcher?" (Braun & Clarke, 2013:32).

### 5.3 Research approach

The research approach I adopted for this study is qualitative in nature. Research that is qualitative "produces descriptive data — people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior" (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2016:7). When carried out diligently,

qualitative research helps us to understand the world, society, and institutions (Tracy, 2013:5). Moreover, qualitative research also assumes that meaning is socially constructed. It therefore subscribes to the idea that research should involve an interaction between the researcher and the participant (Mertens, 2010:19). Berg (2001:7) is also of the opinion that

[q]ualitative researchers, are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth.

It is Creswell and Poth's view (2018:84) that qualitative researchers undertake studies meant to emancipate and liberate those being studied. This is done by allowing people's voices to be heard without prejudice or fear of being dominated by the researcher. Of importance therefore is that qualitative researchers are more interested in how people make meaning of their lived experiences (Taylor, et al., 2016:8). In other words, qualitative researchers do not impose their ideas and experiences on the researched, but rather they allow the researched to share their views and experiences freely. It was my intention with this study to get the unfettered views of the participants on their experiences regarding education policy implementation in Lesotho. In this regard, I did not to impose my ideas on the participants regarding education policy implementation, but rather let them speak about their reality and experiences.

After selecting the research approach, the researcher needs to select an appropriate and relevant research design. Such a relevant and suitable research design would enable me to answer the various research questions, and ultimately realise the aims and objectives of this study.

## **5.4 Research design**

For O'Neil and Koekemoer (2016:3), the words "approach, design and strategy" are often used as synonyms to describe or refer to the same phenomenon. However, irrespective of what it is referred to, any study should have an appropriate research approach. This is important because "a good design, in which the components work harmoniously together promotes efficient and successful functioning [while] a flawed

design leads to poor operation or failure” (Maxwell, 2013:19). The selection of a suitable research approach is therefore central to the success or failure of a study.

However, irrespective of what it is referred to, any study should have a research design. This is important because “a good design, in which the components work harmoniously together promotes efficient and successful functioning [while] a flawed design leads to poor operation or failure” (Maxwell, 2013:19). The way a research study is designed is therefore central to the success or failure of a study.

Johnston and Christensen (2012:90; Creswell & Poth, 2018:89) define a research design as an outline of the research and how it will unfold. Braun and Clarke (2013:42) posit that there is a need to,

... think of design *broadly*, as something which incorporates the goals of your study, the theoretical framework(s), the research questions (which guide you), ethics, and the method(s) you will use to generate and analyse data.

This view is echoed by Vogt, Gardner and Haeffele (2012:3), for whom the research design refers to

the basic methods of collecting evidence, surveys, interviews, experiments, observations (participant and naturalistic), archival research (data and textual archives), and combinations of these methods. In essence, a research design connotes a plan of the stages that need to be engaged to complete a research project.

A research design is informed by the research approach that is followed, and it informs the methods for data collection and its analysis. One could also refer to it as a proposal or sketch of what researchers aim to include in their research study and how they plan to execute that study. It therefore makes suggestions on how the study will be carried out to achieve the aims and objectives set out. Therefore, every research study needs a research design since the research design "facilitates the smooth sailing in various operations, thereby making research as effective as possible yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money" (Kothari, 2004:32).

From the literature it appears that authors refer differently to the concept designs or approaches depending on their inclinations. For instance, for Creswell and Creswell (2018:41), research designs are types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research

study. For Leavy (2017:9) research design entails qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, arts-based research, and community-based participatory research. Leavy (2017) also identifies five different research designs, while Creswell and Creswell (2018) only refer to three possible research designs. For this study, I draw my definition of what research design entails, from Creswell and Creswell (2018).

Therefore, I regard a research design as a type of inquiry informed by the research approach and which should be relevant to the research approach.

Linked with my research approach, the design I followed for this study is also qualitative in nature.

In the next section, I give an exploration of the research paradigm I adopted for my study.

## **5.5 Research paradigm/theoretical perspective**

### **5.5.1 Research paradigm**

The word paradigm is a term that was coined by American philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1962), and it refers to “a philosophical way of thinking” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:26 and Schensul, 2012:76). Rehman and Alharthi (2016:51 also Scotland 2012:9 and Lincoln et al. cited in Kauschik & Walsh, 2019:1) define a paradigm as a “basic belief system and a theoretical framework with assumptions about ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods.”

It is also the view of Johnson and Christensen (2012:31) that “a research paradigm is a perspective that is based on a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values, and practices.” As such, it also describes “a researcher’s worldview” (Kivunja & Kiyuni, 2017:26). Since a paradigm is “specifically about research behaviour” (Jonker & Pennink, 2010:27), it can provide an indication about the way in which research should be conducted. The research paradigm that I adopted in this study not only reflects my perspectives on the world and the reality I find myself in, but it also informed the way I conducted this study.

For this study, I adopted a constructivist research paradigm. The constructivist paradigm is viewed as interpretivist in nature (Fazlıoğulları, 2012:49; Williamson

2006:85). I chose this paradigm because it assumes that I do not know, and as such, I cannot assume or predict what may or may not be the truth. It subsequently prompts me to be less biased and more flexible towards what I will find from this research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:9).

According to Mertens (2010:16), constructivism grew out of the philosophy of Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Wilhelm Dilthey's and other German philosophers' study of interpretive understanding, called hermeneutics. Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah, (2016:2) define the constructivism paradigm as an approach which asserts that "people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences." Additionally, Ultanr (2012:196) describes constructivism as a "situation in which individuals perceive, interpret, and explain the same object differently ..." Thus, constructivism enabled me to comprehend each participant's interpretation of their own experiences and the meanings they attach to education policy implementation in Lesotho. This is in line with the aims and objectives of this study, as it seeks to understand education policy implementation in Lesotho from the perspective of the participants that are assumed to be knowledgeable about education policy processes and education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

With regard to the use of a constructivist approach, Bisman and Highfield (2012:6) posit that

adopting a constructivist approach allows the researcher to give meaning to the ways things are, and to identify factors that otherwise could not be easily exposed or described through metrics and statistics, nor generalised across entire populations

This view fits in with this study, as I believed that those involved in Lesotho education policy processes are able to reflect on their lived policy-making experiences. It was also my intention not to interfere with the participants' understanding of their reality, and the meanings that they attach to their experiences. Since absolute neutrality was impossible, I intended to remain wary, and to reflect on my own prejudices, assumptions and stereotypes, and employ specific strategies to mitigate their impact on this study.

A research paradigm is informed by certain ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. I now briefly explain the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that inform the constructivist paradigm.

### **5.5.1. a      *Constructivist ontology***

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:34). It also refers to the claims and assumptions that a particular approach to social enquiry makes about the nature of social reality (King & Harrocks, 2010: 8). The ontological position of constructivism is that

reality is socially constructed. Therefore, multiple mental constructions can be apprehended, some of which may be in conflict with each other and perceptions of reality may change throughout the process of the study (Mertens, 2010:18).

This view is reiterated by Guba and Lincoln (cited in Garneau & Pepin, 2015:11), as they argue that "... the constructivist ontology rejects the idea of a single reality and favours instead the idea of multiple, socially constructed realities." For the constructivist, ontologically, there are multiple socially constructed realities that can be conflicting and open to different interpretations that lead to conflicting views (Mertens, 2010:18). This supposes that reality is socially constructed, and that multiple realities exist.

Moreover, the constructivist ontology assumes that "truth is a particular belief system held in a particular context" (Klenke, 2016:22). From a constructivist perspective, what could be regarded as the truth is, therefore, context-specific. What is true in one context may not necessarily be true in another context. This also means that the truth of one participant may not be the truth for another, even though they are both involved in and interact with education policies. The existence of multiple realities and truths means that there is no one right or wrong answer or experience within a constructivist paradigm - rather multiple realities derived from the unique experiences of each participant. As a result, the participants' "words become the focus of research, and the researcher interprets how these words produce particular realities within the speaker's and hearer's culture" (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017:21).

From the above it appears that constructivism does not subscribe to a singular and objective reality. Rather, it believes in the existence of multiple subjective realities.

Therefore, what is out there and what is regarded as the truth is subjective, and it is informed by experience. This prompted me as a researcher not to make any assumptions about the lived experiences and the realities of the participants, but rather to see their reality from their perspective. Their experiences and their views should therefore be regarded, treated and respected as their truth(s).

In this study, I tried to understand the lived experiences and realities of the participants with regard to the implementation of education policies in Lesotho. Therefore, I found the constructivist paradigm to be ontologically suitable as a lens that enabled me to achieve the aim and objectives of this study, and address the questions it tries to answer.

### **5.5.1.b Constructivist epistemology**

Duberley, Johnson and Cassell (2012:17) posit that

... epistemology is the study of the criteria by which we can know what does and does not constitute warranted or scientific knowledge. That is, what do we know whether or not some claim, including our own, is true or false.

Additionally, King and Harrocks (2010:8) give what they term the concise definition of epistemology as “the philosophy of knowledge.” Epistemology is therefore about knowledge and the construction of knowledge. In epistemology, we answer typical questions such as what knowledge is, who the bearers of knowledge are, and where knowledge resides.

With regards to the construction of knowledge, is it the view of Braun and Clarke (2013:30) that knowledge, from the constructivist perspective, is socially constructed and influenced by societal norms such as culture, ethics, philosophy and politics. Knowledge is therefore subjective, and constructed within society or by the individual. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:57) attest to this as they claim that the constructivist paradigm follows a ‘subjective epistemology’, where the researcher and the researched or participants create meaning together. The researcher and the researched are cooperatively linked and depend on each other in their effort to produce meaning or in creating new knowledge on the phenomenon under investigation. In respect of this study, I allowed the research participants to create their own knowledge and meaning about education policy implementation in Lesotho.

### **5.5.1.c Constructivist methodology**

The purpose of methodology is to guide the researcher in choosing data collection methods that will help achieve the aim of the study (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016:52). In addition, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26) posit that “methodology articulates the logic and flow of the systematic process followed in conducting a research project, so as to gain knowledge about a research problem.” This view is echoed by Leavy (2017:14), who states that a methodology “is a plan of how we will execute our research.”

Methodologically, constructivism is directed at “understanding a phenomenon from an individual’s perspective, investigating interaction among individuals as well as the historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit” (Scotland, 2012:12). More so, the constructivist methodology tends to adopt a “relativist stance” (Appleton & King, 2002:642), implying that the researcher suspends his/her own views and listens to those with experience without bias or prejudice.

A constructivist methodology enabled me to comprehend each participants’ interpretation of their own experiences and the meanings they attach to education policy implementation in Lesotho. For purposes of sound and legitimate research, I decided to also use a theoretical framework. In the next section, I explain the theoretical framework I have adopted for this study and the reasons behind my choice.

### **5.5.2 Theoretical framework: complexity theory**

Szekely and Mason (2019:674) regard complexity theory as one of the approaches that best describes the dynamics of development of systems, which addresses issues regarding their sustainability. According to Johnson and Christensen (2012:62), “theory [is] an explanation or exploratory system that discusses how a phenomenon operates and why it operates as it does.” It is also the view of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:10) that a theory refers to “sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world and behaviour within it.” Furthermore, Bordens and Abbott (2014:33) define a theory as “an explanation of some aspect of the natural world.” In the case of this study, the aspect under investigation is education policy implementation in Lesotho. Therefore, using a theoretical framework is supposed to



assist in explaining and make meaning of how education policy implementation takes place in Lesotho takes.

In research, the theoretical perspective refers to the literature part of the study that deals with the explanation of what the study aims to achieve. It can also be referred to as the lens that underpins such a study (Creswell & Poth, 2018:50). The theory that underpinned this study is the complexity theory. The term complexity is derived “from the Latin *com: together, plectere: to weave*.” Pycroft (2014:21) defines complexity as “complexus [and translates to] that which is woven or enmeshed.” Complexity is synonymous with intricate and multifaceted situations or phenomena.

Cochran-Smith, Ell, Ludlow, Grudnoff and Aitken (2014:4) argue that “there is no single definition of complexity of complexity research.” Gould, (2009:2) reiterates this view, and expounds that “no single unified 'Theory of Complexity' exists, but rather a collection of 'understandings' derived from the natural sciences of biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics.” It is also the contention of Haggis (2008:164) that

complexity theory' does not refer to a specific body of literature. Originating in the mathematical sciences, its ideas have been taken up in fields as diverse as archaeology, law, philosophy and management.

Despite the argument that complexity theory is not easy to define, in the subsequent paragraphs I attempt to give a description of complexity theory from the perspective of different authors. I also make an argument for the use of complexity theory in this study.

Morrison (2008:16) describes complexity theory as “a theory of change, evolution, adaptation and development for survival.” Additionally, Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk (2011:18) define complexity theory as

the interdisciplinary understanding of reality is composed of complex open systems with emergent properties and transformational potential. A crucial corollary of complexity theory is that knowledge is inherently local rather than universal.

Therefore, complexity theory describes the complexity of our reality, our world or phenomena within this world. As such, it helps us to understand how our reality functions.

With respect to education, Snyder (2013:13) contends that

a complexity approach acknowledges that all levels of focus, whether this is the individual, class, school, national or international associations, reveal humans and human endeavour as complex, and that focusing on one level will not reduce the multi-dimensionality, non-linearity, interconnectedness, or unpredictability encountered.”

This view is echoed by Kallemeyn, Hall and Gates (2019:5), who argue that “complexity theory frames reality as nonlinear with no obvious direct cause and effect connections. Changes may result in no effects, unanticipated effects, or multiple effects.” It could thus be argued that a distinct characteristic of complexity theory is that it conforms to the principle of ‘non-linearity’ (Trenholm & Ferlie, 2013:230; also Devereux, Melewar, Dinnie & Lange, 2020:415). This is also in line with policy-making, which is described as a non-linear process in Chapter 2 (cf. 2.3.1). This means that complexity theory can help to explain and describe the policy processes in Lesotho.

In addition, complexity theory is also concerned “with environments, organisations, or systems that are complex in the sense that very large numbers of constituent elements or agents are connected to and interacting with each other in many different ways” (Mason, 2009:2). Regarding the relationship between organisations and complexity theory, Hogue and Lord (2007:373) argue that “complexity theory proposes that organizations are best understood as *complex systems* comprised of dynamic networks of relationships.” As a result, Mason (2014:7) proposes that

complexity theory suggests that it is in the dynamic interactions and adaptive orientation of a system that new phenomena, new properties and behaviours, emerge, that new patterns are developed and old ones change.

Burns and Koster (2016:44) warn that

complexity theory cautions us not to marginalize or disperse with what is apparently trivial or inexplicable. What may appear to be marginal maybe part of the complexity of a system, and may constitute the critical level above which emergent properties and behavior become possible.

In other words, in studies informed by complexity theory, nothing is considered as unimportant or too insignificant to be considered. This insight is beneficial when dealing with education policy implementation. It guards me against ignorance and prejudice, and sensitises me that no information or process should be overlooked or relegated as trivial. As a result, the use of complexity theory is relevant and essential

to the achievement of the research aim, which is to develop a framework towards a policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

A working definition for this study is that complexity theory attempts to explain complex situations or phenomena. In the case of this study, complexity theory is used to explain the complex nature of education policy implementation. Fitz-Gibbon (2004:6) describes education itself as a complex, intricate and interrelated system. Within the system of education and within schools, there are intricate connections between and among learners, the community, their families, teachers and their peers. The teachers are also interlinked to their colleagues, their employers, the community, policy-makers and parents (Morrison, 2008:17). These intricacies influence the policy implementation process.

Morcol (2012:7) also views the public policy process as rather complex. The aim of this study is to make meaning of the complexity of education policy implementation, which also has a feature of intricate attachments (Morrison, 2008:16). It is also the opinion of Kayuni (2010:7) that “[t]aking into consideration the multiplicity of policy actors, it became clear to most policy analysts that the policy environment is more complex, unpredictable and confusing akin to chaos.” With both education and the policy process being viewed as rather complex processes or phenomena, it seems to make sense to adopt a theoretical framework that would be able to explain a process such as complex as education policy implementation. Thus, the use of complexity theory did not only help me to understand education policy implementation, but also to ground this study theoretically.

The research methodology informs the research methods and the latter should be in line with the former. In the next section, I briefly unpack the various research methods that I engaged with in this study. In this section of my research I intend to inform the reader about the manner in which data was collected (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:90).

## 5.6 Research methods

In research, the choice of research methods is influenced by the choice of the research methodology adopted for a particular study. This study is qualitative in nature, and it is informed by constructivism. As indicated earlier (cf. 5.5.1), constructivism proceeds from the assumption that knowledge is socially constructed. Hence, the socially constructed nature of knowledge prompts me to use subjective approaches when collecting data (Mertens, 2010:19).

Research methods are mechanisms and techniques used to collect data (Dawson, 2002:22). Research methods also refer to that “range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction” (Cohen et al., 2000:44). There are several research methods that are used in research. They include, but are not limited to, small-group discussions, semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, and the analysis of texts and documents, such as government reports, media articles, websites or diaries (Hammarberg, Kirkman & De Lacey, 2016:499; Waring, 2017:16).

Using a combination of different methods is desirable, as this can overcome the disadvantages posed by a single method (Dawson, 2002:34). In this study, I used various research methods to gather the required data. The research methods I used include a literature review, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis.

### 5.6.1 Literature review

A literature review is one of the most significant and central components of any research study. It is a section where researchers analyse, evaluate and synthesise the findings of other authors that relate to their study (Efron & Ravid, 2019:2). Bordens and Abbott (2014:66) define a literature review as “the process of locating, obtaining, reading, and evaluating the research in your area of interest [with the purpose of avoiding] needless duplication of effort.” Moreover, because it is a crucial part of a research report, a literature review is viewed as a significant foundation on which sound research is built (Oliver, 2012:1,6). A literature review is also regarded as an organised and methodical review of academic papers and literature that relates to the topic being researched (Jesson, Matheson & Lacey, 2011:10; Efron & Ravid, 2019:2). This is confirmed by Ridley (2008:4), who also views a literature review as an

analytical synthesis, covering all known literature on the problem, including that in other languages. High level of conceptual thinking within and across theories, summative and formative evaluation of previous work on the problem. Depth and breadth of discussion on relevant philosophical traditions and ways in which they relate to the problem.

In essence, then, a literature review is a process that entails “(a) planning, (b) organising, (c) drafting, (d) editing, and (e) drafting” (Galvan, 2017:6). A literature review is therefore not a haphazard exercise, but it is organised and should be done in an impeccable manner to contribute towards the logic and the coherence of a study.

For VanderStoep and Johnston (2009:10), the literature review serves two purposes. First, it should convince the reader that the researcher is familiar with the literature and is competent to conduct an investigation. Second, it should convince the reader that the proposed study fits into the existing body of knowledge, and explain how the proposed study will fill a gap in the literature. Also, one of the main reasons for a literature review is to familiarise the researcher with what has already been done in their area of interest, or in relation to their chosen topic (Marczyk, DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005:3).

In addition, regarding the literature review in a qualitative study, it is Leavy’s view (2017:128) that it “provides a solid base from which readers gain an understanding of what is already known about your topic through your synthesis of the recent landmark studies in this area.” This is so because it is only through reviewing existing literature that a researcher can know what has already been done in their field or topic of interest. This knowledge allows the researcher to identify gaps, and also to find out if there is a dearth of literature on their chosen topic or area or not (Bryman, 2016:6).

Hence, it was crucial that I embarked on a review of relevant literature on the education policy process with a particular interest in education policy implementation for my study to be academically sound, acceptable, and focused on my research topic. A literature review further enabled me to find what my predecessors in the field of education policy implementation have done, found and achieved in terms of policy implementation in general and in Lesotho in particular. More so, due to its rigorous and systematic nature, a literature review also enabled me to identify gaps in the

existing literature on policy implementation in general, and also policy implementation in Lesotho.

In conducting a literature review, various sources need to be consulted. These include books, peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, the internet, previously done theses and dissertations, newspapers, magazines and trade journals, amongst others (Gratton & Jones, 2010:57). For this study, I reviewed and consulted relevant literature from internet sources, government documents, newspapers, peer-reviewed journals, theses and dissertations, conference papers, and a variety of books on various topics related to the focus of this study, which is education policy implementation in Lesotho. In addition, I also scrutinised and explored, in a very critical and a planned, systematic and methodologically way, various primary as well as secondary data sources on policy processes and policy implementation in Lesotho. It was my contention that a thorough, rigorous and planned literature review would enable me to get a sense of the nature of Lesotho education policy processes in general, and education policy implementation in particular.

### **5.6.2 Semi- structured interviews**

The main purpose of conducting interviews is for the interviewer to listen to the stories of the interviewees (Seidman, 2006:7). Interviews are regarded as one of the qualitative methods entrusted with providing a more comprehensive understanding of issues compared to other methods such as questionnaires (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008:292). This view is reiterated by Flick (2007:78), who states that interviews form part of the most popular methods used in qualitative research. This results from the fact that the main purpose of conducting interviews is to hear what other people have to say, that is, what they want to share regarding their stories (Seidman, 2006:1). The implication is that, in qualitative research, interviews are more likely to provide rich data than questionnaires. It is further the contention of Schostak (2006:10) that

an interview can be described in terms of individuals directing their attention towards each other with the purpose of opening the possibility of gaining insight into the experiences, concerns, interests, beliefs, values, knowledge and ways of seeing, thinking and acting of the other.

On the nature of qualitative interviews, it is the view of Alshenqeeti (2014:41) that “a ‘good’ qualitative interview has two key features: (a) it flows naturally, and (b) it is rich in detail.” In essence, in qualitative research, an interview is a dialogue conducted with the purpose of gaining insight into the stories and experiences of the participants.

We distinguish between different types of interviews. For Nagmode (2019:36-37), the most common types in qualitative research are structured, semi-structured, unstructured and focus group interviews. In structured interviews, we predominantly make use of closed and rigid questions (Carter & Henderson, 2005:217), while semi-structured interviews are more flexible, open-ended and comprehensible types of interviews (Qu & Dumay, 2011:246). Unstructured interviews mainly make use of informal modes of questions (Qu & Dumay, 2011:245), while focus group interviews are “semi-structured discussions with groups of 4-12 people that aim to explore a set of issues” (Tong, Sainsbury & Craig, 2007:351).

For this study, I opted for semi-structured interviews due to their flexibility, open-mindedness, and opportunity to get as much information as possible. Schensul (2012:90) is of the opinion that semi-structured interviews are used when a researcher wants to gather the same data from individual participants ranging in numbers from twelve to fifteen. However, the number should not exceed 19 participants. In this study, I used 20 participants. More information on the participants is provided later in the chapter in the section on participant selection (cf.5.7).

Fylan (2005:65) defines semi- structured interviews as

conversations in which you know what you want to find out about- and so have a set of questions to ask and a good idea of what types will be covered- but the conversation is free to vary and is likely to change substantially between participants.

Longhurst (2016:143) also views semi-structured interviews as a spoken conversation in which the interviewer seeks to gather information from the participant by asking questions. For DeJonckheere and Vaughn (2019:2), the overall purpose of semi-structured interviews is to gather information from key informants who have “personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs related to the topic of interest.”

Drawing from these ideas, the working definition I adopted for this study is that a semi-structured interview is a flexible conversation between a researcher and the



participant(s), in which a set of semi-structured open-ended questions are asked with the aim of soliciting as much information as possible on the topic under investigation. In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with different participants in the education sector on their knowledge and lived experiences of the policy processes in the Lesotho education sector.

To ensure the effectiveness of the interviews, specific factors about the physical environment need to be considered. These are “comfort, privacy and quiet” (King & Harrocks, 2010: 42). This means that the venue where the interviews are conducted has to be comfortable to both the interviewee and the interviewer, as well as private and free from any disturbances. I ensured that for this study, the physical environment where the interviews took place adhered to the suggestions made by these authors. The interviews were held in offices provided by the participants, and no disturbances were encountered. The participants were also in a comfortable and familiar environment, and I did everything possible to not make them feel uncomfortable or intimidated.

It should be noted that, besides the above-mentioned factors, there are also certain guidelines I had to adhere to to ensure that I obtained relevant information from the participants. In this regard, I had to listen more and talk less, and then follow up on what the participants said. I also had to ask for clarity in cases where I did not understand their responses. I avoided asking leading questions, but instead used open-ended questions. I also avoided interrupting the participants (Seidman, 2006:78-88). With these pointers in mind, I conducted the interviews with the different participants.

The flexible nature of semi-structured interviews enables the researcher to probe responses from the participants or to change the direction of the conversation. So while I did make use of an interview schedule (cf. Appendix B), I came across very important and relevant information on policy-making processes in the Lesotho education sector. I was able to probe the participants and further pursue certain participants in subsequent interviews. I therefore expanded my initial interview schedule as the process unfolded, and used follow-up questions where necessary to get clarity or more information from the participants.



It is also important to note that certain factors outside of my control were likely to impact the success of the interviews. Some of these factors may include race and ethnicity, gender, class, hierarchy and status, linguistic and age differences (Seidman, 2006:99-105). In this study, neither race, ethnicity or linguistic differences influenced the interview process as all the participants and myself are Black, Basotho and speaking the same language. In terms of the language, all interviews were conducted in English. I was conscious of the possible impact of issues such as gender, class, hierarchy and age, as I interviewed male participants as well. Some of the participants were officials from MoET and others occupied senior positions, which could have influenced their view of me as a young female researcher.

Conversely, although it seems to be an ideal way of conducting qualitative research, interviews are not without their internal contradictions. Alshenqeeti (2014:43) criticises interviews as time-consuming, small-scale studies that are never 100% anonymous and have potential inconsistencies. Also, there is no one interview method that is suitable for all occasions or all participants (Hofisi, Hofisi & Mago, 2014:64). I am aware of the criticism against interviews, but I still feel that the advantages associated with interviews far outweighed the potential disadvantages. My awareness of these factors prompted me to be vigilant during the interviews, and to try to mitigate their impact on the quality and extent of the interviews and the data that I hoped to generate.

### **5.6.3 Document analysis**

Document analysis is regarded as a suitable method for qualitative studies (Bowen, 2009:29). A document is defined by Altheide et al. (2008:127) as “any symbolic representation that can be recorded and retrieved for description and analysis.” Shemshuchenko, Parkhomenko, Tarakhonych, Podorozhna and Stanislav (2019:2) view a document as the “material form of displaying, disseminating, using and storing information that gives it legal force.” In qualitative research, we use various types of documents. These may include academic publications, diaries, biographies, personal correspondence, government materials, research diaries, organisational materials, and newspapers and magazines (Smulowitz, 2017:2).

The main purpose of document analysis is to “provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change

and development and verification of findings from other data sources” (Bowen, 2009:30-31). This view is echoed by Cardno (2018:636), who states that

as a qualitative research method, an analysis of organisational policy documents provides a most easily accessed and cost effective way to collect and analyse data using additional method in a small scale or a case study project.

Smulowitz (2017:2) regards the ability of a researcher to have a clear understanding of the link between participants’ interviews and the documents being reviewed, and their contextual social reality, important in document analysis. Bowen (2009:29) furthermore states that

documents can provide data on the context within which research participants operate — a case of text providing context, if one might turn a phrase. Bearing witness to past events, documents provide background information as well as historical insight.

For this study, I analysed various official documents such as the Constitution of Lesotho, 1993 and the Education Act, No. 3 of 2010, with the purpose of establishing the legislative context that informs education policy development and implementation in the Lesotho education sector. The Constitution 1993, gave insight into what Lesotho aspires to achieve in education, while the Education Act 2010, elaborated on the roles of different stakeholders in the provision of education in the Lesotho context (cf. 4.6.1 & 4.6.2). In the case of education research, Cardno (2018:625) proposes that “research that focuses on educational problems can make use of policy documents to understand the nature and sources of problems that are complex.” For this reason, Lesotho education policies are included amongst the official documents selected for this study. These documents were chosen based on the assumption that they would generally contain information on the implementation of (education) policies in Lesotho.

Moreover, Bowen (2009:30) contends that “documents provide supplementary research data. Information and insights derived from documents can be valuable additions to a knowledge base.” To find more information on how the Lesotho education sector implements its policies, I also analysed the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2016-2026, the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development, 2013, and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009 (cf. 4.6.3, 4.6.4 & 4.6.4). I analysed the contents of these policies to gain insight into their

pronouncements on how policies in Lesotho education should be implemented. In this regard, I reviewed the principles, features and types of interventions contained in these policies to establish how they promote or thwart education policy implementation.

Conversely, it is imperative to note that, similar to all other data collection methods, document analysis has both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages associated with document analysis are that it is an efficient, time-saving and cost-effective method of data collection. Documents are static and stable, and they do not change depending on who is analysing them (Bowen, 2019:31). The disadvantages of a document analysis are that documents may lack essential details needed for the study. Documents may also not be easily available, and this lack of availability can lead researchers to choose only documents that are readily available, resulting in bias (Bowen, 2019:32).

## **5.7 Participant selection**

Qualitative researchers need to note that when selecting participants, they should be aware that not every person in the population, society or community can take part in a study. Only a representation, called a sample, is chosen (Wan, 2019:49). Studying the whole population during research would be a strenuous, expensive and time-consuming exercise. As such, it is often more convenient for researchers to study a section of the population, in other words a sample of the population (Marshal, 1996:523). In the case of qualitative research, the selection of a sample is known as participant selection.

Participants are individuals or groups of people that are selected to take part in a study (Johnson & Christensen, 2012:90). Creswell and Poth (2018:233) recommend that the selection of participants for a research study needs to be done in a meticulous manner. This ensures that only those individuals who have experience of the subject matter under investigation, are selected to answer questions or share their experiences. Therefore, it would be fatal to select just anybody, or participants who do not have the relevant knowledge and experience.

For this study, people with knowledge about Lesotho education policy processes in general, but also knowledge of and experience in education policy implementation,

were selected. The best way of getting such people was by applying the purposive or judgemental sampling method. Marshal (1996:523) states that a judgement sample, also known as a purposive sample, is a sampling technique in which “the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research questions.” This view is echoed by Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016:2), who define purposive sampling or judgement sampling as the “deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses.”

In addition, Macnee and McCabe (2008:121) contend that “a purposive sample consists of participants who are intentionally or purposefully selected because they have certain characteristics related to the purpose of the research.” This method therefore assumes that participants are selected based on certain qualities or characteristics.

All participants selected for this study were chosen because I believed that they are likely to be role players in education policy processes, and that they are involved in and have experience of education policy implementation. As such, knowledgeable participants selected for this study included officials from MoET, representatives of Lesotho teacher unions, non-governmental organisations, media, representatives from a number of churches, principals and teachers. It was assumed that their work experiences and the positions they occupy put them in a place of being knowledgeable about education policy processes in the Lesotho education sector. As such, they were included in this study because of their proximity to the Lesotho education policy process in general, and education policy implementation in particular.

For this study, 20 participants were purposively selected to take part. These participants comprise four officials from MoET. I purposively selected two (2) MoET officials from the Teaching Council and two (2) MoET officials from the Education Planning Unit. The Teaching Council was established by the Education Act, No. 3 of 2010. The functions of the Teaching Council are to advise the Minister in matters related to the teaching profession (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:Section 35(1) and Section 36(d)). As a result, it could be assumed that "matters related to the teaching profession" also relate to education policy and education policy implementation. More specifically, the Education Planning Unit, which is located within the Ministry of

Education and Training, is responsible for policy formulation (and therefore also policy implementation) in the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho.

I also selected two (2) education secretaries. As indicated earlier (cf. 4.6.2), schools in Lesotho are owned mainly by churches, and Education Secretaries manage these schools. The Education Act, No. 3 of 2010, Section 26(1), makes provision for proprietors (churches in this case) who own more than 20 schools to establish an “educational secretariat which shall be headed by an educational secretary appointed by the proprietor and approved by the Minister”. Every church with more than 20 schools is therefore obliged to appoint an education secretary. Currently, in Lesotho, we have five (5) education secretaries in total - four (4) education secretaries representing churches and one (1) secretary representing government schools in Lesotho. Regarding the selection of the secretaries, I cannot disclose how I decided which two secretaries to include, as this would compromise their identities. However, I assumed that the secretaries I chose would have knowledge and experience of education policy matters in Lesotho. Secretaries are supposed to liaise with the Ministry of Education on “matters of management of schools” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:Section 26(1)). As such, proprietors, or in this case the church, are significant stakeholders in Lesotho education. Since policy-related issues cannot be divorced from the management function of the secretaries, it is assumed that the secretaries have knowledge or experience about education policies in general, and policy implementation in particular.

In addition to the above participants, I also selected three (3) principals and three teachers (3) from various schools. These participants are assumed to be involved in schools, on a daily basis, in the implementation of education policies. I therefore consider them to be experienced and knowledgeable about policy implementation. The study was conducted in post-primary schools. All teachers selected were Social Sciences teachers. This is because, in the Social Sciences syllabus, some content on politics and governance is taught. As such, I believe that these teachers would have some knowledge about policies and policy processes. However, teachers and principals are at the coal-face of policy implementation – they are primarily responsible for the implementation of education policies. My assumption is that they would therefore have knowledge and experience about education policy implementation in Lesotho schools. These participants come from three schools – a church-owned

school, a government-owned school, and a privately owned school. All the schools are in the district of Maseru, and were selected because they were easily accessible to the researcher.

I also purposefully selected two (2) representatives from teacher trade unions in Lesotho. In Lesotho, we have five teacher unions. I selected the two unions which I believe represent the majority of teachers in Lesotho. Two (2) representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were also selected. In the case of NGOs, I purposely selected the ones that I have seen working with schools in certain projects, in the hope that they also assist schools during education policy implementation.

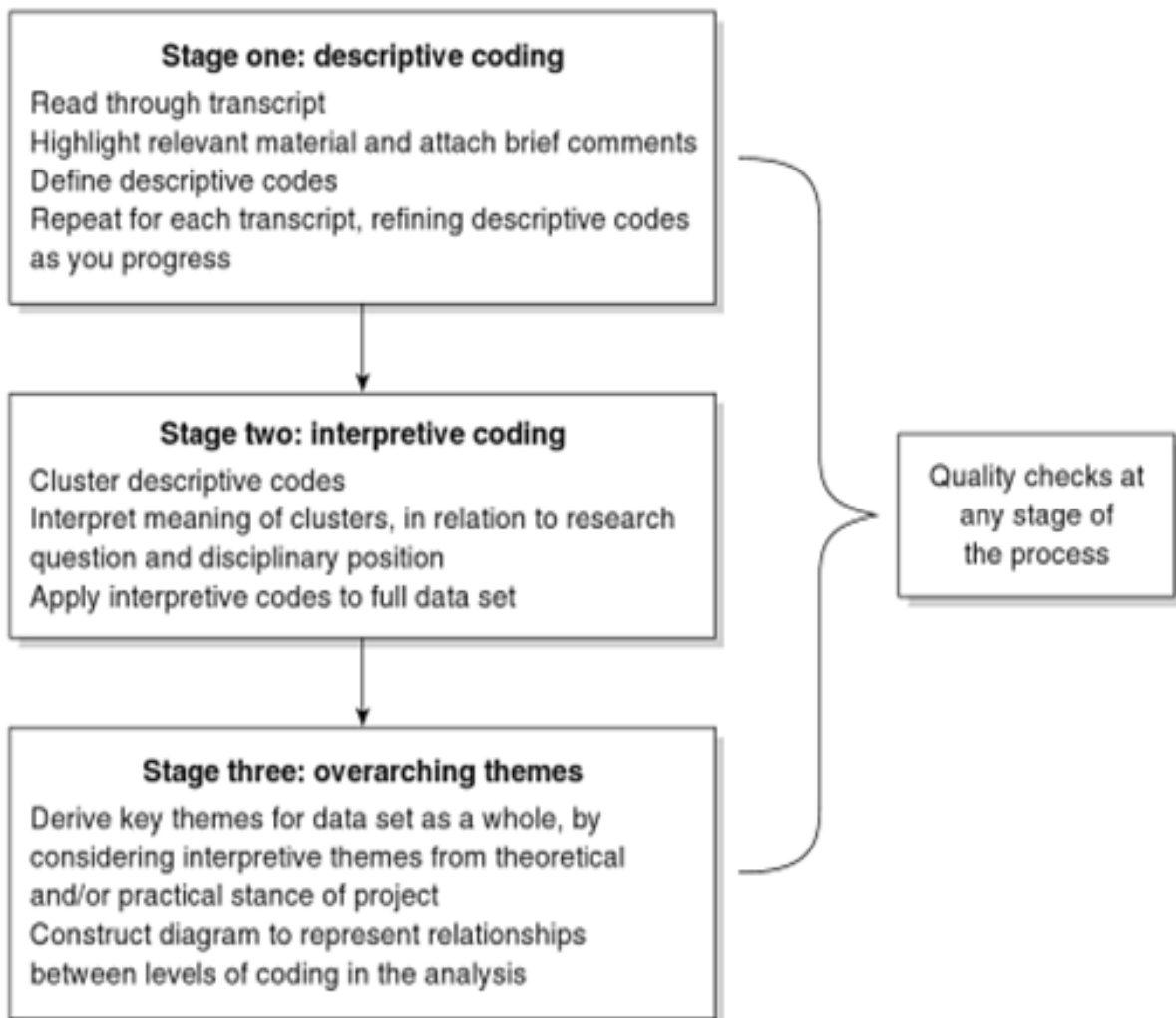
Additionally, four (4) representatives from various media houses (two print and two radio stations, from both independent media and state-owned media) in Lesotho were also selected. From the print media, I purposely selected two independent newspapers. One of the newspapers is freely available in Lesotho, and I believe it covers a wide population. I chose the second newspaper because it was located in an easily accessible area. These participants were all selected because they have a particular role to play in policy implementation in Lesotho.

With regard to this study, my assumption was that the participants I had selected have knowledge and experience of education policy processes in Lesotho. I also assumed that they would share this knowledge and experiences with me and enable me to come to a better and deeper understanding of policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. After the participants were selected and data were gathered, the data needed to be analysed to come to sound conclusions. In the next section, I give an overview of the data analysis strategy I used in this study.

## **5.8 Data analysis**

Data analysis is the systematic organisation, integration and examination of data with the purpose of deriving 'patterns' and 'relationships' from the information we have gathered (Neuman, 2011:477). Data analysis also involves the preparation and organisation of the data through the use of themes derived during the process of coding (Creswell & Poth, 2018:251).

The diagram below (Figure 6) illustrates the phases involved in data analysis in a qualitative study. Following the diagram, I will give an overview of what data analysis entails, which data analysis strategy will be used in this study and what value that chosen strategy will add to this study.



**Figure 6: Stages in data analysis (www.google.co.ls)**

The above diagram depicts data analysis as a systematic process that unfolds in three stages. The first step is descriptive coding, which entails reading through the data to identify patterns in preparation for coding and later allocation of themes. Step two, called interpretive coding, is about data coding. This is where codes are added to data. Lastly, step three is a stage at which key themes are derived from the data. The analysis of data gathered through the semi-structured interviews will also be analysed



following these stages. However, before I outline my data analysis strategy further, let me first elaborate on what data analysis is and what my approach looks like.

As indicated earlier (cf.4.2), this study is qualitative in nature. I therefore utilised a qualitative data analysis strategy to analyse the empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews. There are several qualitative data analysis strategies that qualitative researchers can use to analyse their data (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012:3). These include, but are not limited to thematic, structural, interpretive, narrative and eidetic data analysis strategies (Wertz, Charmaz, McMullen, Josselson, Anderson & McSpadden, 2011:105). After careful consideration, and based on the reading that I have done with regards to different data analysis strategies, I have decided to use thematic data analysis. Percy, Kokstere and Kokstere (2015:80) opine that thematic data analysis is suitable for the analysis of data generated through semi-structured interviews.

Thematic data analysis is a descriptive form of data analysis (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016:100), and it is “highly inductive” (Dawson, 2002:115). This means that the themes will not result from my imagination, but they will emerge from the data. These themes are also not imposed on the data. Thematic analysis of data happens when data is analysed using ‘themes’ identified from the raw data. Furthermore, for Guest et al. (2012:10), thematic data analysis moves beyond explicit words or phrases, and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data – in other words themes. Thematic analysis allows researchers to code and categorise data patterns (Alhojailan, 2012:40). Therefore, thematic analysis is not a superficial task where the researcher just picks any word without contemplating its use as a clear word or phrase that can indeed be called a theme.

A theme denotes a word that is used “to refer to patterns in the data that reveal something of interest regarding the research topic at hand” (King & Horrocks, 2010:149). Themes are also described as patterns that materialise from raw data and can become concepts that can be categorised into different components (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:82). In addition, themes represent codes that have a “common point of reference and has a high degree of generality that unifies ideas regarding the subject of inquiry” (Vaismoradi et al., 2016:101). In qualitative research, themes are



conceptually derived through the organisation of raw data into different categories (Neuman, 2014: 480, Crowe et al., 2015:618).

When engaging in thematic data analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006 cited in Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3354) propose a six-phased guide. The proposed phases are (1) become familiar with the data, (2) generate initial codes, (3) search for themes, (4) review themes, (5) define themes and (6) write-up. For this study, I followed the phases proposed by Braun and Clarke. I also followed the steps cited in in Figure six I first transcribed the data, then read through the transcribed data several times before coding it. After coding, I searched for and developed themes. After that, I reviewed and defined the themes before writing the results.

The quality and integrity of this study are guided by certain principles that ensure it is of a high standard. In the next section, I address the issues that I need to adhere to to ensure the integrity and the quality of this study.

## **5.9 Quality considerations**

Quality in research is a very important aspect, as it is regarded as a precondition for ethically sound research (Flick, 2007:125). According to Chowdhury (2015:151),

quality of a qualitative research may depend on the ‘soundness’ of the research process, ‘well-foundedness’ of the research techniques, ‘goodness’ of the research information, and ‘worthiness’ of the whole aspect of the research.

In essence, quality in research is of paramount importance as it legitimises the study, and will produce a scientifically and ethically sound study of good quality.

Creswell and Poth (2018:354) are of the view that to to ensure research of high quality (and to mitigate any critique against the study) the following questions should be asked:

- Did the interviewer influence the participants’ description in such a way that the descriptions do not truly reflect the participants’ actual experience?
- Is the transcription accurate, and does it convey the meaning of the oral presentation in the interview?

- In the analysis of the transcriptions, were there conclusions other than those offered by the researcher that could have been derived? Has the researcher identified those alternatives?
- Is it possible to go from the general structural description and to account for the specific contexts and connections in the original examples of the experience?
- Is the structural description situation specific, or does it hold in general for the experience in other situations?

These questions inform some of the pillars of the quality considerations that researchers should consider, and which I also reflected upon in this study. In some circles, the assumption exists that quality considerations in qualitative research are not as legitimate as in of quantitative research (Bryman, Becker & Sempik, 2008:262). I align myself with Sensing (2011:214), who maintains that such assumptions are flawed and skewed because they fail to take into consideration that “qualitative research cannot be judged by the same standards as quantitative research.” I also need to concur with Seale (2000:7) that, although they do not conform to the “traditional validity and reliability, qualitative researchers do conform to quality considerations in their studies.”

For Sin (2010:306), quality in research incorporates “rigor and [it] extends considerably beyond satisfying the validity and reliability criteria for rigor.” Daymon and Holloway (2011:78) identify various positions that researchers can align themselves with when it comes to quality considerations in research. These positions are the traditional position, which aligns with the concepts of validity and reliability, the alternative position, which is aligned to the principle of trustworthiness, and the radical position, which places emphasis on the unique nature of the study and who wants studies to be judged on intuition and not against other studies. For this study I adopted the alternative position, which is aligned with the concept of trustworthiness. Merrick (1999:31) claims that trustworthiness has since become the “primary criterion for evaluation of quality” for qualitative research. As a criterion, Guba and Lincoln (1995) developed the concept of trustworthiness to assess quality in qualitative research. As such, it differs from the traditional validity and reliability that is tied to quantitative research (Cleland & Durning, 2015:61).

Trustworthiness refers to “the extent to which the findings are an authentic reflection of the personal or lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation” (Curtin &

Fossey, 2007:89). Issues of trustworthiness are important, because “threats to trustworthiness can include problems such as reactivity and biases on the part of the researcher and participant” (Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006:444). In an effort to avoid bias and prejudices, and to produce a scientifically and ethically sound study of high quality, I adhered to the following aspects, which I believe enhanced the trustworthiness of my research: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability.

- **Credibility**

The credibility of qualitative research is determined by the researcher's professionalism (or lack thereof) (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014:5746). The conduct of the researcher therefore determines the credibility of a study. As a means to ascertain credibility of the study, the following questions should be answered: “do we have confidence in the truth of the data and the research findings?” (Addo & Eboh, 2014:148); “does the study measure or describe what it is supposed to measure or describe?” (Sensing, 2011:219); and “has your research provided enough evidence for your claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment - and agree or disagree with your claims?” (Flick, 2007:20).

There are a number of ways in which the researcher can respond to issues of credibility, and this will enhance the trustworthiness of a study. These include prolonged and varied field experience, time sampling, reflexivity, triangulation, member checks, peer examination, interview techniques, establishing the researcher's authority, and structural coherence (Anney, 2015:275). Credibility can also be achieved through ‘reflective confirmation’, which is a form of ‘member checking’ meant to authenticate the data and its interpretation. This is done by asking the participants to check and confirm that what the researcher has interpreted is indeed what the participant intended (Sensing, 2011:221).

To ensure the credibility of this study, I used a number of participants. I also used semi-structured interviews, as they allow flexibility in the field. The participants were given a chance to confirm both the transcribed interviews and the interpretations in an effort to get them to verify that what was written, was in fact what they said or meant.

- **Dependability**

Dependability is achieved if other researchers can replicate the study given the circumstances, the context and the population (Cope, 2014:89). In other words, dependability is the “strength of reliability of data through time and circumstances” (Hall, 2014:39). To to achieve dependability, the researcher needs to answer the question “what is the audit trail that demonstrates the procedural routes to the decisions made by the researcher at every stage in the research process?” (Addo & Eboh, 2014:148). In other words, dependability means that what the first researcher found, other researchers should also be able to find (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014:5746).

One of the mistakes that researchers should avoid to to achieve dependability is that of bias. To steer clear of bias, I should therefore ensure that my interpretation of the data is not based on my particular preferences and viewpoints (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:123). It should actually be grounded in the data. One way of doing this is by giving a very clear account of all the steps I undertook during the research, and upon which my findings and conclusions are based.

For this study, I gave an account of the methods of data collection used, the mode of data analysis and how data interpretation was done before arriving at the conclusions. My awareness of the impact of my bias on the research also prompted me to be on the alert for any instance where my reading of the data or my engagement with the literature could lead me to data falsification or data fabrication.

- **Transferability**

Transferability is equivalent to external and internal reliability in quantitative studies. To to achieve transferability, the researcher should answer the question, “what is the degree to which the findings of the study can be transferred to other contexts or settings” (Addo & Eboh, 2014:148)? In answering this question, Scott and Morrison (2011:221) posit that “transferability demands of the researcher a thick description of the setting in which the research is being carried out.” Verhoef and Boon (2011:52) advise that transferability can be assessed by “thoroughly describing participants’ characteristics, the research context as well as the assumptions that were central to the research.”

This means that I was expected to clearly and vividly describe the context of the research. I also needed to give a detailed description of the participants and the assumptions that informed this study. In this study, I gave a thick description of the study's setting without compromising the ethical principle of anonymity for my study. I also used a paradigm and theory for methodological soundness. Lastly, I purposively selected participants from a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the education sector.

- **Confirmability**

Confirmability is synonymous with reliability and objectivity in qualitative research. As such, it measures the precision and truthfulness of what is conveyed by a study (Given, 2008:112). Like reliability, confirmability is supposed to adhere to the principle of objectivity (Mertens, 2012:29). Moreover, Polit and Beck (2012; Cope, 2014:89) suggest that confirmability refers to the "researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' response and not the researchers' bias or viewpoints." Confirmability therefore suggest that researchers keep their opinions and biases to themselves, and not let that interfere with the actual study findings. It mitigates the impact of bias on the study.

In social research, of which this study is an example, it is difficult (if not impossible) to present research that is not "contaminated" or influenced by personal views and biases, or that is entirely objective (Gunawan, 2015:10). However, the fact that it is challenging to deliver social research that is entirely neutral did not prevent me from putting mechanisms in place that would ensure a fair degree of confirmability.

In this study, I ensured confirmability by providing rich quotes from the participants that depict each emerging theme (Cope, 2014:89) and their original ideas. In this way, I tried to demonstrate how the data were linked to the conclusions and interpretations that arose from them (Daymon & Holloway, 2011:94). As a result, I presented the experiences and knowledge of the participants as accurately as possible as they have narrated it to me, and I did not interfere with what they said and did not influence their responses in anyway. The same objectivity was applied in my engagement with the literature and during the document analysis.

Aside from the above-mentioned quality considerations in this study, I also had to reflect on and follow certain ethical principles to ensure that this research project was morally and ethically sound. In the next, section I present ethical considerations.

## 5.10 Ethical principles

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with decisions on what is morally right or wrong (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011:2; Vanclay, Baines & Taylor, 2013:244). Arifin (2018:30) maintains that it is important to take various ethical principles into consideration when doing research, because it ensures the protection of human subjects.

For Holloway and Brown (2012:1954), ethics in research are concerned with issues of autonomy, rights, safety and the well-being of participants. My responsibility to consider the ethical implication of my study is highlighted by Dooly, Moore and Vallejo (2017:351), who are of the opinion that qualitative research in general, and research done within educational settings to, often raise serious ethical questions because of the general involvement of human beings. Since my study focuses on education policy implementation, and since humans participated in this study, I therefore, had a responsibility to ensure that the participants' rights, well-being, safety, and autonomy were protected, and that none of the participants were violated.

However, my responsibility to deliver ethical research was not only limited to my engagement with participants. Instead, ethical considerations also include a reflection on my engagement with the data, and sources. The ethical issues I adhered to in this study are discussed in the subsequent sections. These include informed consent, confidentiality, the principle of no harm to participants, and beneficence, which are explained in the following paragraphs.

- **Informed consent**

Informed consent means a person “knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his consent” (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011:4). Informed consent “implies that the respondent in a study should be given all the information needed to make an informed decision about the participation” (De Wildt, 2016:59). This view is supported by Fleming and Zegwaard (2018:210), who explain that

the term consists of two important elements, with each requiring careful consideration, that is, ‘informed’ and ‘consent.’ Participants must be fully informed

of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, and what [if any] consequences there could be.

Informed consent is also about getting people that are voluntarily 'willing' to join the research as participants, and who are willing to sign a consent form (Bordens & Abbott, 2014:202). In other words, informed consent means that no one should be involved in research as participants without having all the information about the research, and without having had the opportunity to decline participation in the research.

In preparation for obtaining informed consent, the following criteria should be met: "consent should be given freely (voluntarily), subjects should understand what is being asked of them, and involved persons must be competent to consent" (Arifin, 2018:30). As one of the "most important principles of research ethics" (Rubin & Babbie, 2010:57), participants should not be forced to take part in any research. Rather, their participation should be on a voluntary basis (Klenke, 2016:16). As a means to ensure that informed consent is adhered to, a written document should be available, signed by the participant indicating that s/he agreed to take part in the study (Richards & Schwartz, 2002:137). Hence, it is imperative that individuals expected to take part in a study are briefed on what the study entails, their role in the study, and the assurance that their identity will not be revealed (Easton & Mathews, 2016:18).

Informed consent therefore places a responsibility on the researcher to ensure that all participants are well informed about the study. As such, I should inform them about the aim of the study and what they are expected to do. I should also divulge to participants any potential harm they might be subjected to, and how their identities will be protected.

In seeking informed consent, I first had to apply for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education at the University of Free State, and this was granted to me as UFS-[HSD2020/0337/3108] (cf. page iii). I also adhered to the ethical considerations of the Lesotho Ministry of Education. This was also granted to me by the Principal Secretary - Basic Education (cf. Appendix C).

In addition, I had to ask for consent from the participants. For this study, I designed a consent form (cf. Appendix A) that all participants signed. This form informed the participants of the aim of the study, their right to voluntary participants, their right to withdraw from the study if they no longer felt comfortable to continue, and the contact



details of my promoter in case they need to consult him on any matter. For compliance, I explained the contents of the informed consent document to the participants before they signed, and when they agreed to the stipulations, they signed before the interviews commenced.

It is the concern of Mertens (2012:33) that participants often agree to take part in a study for financial gain. In this regard, I clarified to the participants that the study is voluntary, and that they would not be remunerated, incentivised or rewarded for their participation.

- **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality refers to the responsibility of the researcher to not report private information that could risk the participants being identified (Klenke, 2016:51). In addition, confidentiality also implies that the participants' identity is known to the researcher, but that the data is "de-identified and the identity is kept confidential" (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018:211). It is the responsibility of the researcher to treat all participant responses as confidential (Mertens, 2012:36). Participants are entitled to know how the information that they have provided will be reported on, and what will happen to the data, including how such information will be kept secure.

The participants in this study were made aware that the information they have provided, which was audio recorded, would be transcribed, and after transcription it would be analysed manually by the researcher. To ensure confidentiality, I stored the raw data in a safe and secure place, which could only be accessed by myself, my promoter and the relevant university authorities. I also did not use explicit information in my report that could jeopardise the participants and their organisations in any way. Besides confidentiality, there is a need to assure participants of their safety during and after the study.

Additionally, I used pseudo codes to avoid compromising the identity of participants. It should be noted that we only have four educational secretaries in the country, therefore, I had to be extra careful when reporting on them so as not to give away their identity. That was done by not giving a detailed description of the participants.



- **No harm to participants**

Hammersley and Traianou (2012:57) opine that social science researchers are of the opinion that there is minimal to no risk of harm in their studies. Despite this, it is important to the researcher and to the benefit of his study that the participants are not exposed to any harm during or after the study (Vanclay et al., 2013:247).

Conversely, Reamer (2013:48) argue that “qualitative researchers often have access to the most intimate corners of participants’ lives, which could lead some participants to feel overexposed or at risk emotionally.” As such, it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that any risk of harm must be prevented. Alternatively, the researcher should try to mitigate any risks that participants could be subjected to. One way of protecting participants is to ensure that their rights, autonomy and dignity are not violated.

In this study, there was no harm, as participants were expected to give their professional opinions on their experiences with policy processes in the Lesotho education sector. The study was not seeking experiences that would otherwise affect or involve the emotions of the participants. Also, the participants' autonomy, dignity, and rights were respected at all times during and after the interviews.

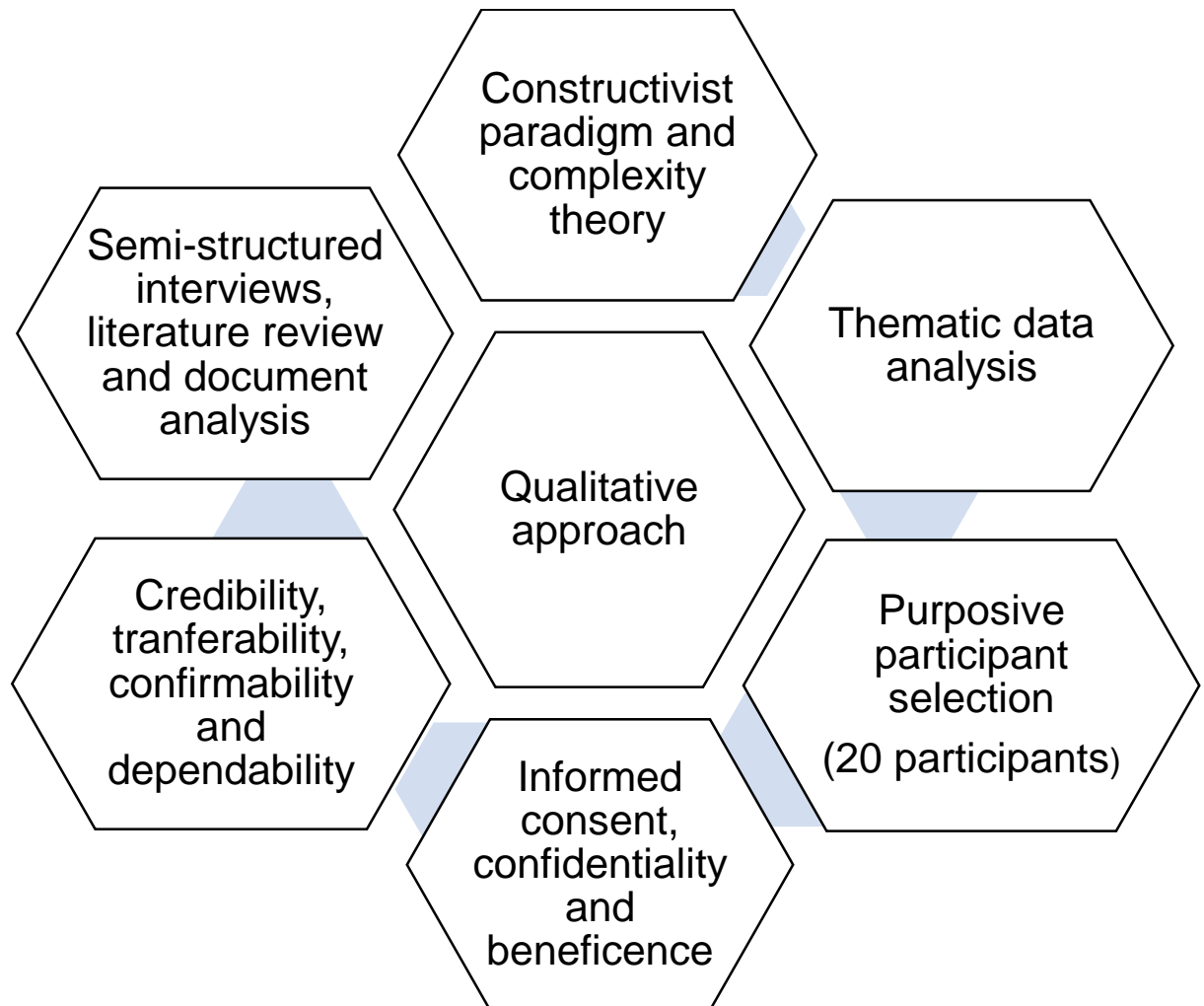
- **Beneficence**

Beneficence is described by Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2001:95) as “doing good to others and preventing harm.” Beneficence also means that “persons are treated in an ethical manner not only by respecting their decisions and protecting them from harm, but also by making efforts to secure their well-being” (National Research Council. 2007, 2007:128). To achieve beneficence, it is important that the researcher minimises or commits to minimise the risks that are related to research in all forms, and ensures that the benefits to the participants surpass the risks (Sensing, 2011:33).

Beneficence creates an awareness of the benefit that the study findings may have for the study population (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020:84). I already indicated that participants would not be rewarded, incentivised or remunerated for their participation in this study. Regarding this study, the participants are the immediate beneficiaries, as it is assumed that their participation in this study will help them reflect on and improve the way they deal with policy processes, to education policy implementation. Since

benefits to this study cannot be quantified, I can only subjectively assume that participation in this study will be rewarding to the participants.

## 5.11 Summary of the methodology of this study



**Figure 7: Summary of chapter**

## 5.12 Conclusion

This chapter on methodology outlined what underpins this research. In this chapter, I discussed the research design for the study, which is the qualitative design. I also expanded on the research paradigm/theoretical perspective, where I adopted the constructivist paradigm and the complexity theory to couch the study. I adopted the qualitative methodology coupled with literature review, document analysis and semi-

structured interviews as my methods. I also engaged a purposively selected group of participants. My method of data analysis was thematic analysis. I also reviewed quality considerations and ethical considerations that I utilised for the credibility of the study. The study adheres to the set standards of sound methodology. In the next chapter, I present the data collected through the individual semi-structured interviews. This data was collected with the aim of addressing the objective, namely to investigate the perceptions and realities that shape and inform understandings about policy implementation and dissemination in the Lesotho education sector.

## CHAPTER 6:

# PERCEPTIONS ABOUT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE LESOTHO EDUCATION SECTOR

## 6.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of this study is to develop a framework that will enhance the implementation of education policies in the Lesotho education sector. To achieve this aim, I embarked on a literature review in Chapters 2 and 3 to contextualise and locate policy implementation within the broader context of the policy processes. In Chapter 4 I considered the context in which policies are implemented in the Lesotho education sector. This was done with the purpose of establishing the general as well as the legal or legislative context in which Lesotho education policies are developed and implemented. This information allowed me to establish existing gaps in education policy implementation, especially in the Lesotho education sector.

I believe that a framework, as is envisioned in this research, cannot be grounded in literature alone, but that it also needs to be supported by theory. It is for this reason that Chapter 5 outlines the research design followed in this study. The study is qualitative in nature, and couched in both the constructivist paradigm and complexity theory.

The objective of this chapter is ***to investigate the perceptions and realities that shape and inform understandings about policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.*** To achieve this aim, I conducted interviews with a number of participants in the Lesotho education sector. Although already outlined in Chapters 1 and 5, in this chapter I will just give a brief overview of the methodology, design and the data analysis method I used in this study. This will be followed by my research findings, and a discussion of my findings on the perceptions and realities that shape and inform understandings about policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

## 6.2 Research design

The interviews were conducted in October, November and December 2020, and March 2021. No interviews were conducted in January and February 2021, because of the National Lockdown due to COVID-19. My interview grid comprised of different questions for the various participants (cf. Appendix B). Although I decided to ask different questions to the various stakeholders, in some cases similar questions were asked to all participants. The data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis (cf. 5.8), and the interview questions were divided into broad themes and sub-themes.

The themes emanated from the literature review and the data I collected. The process of coding and designating themes was helpful because I was able to eliminate irrelevant data, which was not in line with my research aim and objectives

Coding and designating themes also helped me with identifying similarities and differences in the responses of the participants. It should be noted that my presentation of the data is a representation of the views of the participants.

In pursuing the empirical data upon which this study is based, all relevant ethical aspects were considered and applied. Permission to conduct this study and to become involved in this study was sought and granted from the various participants (cf. Appendix B) and institutions, such as the UFS (cf. pg. iii) and the Principal Secretary - Basic Education (cf. Appendix C). Additionally, I made use of pseudonyms in an effort to further protect participants' identities and the identities of the institutions they work for. I further avoided linking participants to specific institutions, to further ensure that their identities and those of their institutions are not compromised. I used the following pseudonyms to to protect the identity of participants: Planning Unit 1 - PU1, Planning Unit 2 - PU2; Teaching Council member 1 - TC1, Teaching Council member 2 - TC2, Education Secretary 1 - ES1, Education Secretary 2 - ES2, Teacher Union member 1 - TU1, Teacher Union member 2 - TU2, Principal 1 - P1, Principal 2 - P2, Principal 3 - P3, Teacher 1 - T1, Teacher 2 - T2, Teacher 3 - T3, NGO 1- N1, NGO 2 - N2, Print Media 1 - PM1, Print Media 2 - PM2, Audio Media – AM1, and Audio Media 2 - AM2.

I subsequently present the data I gathered during my interviews. These data are presented based on the following themes and subthemes:

- Understanding education policy and education policy implementation
- Importance of education policy
- Relevance of education policy
- Challenges facing education policy implementation
- Collaboration with other stakeholders
- Recommendations and strategies to enhance education policy implementation

## **6.3 Data presentation**

### **6.3.1 Understanding education policy and education policy implementation**

#### **6.3.1.1 Education policy**

All the participants were asked to explain what they understand the concept 'education policy' to mean. This question was asked as a means to break the ice and also as a way of establishing participants' perceptions of the concept 'education policy'. Some participants viewed education policy as a document that gives guidance and direction to schools. P1 described education policy as "a document that directs education in education institutions and in the country as a whole." This was corroborated by PM2, who stated that "education policy is a document that guides the government and the schools on the direction that Lesotho wants to take regarding education. In other words, education policy is a document that ensures that education provision in Lesotho becomes uniform." ES2 also concurred that education policy "is a document with clear goals and objectives on the outcomes expected in the education sector".

In addition, T1 views education policy as "a guide, it is something that gives us direction on how to address or deal with issues in the education sector." A view participants reiterated what P1 said, when he contended that "education policy ... is a guideline that directs how education related issues should be controlled and directed." P2 believed that "an education policy is a written document that has some directives, some guidelines on how different things should be implemented by the educators particularly at grass root level."

There were also participants who understand education policy to be some tool, plan or framework with rules and regulations meant to advance education. In this regard,

P2 stipulated that “it refers to the rules and regulations that guide education and its provision in our country.” P3 viewed it as “a tool developed for education to ensure that teaching and learning takes place in an effective and efficient manner.” For ES2, education policy resembles “a plan developed by government and relevant stakeholders, that details how education and education related matters should be dealt with.” Education policy is also regarded as a blueprint of what the education sector is aiming to achieve. In this instance, N1 mentioned that “education policy is a plan, a blueprint or an outline of what the Ministry of Education and Training intends to achieve with education”. A link was also established with the Lesotho Vision 2020, as N2 regards education policy as important because it “guides personnel in the Ministry of Education and Training on how to achieve Lesotho Vision 2020 stipulations on education. Moreover, the importance of education policy is that it is all inclusive.”

For some participants, education policy was a document, while others viewed it as a guideline that directs education. Moreover, there are participants that viewed education policy as a blueprint or plan whose purpose is to guide education. Common in all the responses was that education policy is something that is meant to give direction to the provision of education.

### **6.3.1.2 Education policy implementation**

Participants were asked to explain their understanding of the concept education policy implementation, with the aim of levelling the ground for questions to follow. For some participants, education policy implementation meant the realisation of a plan. To this effect, S2 answered: “implementation is the actual realisation of the goals envisaged in the policy.” For N1, education policy implementation “is the realisation or execution of that plan. In other words, implementation is putting the plan into action.” Moreover, TC2 pointed out that “education policy helps the Ministry and all stakeholders with guidelines towards achieving destined goals.”

Other participants viewed education policy implementation as the execution of the plan as articulated by the policy. N2 indicated that “policy implementation is the means or modes we use to discharge to the relevant stakeholders what is contained in the education policy.” TU1 also explained that “education policy implementation is when we make sure that the developed policies are put into work.” TU2 mentioned that

“education policy implementation simply means putting a policy into practice. It can also mean putting goals and objectives of a policy into action.”

The above extracts seem to indicate that the participants were aware of education policy implementation. In this regard, participants gave a description of what they believed implementation to be. Participants were in agreement that implementation is about the realisation, execution, and putting policy goals and objectives into practice by those with the responsibility and authority to do so.

## **6.4 Importance of education policy**

Participants were asked to give their views on the importance of education policy in the Lesotho education sector. This question was part of the questions aimed at finding the opinions of participants on their awareness regarding the importance of education policy. Participants pointed out that education policy brings order and homogeneity in schools and in education. P1 confirmed that “when we have education policies, we will not provide education in a random and haphazard manner. As a country we will do the same things and people will not do as they please as we will have a guide.” Additionally, PM2 posited that “it is to ensure that education is provided in the same way throughout the country. It also helps to guide schools to do same things, for example schools have the same school calendar and they follow the same curriculum.” PU2 mentioned that “the importance of education policies is that they guide us on how to handle education related matters in a uniform manner,” and P2 attested that “it helps our schools with uniformity as all schools in the country will follow the same rules and regulations.” P3 believes that education policy is meant to guide teachers and learners in their daily activities in a school.

TC1 argued that “if we didn’t have policies, it would mean everybody will be doing as they please. People will be using their own discretion. The Ministry of Education can find dealings to be very haphazard and frustrating if they lack policies.”

Other participants also emphasised the importance of education policies in giving direction with regards to education-related matters. PU1 stipulated that “it gives us direction on how we are expected to run education and education-related matters in school.” PM1 added that “they assist us so that we do not do things haphazardly. They



give us direction so that we know what our education aims to achieve”. TC1 thought that “we need some form of reference on how to go about things and how to go about issues in education.”

Moreover, some of the participants viewed education policy as part of improving education as a human right. N1 responded with “to answer your question I think education policy is very important in Lesotho education sector. This is because education is a human right. It is thus important that we have a clearly written guideline of how it should be offered or how its facilitation should take place.”

However, there are also participants who viewed education policy as something confusing, due to some inconsistencies they have observed. In this regard, ES1 lamented that “this is a difficult one. I am confused because sometimes we have policies that do not apply to our context specific problems, so you find that it confuses us. For example, we have Curriculum and Assessment Policy now and it causes a lot of confusion on us teachers. In my view it is too expensive for our country and it does not benefit us at.”

From the above it appears that participants are aware of the importance of education policy in the Lesotho education sector. For some, education policy is something which should bring homogeneity in the way that things are done in the sector. For others, education policy is a mechanism or strategy that improves management and governance within the education sector. There are also those who see education policy as a tool for advancing education as a human right in the education sector. Conversely, there are participants who seem to be confused because they believe some policies, such as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009 are not beneficial to the Lesotho education sector, as these policies do not respond to the specific needs of the country.

## **6.5 Relevance of education policy**

It also seems as if Lesotho education policies are irrelevant, this according to PU1, who stated that the Lesotho “education [policy] also seems not to be addressing our problems as a nation, this means that the Ministry of Education need to formulate and implement policies that would address this dilemma that we are facing”. PM1 also

stated that “as a country we are talking about major reforms now, but nobody has ever mentioned education during consultation process. At the same time, we are complaining about how our curriculum doesn’t meet our market demands.” PU2 was of the opinion that the Lesotho education sector implements “donor-driven policies that sometimes do not address our pressing needs, but those of the donors.”

In this regard, AU2 stipulated that

“in 2019 we had a yearlong strike. For the whole year learners were not taught. This for me says there is a problem with policy implementation. It says the Ministry either did not have a policy to address teachers’ grievances or they did not use that policy if they have one.”

Additionally, PM2 stated that “many children are out of school due to poverty, but we do not have policies that cater for them.” N1 blamed “imported policies that are not domesticated” as a problem that renders education policies to be irrelevant.

The above suggests that, in Lesotho, education policies are implemented that are irrelevant to the Lesotho context and the needs of the country. To this effect, participants referred to major reforms taking place in the country, but lamented that education is not included in such reforms. Participants further indicated that Lesotho has a tendency of implementing donor-driven education policies that are not tailored to the specific needs of the country.

## **6.6 Challenges facing education policy implementation**

Different views arose from the interviews with stakeholders, while in many ways they actually influence education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. From these views, I identified certain factors that influence education policy implementation in Lesotho. These factors include knowledge about education policies, accessibility of policies, policy dissemination, stakeholders’ engagement, resources, trainings, politics and policy gaps.

### **6.6.1 Knowledge about existing education policies**

Generally, most participants seemed to be aware of the existence of some policies in the education sector. When asked to mention the policies they were familiar with, some participants were able to do that. P1 answered “the Education Act, 2010, Codes of Good Practice, 2011, Curriculum and Assessment Policy and Children Protection and Welfare Act, 2011”. P2 mentioned the “Inclusive Education Policy, Curriculum and Assessment Policy, and the Textbook Rental Policy.” T1 was aware of the existence of the “Education Act, 2010, and the Codes of Good Practice.” T3 knew “Education for all, Curriculum and Assessment Policy, and the Inclusive Education Policy,” while PM1 mentioned “the Inclusive Education Policy”.

However, many of the participants were not aware of the existence of policies promulgated by the MoET. P3 pleaded ignorance and indicated that “I really do not actually know of any.” T2 echoed that “I am not aware of any.” PM2 reiterated: “I cannot think of any at the moment as we are never given policies by the Ministry of Education.” AM1 resonated that “I really do not know them. I have only heard of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy as it was the bone of contention during the teachers’ strike in 2019,” while AM2 responded that “I really do not know them.”

It appears that some participants did have knowledge of education policies and laws, while a number of them were unaware of the existence of certain policies of the education sector in Lesotho. It was clear from the interviews that there was a perception that the MoET does not distribute the policies which they develop.

### **6.6.2 Accessibility of education policies**

Since several respondents were unaware of the existence of education policies, a question was asked to establish the accessibility of education policies to stakeholders in the Lesotho education sector. In this regard, some participants, particularly those who knew about the existence of policies, mentioned that such policies were easily accessible. Some participants obtained the policies from the MoET itself, principals or the internet. In this regard, ES1 pointed that “truly speaking the Ministry gives us polices and it is very easy to access them. It is in rare cases where the Ministry develops a policy that we are not aware of.” T2 stipulated that “I got them from my principal,” and T1 “got the copies from the internet.”

Conversely, there are participants who indicated that policies are not easily accessible. In this regard, AM2 lamented that there was “lack of information. I do not have any information on education policies.” It was also the contention of ES2 that education policies “are not easily accessible”. ES2 continued, stating that

“you need to know people in the right offices to access policies from the Ministry of Education. They are not available in the Government Printing. It is very difficult to get policies. I remember there is one time that I had to ask an acquaintance to photocopy a policy for me so that I at least have a copy. Believe me, even some people in the Ministry do not know about the existence of some of our education policies.”

TC2 also indicated that

“it is not easy at all to find education polices in Lesotho. Some are not available on the internet and they are also not available at the Government Printing Unit. In fact, most of the times you need connection with someone in the Ministry of Education to access policies.”

T2 responded that “nobody has given me copies and I have also not made time to find them,” while PU1 stated that “they are not easily accessible because of financial constraints. Like I said earlier, some policies are not accessible even to us in the Planning Unit.”

From the foregoing responses, it it appears that whereas education policies are accessible to some participants, they are not accessible to other participants. For instance, ES1 and ES2 give different responses regarding accessibility of policies despite coming from the similar offices. Also T1 and T2 give different responses on where they got copies even though they come from the same profession. The difference in responses could be interpreted to indicate lack of consistency by MoET in availing policies to stakeholders.

### **6.6.3 Policy dissemination**

Another important factor that affects policy implementation, is policy dissemination. For policies to be implemented, they first must be disseminated to the implementing agents.

Responses from some participants indicate that MoET does not disseminate the actual policies, or information about them. In this instance, P1 lamented that “they [MoET] do not [disseminate policies]. Let me make an example, ... MoET does not come to our school even when we invite them. Truly we are on our own. Unfortunately, we do not even get information on newly developed policy because of the hostility that MoET has towards us.” In addition, P1 responded that

“many stakeholders including learners, teachers and parents lack information on policies that are used in the education sector. The parents only hear of policies and laws when they are summoned to disciplinary hearings of their children in schools.”

This view was affirmed by P3 who pointed out that “sadly we are on our own; the Ministry does not inform us about policies.” PU1 indicated that

“policy implementation is a very expensive exercise. Unfortunately, we [MoET] do not have sufficient resources to disseminate and subsequently implement our policies. As such, most of our policies are never implemented.”

Nevertheless, a number of participants, such as P2, pointed out that MoET disseminates information on policies even though it is not beneficial:

“it is often even though it is not beneficial as it is often generalised information. We are never given context specific information that affects our unique situations. For example, with Curriculum and Assessment Policy, we do not know how to tackle teaching Information and Communication Technology in schools where there are no computers, or in schools where there is no electricity.”

The above responses imply that there is poor dissemination of policies to stakeholders in the Lesotho education sector. Additionally, a number of participants pointed out that MoET is hostile towards them, and never shares its policies, and that they are often left in the dark. Even when policies are disseminated, it appears that stakeholders are not given sufficient information to allow for effective policy implementation. To this effect, officials from the MoET indicated that policy dissemination is expensive, and that they lack resources that allow them to fully execute it in a proper and effective manner.

#### **6.6.4. Role of stakeholders in policy implementation**

Despite some of the participant responses implying that education policy dissemination is not sufficient, I still asked the stakeholders about their involvement in education policy implementation. The participants appeared to be aware of the roles they should be playing with regard to education policy implementation. For example, AM2 contended that “I think the media should be used to raise awareness on the policy. If stakeholders know of the presence of a policy, they are better placed to implement it.” AM1 opined that “our role is to disseminate information on policy implementation to the consumers. In the case of education policy, we should write about policies that the Ministry of Education has developed so that principals, teachers and members of the communities know about them, that way we will promote their implementation.” Moreover, N2 responded that “our main role is that of advocacy for the implementation of ... [policies].” N1 commented that “it is our duty as NGOs to ensure that government fulfils its roles and responsibilities to the people”.

Conversely, when asked if they believed they play their roles effectively, participants were quick to point out that, for various reasons, they have been unable to effectively play their roles in education policy implementation. AM2 replied “no, we are not fulfilling that role because we are in the dark when it comes to education policy implementation.” However, AM1 held a slightly different view and mentioned that “to a minimal degree, because we get some information when the Ministry of Education wants to launch a policy. We are just invited to give coverage of that event and that is why I say our role is minimal”. Additionally, N1 reiterated that “in the case of education policy implementation we are not doing anything. As an organisation we strive for good governance and social justice, thus we found it important to facilitate ... between the government and teachers”.

A similar view to the above is held by PM1, who stated that

“no. We are just invited during policy validation workshops. At these workshops the policy is already complete and ready to be send to the consumers. Our task is just to listen to the speeches about that policy then report in our newspapers on such speeches. In short our task is just to make that particular policy popular even though we do not know it ourselves.”

PM2 also stated

“no. Our challenge across the board is lack of information. We are often not aware of [policy] developments in education. Moreover, the Ministry of Education personnel is not very cooperative, even when you want to write a story about their Ministry you struggle as they do not willingly give information to the media. If you want to interview education personnel, they will give you a run-around. I tell you, we end up not being interested in covering issues of the Ministry of Education because of the hostile attitude they give us. In the case where they invite us to a press conference, they present and leave us there. They do not even want to accommodate our questions.”

Based on the above responses, it seems that although stakeholders are aware of the roles they should play, and despite their perceived willingness to assist in education policy implementation, they do not play their roles effectively due to constraints such as a lack of cooperation from MoET. Stakeholders also seem to blame MoET for being hostile towards them, and not willing to give them a chance to play their roles when it comes to education policy implementation.

### **6.6.5 Politics**

Participants pointed out that long-term political instability in Lesotho negatively affects education policy implementation. PM1 indicated that

“I suspect maybe this [challenges with policy implementation] is because we have not had a stable government in about eight years now. The situation is bad as Ministers are frequently changed. Sometimes a Minister just serves for 6 months and is reshuffled or the government changes. This political instability is affecting so many things, it’s really sad”.

The above view is echoed by PM2, who stated that

“the other issue is that our governments no longer complete their five-year term in office, instead they are frequently toppled. This results in Ministers that do not stay long in a Ministry, resulting in lack of continuity. You know in some cases before a Minister even knows who s/he is working with, they are either reshuffled or the government collapses. This lack of stability affects policy

implementation in a very negative way as each minister never gets a chance to actually know the policies so that s/he can monitor their progress”

Furthermore, ES1 stipulated that

“partisan politics have also contaminated our systems as people are no longer hired on merit but on political affiliations. This means that we now have people who do not have the right qualifications for the jobs they hold. The unfortunate part with political appointments is that even donkeys can hold important positions in government. We should also as a country avoid appointing Principal Secretaries (PSs) politically as that breaches continuity in the Ministry as PSs are changed frequently due to political instability. Too many reshuffles of PSs and Ministers that are not even done of merit should also stop for education policies to be effectively implemented.”

For TU1,

“the political instability we have in this country is disastrous for smooth policy implementation. ... from 2017 to date, [Lesotho] have had four Ministers of Education, how will people that are being reshuffled that much get time and opportunity to know policies in the Ministry? The answer is simple, they can't, and that's why our education will remain poor.”

This view is supported by, AM2 who stated that “political instability, Lesotho is the only country in the world that I know which has changed governments more than three times in a space of four years.” AM1 lamented that “our forever changing government is very problematic. This thing of changing Ministers and PSs frequently is causing regress in our development.”

Some of the participants had suggestions on what needed to be done. ES2, for example, opined that “the government should avoid too many reshuffles of Ministers and Principal Secretaries (PSs) as that negatively affects education policy implementation. From 2017 to 2020 we have had four different Ministers in the Ministry of Education and Training, that is volatile and not conducive for effective implementation of education policies.”

Participants further indicated that Lesotho political office bearers lack political will when it comes to education policy implementation. PM1 indicated that “another factor



is political will; politicians just do things so that we can clap hands for them. They are not interested in improving our education.” AM2 also commented that “there is need for political will so that all these policies that are developed get to be implemented.”

Moreover, N1 pointed out that “last year we had a yearlong teachers’ strike. At the centre of the strike was failure by government to make teachers and proprietors aware of new policies that guide education.” For AM1 education policy implementation appears not to be important, because “government has its own priorities. One would think education should be one of them, but the priorities of government seem to lie elsewhere. I certainly don’t think the government gives the Ministry of Education enough support to fulfil its mandate [of amongst others policy development and implementation].”

While there are concerns about a lack of political will in education policy implementation, some participants indicated that there is some level of political will displayed by MoET regarding the implementation of certain education policies. TC2 argued that “to some extent there is political will for policies to be implemented. With policies like the Inclusive Education Policy, the Ministry is trying its level best to implement it.”

It seems that the incessant political instability in Lesotho has a negative impact on the implementation of education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. Responses suggest that the frequent reshuffling of Ministers and Principal Secretaries (PSs), as well as the recurrent toppling of governments, bring political instability. This adversely affects education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. There is an indication that political office bearers lack the political will to implement education policies in Lesotho. Additionally, participants hint that personnel in the Ministry of Education is appointed based on political party affiliation and not on merit, and this criterion of staff appointment is blamed for poor education policy implementation.

### **6.6.6 Policy gap**

Indications from the responses are that there is a policy gap in the Lesotho education sector. Participants also allude that the lack of an overarching education sector policy

could be responsible for the lack of effective education policy implementation. To this effect, PU1 pointed out that

“our main challenge as a country is that we do not have an Education Sector Policy. That means we have disintegrated policies. Let me be real with you, at times some units and departments in our Ministry of Education develop policies without our knowledge or input from the Planning Unit. Sometimes we have no idea of such policies when they are being disseminated. That uncoordinated formulation is very problematic as it means our policies are not harmonised.”

This view was confirmed by PU2, who opined that “there is also lack of Education Sector Policy.” N1 that “you know, when I heard that you were coming to interview me on education policy implementation, I quickly searched for the Lesotho Education Sector Policy, but found none. I even asked friends working in the Ministry about the existence of such a policy but they told me it does not exist.”

TU1 was not happy with the lack of an overarching policy, and lamented that “there are so many education policies that have been developed but are not being implemented; maybe it is time for us to have a consolidated education policy like the NEPA in South Africa. I suspect our implementation fails because we have stand-alone policies.” AM1 pointed out that “there is no proper education sector policy; even if it is there I am sure it is outdated given the fact that our schools, especially the public ones or government owned have very poor performance.”

It seems as if the Lesotho education sector has a policy gap that is affecting policy implementation. The lack of an overarching Education Sector Policy, or an overarching policy that would give effect to the Education Act, implies that there is lack of harmonisation and in some cases, a lack of intertextuality among policies developed in the Ministry of Education. This can affect the effective implementation of policies, as there is a likelihood that policies that lack harmonisation can cause confusion among implementing stakeholders. Such confusion could result in policies not being implemented, as actors do not know what they are actually supposed to do and for what reasons.

### 6.6.7 Resources

Responses from the interviews indicate that there were mixed feelings from participants regarding the availability of resources for education policy implementation. Some participants were of the view that MoET does not have sufficient resources to effectively implement education policies. In this regard, N2 opined that

“unfortunately the Ministry is unable to work with us as they do not have resources. The Special Education Unit is allocated only one percent (1%) of the Ministry of Education budget. That money only covers the salaries of the civil servants working in that unit. It is not enough to cover resources needed for the effective implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy.”

This view was echoed by S1, who stated that “I think they have resources, particularly human resources. But I think financially they do not have resources. However, I think our resources are limited because we fail to prioritise important things.” Additionally, PU1 opined that “no we do not have enough resources because most of the Ministry of Education’s budget goes to payment of salaries.”

There were also those participants who believed that MoET has adequate resources to implement education policies, but that it is not willing to utilise them effectively. It was the opinion of TU2 that “yes it does [have sufficient resources]. The only problem with MoET is poor budgeting; they spent more money on salaries and less money on policy implementation.” TU1 complained that “they [MoET] always claim that they don’t have resources, but with the little they have, they do not allocate it appropriately. We can’t actually say there are no resources when we know that Lesotho has funding partners that are always ready to give them money.” Moreover, TC2 was confident that “the Ministry of Education has resources to implement education policies. There is human resource available for that task. I am not sure about financial resources, but I am sure that human resource is available.”

Additionally, there were participants who believed that MoET is reluctant to explore possible avenues available to ensure the availability of resources for education policy implementation. To this effect, N1 responded that “they can have them [resources] if they are serious about the implementation of the education policy. Now during the COVID-19 crisis the government was able to collect about M698 million by taking a little from each Ministry. They can do the same to get resources for education policy

implementation.” It was further the opinion of S2 that MoET does have adequate resources, “they just need to utilise their budget well. The Ministry does not just rely on money from government; there are partners that give them money. All the Ministry needs to do is ask for money from partners and account for it accordingly.” According to PU2, the Lesotho government “is always complaining about limited resources. However, there are other areas that serve the interests of politicians where money is overspent unnecessarily. I think we need to prioritise education as a nation and ensure it gets enough resources because it is the backbone of development”

PU1 indicated that

“we [MoET] can have resources if we stop working in fragmented manner within the Ministry [of Education] and within government. Let me make a simple example, a vehicle from the Ministry of Social Development leaves Maseru for Quthing with just one passenger, on the same day, another vehicle say from the Ministry of Education also ferries one passenger to Quthing. This is an unnecessary waste of resources that can be overcome through communication and ensuring that both people use one vehicle.”

The above view was reiterated by S1, who stated that “I think our resources are limited because we fail to prioritise important things. In most cases we prioritise things that are not beneficial to us at the expense of the beneficial ones.”

These responses seem to suggest that there are mixed opinions regarding the availability of resources for effective education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. While some participants believe MoET does not have sufficient resources for education policy implementation, there are those that believe it does have resources, but that these resources are not adequately utilised. These participants were of the opinion that MoET has resources to implement policies but due to poor budgeting and lack of prioritisation, such resources are wasted.

#### **6.6.8 Support from MoET during education policy implementation**

Participants were asked whether they receive any assistance from MoET during education policy implementation. Some participants, like T1, mentioned that they get support from MoET during policy implementation. “The Ministry usually monitor our

progress. The District Education Officer and school inspectors are the ones that monitor and help us when we get stuck.” However, others indicated that MoET does not support them during policy implementation. They even state that, in most cases, they find themselves on their own during the implementation of education policies. In this case, P2 complained that “we are never given the opportunity to be part of the policy process by the Ministry. We only hear of policies during the implementation phase. Even during implementation there is no one that guides us on how to actually implement those policies.”

P1 further complained that “MoET does not come to our school even when we invite them. Truly we are on our own.” This opinion was also verbalised by P2, who stated that “we do not get any assistance. Like I said earlier, the Ministry just dumps policies on us and leave us to figure for ourselves how to implement them.” P3 also protested that “sadly we are on our own; the Ministry does not inform us about policies.”

It appears that there are mixed opinions on whether MoET supports stakeholders during policy implementation or not. To this effect, some participants stated that MoET does not support stakeholders during policy implementation. This is evident from the responses of teachers and principals, who answered this question by stating that MoET does not support them. However, there were also some participants that indicated that they did in fact receive support from MoET during education policy implementation.

### **6.6.9 Impact of globalisation on policy implementation**

P1 indicated that globalisation affects education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector:

“in Lesotho we always depend on Americans and British for their aid. As such, if they want us to develop and implement any policy we just do it without asking any questions. Most of our policies are influenced by donors. Even the structuring of education policies follows guidelines of donors not necessarily what we need as a country. ... there is nothing wrong with learning or borrowing from other countries, but in our case it is different, we are dictated to. That is why most of our policies are never effectively implemented. But on the other

hand globalization helps us grow as we learn from developed countries techniques on tackling some problems that we encounter when implementing policies.”

P3 also stated that, “in a way, education policy implementation in Lesotho is bound to be affected by what is happening in other parts of the world. To America and donor agencies such as the World Bank influence the way we implement our policies as they are the ones that often give us money for implementation.” S1 agreed that

“yes it [globalisation] does. We are trailing behind the rest of the world because most of our policies are influenced by rich donor countries. They test their policies on us, in short we are guinea pigs. When those policies do not work they leave them with us and develop better ones for themselves. Sometimes they bring us policies that are not suitable for us, look at the curriculum and assessment policy, it is too expensive for us as a country but we are stuck with it because some international donor decided we need to implement it.”

Furthermore, PM2 echoed that

“... globalisation has brought disparities on education policy implementation in our country. Sometimes you would think some education policies are developed just to be implemented in Maseru and other urban centres only and not the rural areas of the country.”

The above view was supported by S2, who opined that,

“now we are talking about the 4th industrial revolution, where people are working from home. In this age we still have people that have not even seen a computer and cannot function well now in time of crises. We have teachers who do not even know what zoom is, yet they are now expected to teach learners online due to COVID-19 restrictions. Lack of knowledge on latest technology means we are now stuck and cannot implement education policies as we have no means to.”

PU2 also contended that “it [globalisation] has an impact. As Lesotho we are lagging behind our peers with respect of the use of technology in education. Most of our policies are still not available online, making it difficult for other stakeholders to access them. Again we offer education that has been accused of being irrelevant to the needs of the

21st century.” This view was supported by PU1, who stipulated that “the dawn of COVID-19 has actually shown us that globalisation affects policy implementation. As you interview me now, there is a learner who was last taught in March 2020 before the schools were closed due to COVID-19 pandemic. There is also another learner who has been continuing with their education supported by ICT. The world is way ahead of us as Lesotho and we are painfully trailing behind. We move at a tortoise pace in terms of technology which can help us even with policy implementation.”

Additionally, T1 indicated that “yes, very much, the way we implement policies is influenced by what is happening in other countries. Take for example the new curriculum policy... it brings things we have never heard of before although they were already happening in other countries.” T3 supported the above view by stating that

“yes it does. In a sense that some of the things we do are just meant to impress the international community not to address our pressing needs as a country. We often copy international trends without giving thought to our own context. We teach our learners outdated information that we copy from the outside world, we do not progress with current times. Unfortunately, some of the things we copy, we do not have the capacity to implement them. Take for example the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as stipulated in the CAP, one can ask, who in their right mind recommends that learners be taught ICT in a country where schools based in the rural areas do not have electricity?”

Conversely, other participants suggested that globalisation does not affect education policy implementation in a manner that makes much impact. To this effect, S2 responded that “I don’t think it affects us much. In fact, I can say it partly affects us because globally there are many things that are happening right now but we are not affected. There is this issue of the 4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution that has taken the world by storm now, but for us it is a different story. The Ministry seems to be structured in old ways and fails to be moving with the times. For example, learners from rural schools have only seen a computer on paper only.” In support of the above supposition, TC1 said “no. But in some cases, with the donations of the World Bank we are often asked to draw policies that will assist with the implementation of the funded project. Otherwise I do not think we are impacted by globalisation in our implementation of policies.”



From the above responses, it appears that even though some participants were of the view that globalisation has an impact on education policy implementation, other participants did not think that globalisation has an impact on education policy implementation. More so, certain participants believed that even if globalisation impacts education policy implementation in Lesotho, the impact is minimal. Participants who said that globalisation affects education policy implementation, pointed out the negative impact on Lesotho due to its failure to follow what the global world is doing. In this case, they mentioned poor implementation of ICT and its impact on education, especially during times of crisis like the current one caused by COVID-19, which led to the closure of schools.

## **6.7 Collaboration with other stakeholders**

In this section, I will present findings on the nature of cooperation (if any) between MoET, non-governmental organisations, school management, media and donors, to ensure effective education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

### **6.7.1 Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)**

Participants were asked if MoET assists and collaborates with them during policy implementation. Some responses indicated that MoET does not collaborate with them during education policy implementation. In this regard, P3 mentioned “poor information dissemination regarding new policies and inaccessibility of education policies. The Ministry of Education fails to engage other stakeholders in education policy implementation.” P1 also indicated that they “do not get any assistance from the Ministry.” Similarly, P2 “are never given any training on policy implementation and this makes [them] to have a negative attitude since [they] do not have ownership of these policies.” T3 also stipulated that

“not at all, I have heard about teachers in other schools going to workshops, but my school has never been invited. We have never received training on education policy implementation from the Ministry or anybody. We also have not received any resources to assist us with policy implementation.”

Likewise, ES2 mentioned that



“although the Ministry pays education secretaries, it fails to support us financially to fulfil our duties and responsibilities such as training stakeholders on issues of policy implementation. In short, our office is just white elephants within the Ministry of Education. We really need subvention from government but we do not get it.”

The above view is supported by ES1, who responded that

“our interest and aspiration as school secretariat is to be part and parcel of education policy implementation. Unfortunately, that is not always the case because the Ministry often leaves us behind during implementation. Let me now get to the example, there is something called School Improvement Project known as SIP in short. Through SIP, the Ministry has earmarked schools that are performing poorly so that they get assisted to improve their performance. The Ministry now has its own personnel managing this project and we are not part of that.”

On the contrary, other responses suggested that MoET includes other stakeholders during policy implementation, although not at all times or for all policies. PU2 stated that “during the implementation phase we make use of implementation partners called IPs so that they assist us. Our IPs includes teacher unions and NGOs. Working together with IPs we develop a strategic plan to guide us on implementation, and then we develop an implementation plan that gives details on who does what, how and when. This is the ideal procedure we would like to follow with all policies but it is not always possible due to lack of finances in the Ministry.”

PU1 further elaborated on what needs to happen with education policy implementation under normal circumstances:

“in the case where we are doing things in the right way, we should have Annual Sector Reviews; we also have mid-five year’s reviews. The purpose of these reviews is to reflect on what has been done and what still needs to be done ... so these reviews are meant to monitor and evaluate the progress they have made in education policy implementation.”

For TC1, the problem is that they have not yet been involved in education policy implementation, hence the response that

“we are not yet engaged in policy implementation. But in our plan we were going to use stakeholders. In that plan we thought we should raise awareness among teachers that there is a need for them to pay registration fee. However, due to financial constraints we have not started with such consultations.”

The above responses suggest that MoET rarely includes other partners and or actors in policy implementation. Although MoET officials are aware of what needs to be done for effective education policy implementation to occur, they argue that a lack of financial resources prohibits them from involving more participants. However, other participants opined that MoET does not necessarily want to work with them when it comes to the implementation of education policy implementation.

### **6.7.2 Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)**

Participants were also asked about the role played by NGOs in education policy implementation. The response by P2 suggested that there is some kind of NGO support for certain policies: “in the case of Inclusive Education Policy we are assisted by one NGO. For other policies there are no NGOs that assist us.” N2 emphasised that “as an NGO dealing with disabled people we are involved in the implementation of the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy, 2018. We are 100% stakeholders in that policy as an organisation”.

Some participants indicated that they had never been assisted by NGOs during education policy implementation. To this effect, P3 mentioned that “there are none at the moment.” T1 also expressed that “I am not aware of any NGO assistance in our school.” T2 mentioned that “since I arrived in this school, I have never seen any NGO assisting us in any manner,” and T3 attested that “we have never been assisted by any NGO”.

The inference that can be drawn, based on the above extracts, is that there is NGO support or collaboration for implementation of some, but not all education policies. This could be interpreted to mean that NGOs have an interest in some education policies, but not in all.

### **6.7.3 School management**

The participants were asked whether they think that school management teams had the capacity to implement policies. T1 believed that school management teams have the capacity to implement education policies:

“the management we have in our school comprises the principal, deputy principal and heads of departments. They are very hands on, especially the deputy principal and heads of departments. They monitor our activities; to, they make sure that teaching and learning takes place in an effective and efficient manner. They do not monitor us all the time but they do so frequently.”

The above view was supported by T2, who stated that

“I think they have the capacity to implement policies if they can get copies and be trained. Our management comprises people with at least a first degree as their qualification; I think with that level of education they can effectively implement policies provided they know them.”

Nevertheless, T3 had a different opinion, and mentioned that

“I do not think they do. They just share documents that they come across without even explaining them. I suspect they also do not have any idea on how we are expected to implement policies. Also they do not even follow-up or monitor our progress as we try to implement these policies.”

Whilst some participants were of the view that school management teams have the capacity to collaborate in education policy implementation due to their expertise, there were those who believed that school management teams lack the skills, knowledge and competences needed to effectively implement education policies.

### **6.7.4 Media**

When asked about the importance of media as collaborators in education policy implementation, P1 indicated that

“the media is a very strong entity that can promote or obstruct education policy implementation. This is because when media is informed about education policies, it can influence the community to support or sabotage such policies.

In the case of education policies, it is through the use of media that principals, teachers, learners and communities can be informed about policies, making it easier for those stakeholders to implement policies.”

For PM2 the media was very important, because

“our newspaper is free and is available in all ten districts of the country every week. So, if the Ministry of Education engages us, it means we will be able to share valuable information that can enhance education policy implementation throughout the country for free on a weekly basis.”

This view was supported by P2, who articulated that “they can give a lot of publicity on any education policy. Also the media can assist the Ministry with communicating policies to a wide spectrum of stakeholders as it reaches a lot of people.” Additionally, P3 opined that the media is helpful “to a large extent. Most of us listen to radio, watch television and read newspapers. This means if information on education policy implementation is shared on any one of these platforms, we can easily access it.” This sentiment was supported by T1, who expressed that “media can help with disseminating information to principals, teachers, parents and the community,” and T2, who stated that

“since we have no idea on education policies, the media can help by giving such information to the stakeholders. As teachers, we have access to different types of media, so if the media shares anything on education policies, we will definitely hear about it and subsequently implement it in our schools.”

Furthermore, it was the contention of PM1 that “the media is very interactive. We interact with teachers, principals and parents, and we can say we are aware of what they want. So we can have some inputs as we interact with so many important stakeholders.” This opinion was echoed by T3, who stated that the media can play a very active role in policy implementation because

“they can assist us with programmes that promote policies. We have one programme on Lesotho Television that is run by the Science Department from the National University of Lesotho; ... I wish the Ministry could copy that and have programmes that promote education policies and education policy implementation.”

Regarding whether the media fulfils its role of being collaborators in education policy implementation, PM1 answered that MoET does not involve them during education policy implementation. The media

“are just invited during policy validation workshops. At these workshops the policy is already complete and ready to be sent to the consumers. Our task is just to listen to the speeches about that policy then report in our newspapers on such speeches. In short our task is just to make that particular policy popular even though we do not know it ourselves.”

The preceding view was reiterated by PM2, who expressed that “our challenge as media across the board is lack of information. We are often not aware of developments in education. The Ministry of Education personnel is not very cooperative, even when you want to write a story about their Ministry you struggle as they do not willingly give information to the media.” Additionally, AM1 commented that,

“yes, [the media is involved] but to a minimal degree because we get some information when the Ministry of Education wants to launch a policy. We are just invited to give coverage of that event and that is why I say our role is minimal.”

AM2 stated that “no. we are not fulfilling that role because we are in the dark when it comes to education policy implementation.”

The implication here is that despite the obvious importance of the media in effective education policy implementation, MoET seems not to include the media during education policy implementation. Participants were of the opinion that collaboration with the media is hampered by the hostility of MoET personnel and its (MoET) failure to engage media as a stakeholder in education policy implementation by MoET.

### **6.7.5 Donors**

Participants indicated that donors played a role in education policy implementation. PU1 indicated that donors

“are involved. In some instances, they are too involved, especially the IPs. Sometimes they get into schools even without our knowledge as the Planning

Unit. For example, with the Implementation of the School Nutrition policy, we became aware that donors have been going to schools without our knowledge and input. Cases like this make it difficult for us as a unit to monitor policy implementation.”

For PU2, donors are “involved to a large extent. They sometimes even dictate how a policy should be implemented.” Additionally, ES2 stipulated that the “World Bank, African Development Bank and other partners are very much involved in policy implementation.” This was reiterated by ES1, who indicated that “they are involved ... they usually monitor how their money is being used. We have donors such as UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank and many others. Sometimes we have bilateral donors such as Japanese. For example, UNESCO gave us money for the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education although I am not done.”

Conversely, TC2 expressed that “donors are involved but on a small scale. We have donors such as UNICEF that are hands-on during policy implementation.” For TC1, “they are involved in a sense that they fund some workshops. When they are involved, because of their interests, they sometimes dictate how issues should be dealt with.”

From the above responses, it appears as if donors have a stake in the implementation of education policies in the Lesotho education sector. Participants held the same opinion that donors are involved in education policy implementation, although they differed on the scope of that engagement. It seems that in some instances donors just give money, while in other cases they are involved in the implementation in an in-depth manner, without even engaging MoET officials. What also became clear from the interviews, is that donors exert particular powers as they tend to dictate what should happen during policy implementation.

## **6.8 Recommendations and strategies to enhance education policy implementation**

Participants were asked to make recommendations or suggest strategies that could be used by MoET to counter the problems and challenges they associated with poor education policy implementation. The purpose of this question was to gather

information that might be beneficial in developing a framework that could enhance education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

In response, participants came up with different strategies and recommendations that could be used to enhance education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. Some participants believed improved and strengthened policy dissemination could assist in improved policy implementation. In this regard P1 articulated that “dissemination of information on policies can be very helpful ... many stakeholders including learners, teachers and parents lack information on policies that are used in the education sector.” Participants also indicated that those responsible for policy implementation should be involved in policy processes. This was according to P2, who stated that “policy implementers should be included in policy processes, particularly the dissemination stage.’

The participants also felt that policy implementers should be trained prior to policy implementation, and that the media should be used to educate people about policies. P2 stated that

“... implementers should be given lots and lots of training so that they have a clear understanding of the policy they are to implement.”

P1 also opined that “the Ministry should use [the] media such as radio to inform the general public about their policies, that move would make education policies to be easily implemented.” Participants also expressed the view that policies should be made available to schools and teachers. In this regard, T2 expressed that “if there is sufficient information on policies, implementation will be enhanced. Also accessibility, ... I believe if policies are easily accessible, their implementation will be easy as everybody will have them.”

P3 was also of the view that “teachers are not supposed to go out of [their] way to find policies, [policies] should be made available to [them] by the Ministry. The Ministry must make sure that all stakeholders have policies.” PM1 also elaborated that “I think we need to be given copies of policies during the validation workshops and not just a pamphlet that gives a brief summary of a policy.”

Participants also referred to the importance of engaging other stakeholders during education policy implementation. According to P3,

“the Ministry of Education needs to acknowledge that it works with schools. They should also understand that schools have principals and teachers. In that way they will know that nothing can happen in a school in the principal and teachers do not have information. When we do not know policies we cannot implement them and so they will just remain on paper.”

Additionally, P1 stated that he “would also like to emphasise that by virtue of being direct education policy implementers, teachers should be given training regarding policy implementation on a regular basis.” This view was also reiterated by T1, who stated that

“there is need to train management on a regular basis. When managers have information, they are better placed to monitor progress in their schools. Also, they can help their subordinates during policy implementation”.

T2 was also of the opinion that “teacher training at both National University of Lesotho and Lesotho College of Education should include a course in education policy so that when we get to schools we already know about policies”.

Moreover, some participants suggested that coordination and collaborations with other stakeholders would benefit education policy implementation in Lesotho. According to P1, “policy implementation is very important for our country. That calls for the establishment of a special unit whose duty should be specifically to deal with education policy implementation. If we have a unit dedicated to education policy implementation we will have positive results.” For PU1, “we need to have coordinated planning with all the stakeholders so that when we monitor policy implementation we are on the same footing.”

According to T3, “there should be cooperation between teachers, NCDC [National Curriculum Development Centre] and ECOL [Examinations Council of Lesotho]. There should also be monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation throughout the process not when the policy comes to an end.” T3 further added that

“there should be cooperation between primary and post-primary institutions so that there is continuity in policy implementation. At the moment the primary schools implement policies their own way and we also implement in a different way in the post-primary section. This negatively affects our learners because



when they transition from primary to post-primary they get lost due to two very different systems.”

Participants also suggested that MoET needs to utilise available resources to ensure effective education policy implementation. It was the view of T1 that the “the Ministry should priorities teaching and learning resources during budget allocation. In addition, it seems as if the MoET should prioritise its expenditure, so that those activities that are deemed important be allocated sufficient funds.” T1 further opined that MoET “has put a lot of money into school feeding, but we do not have resources to implement this new curriculum”. In this regard, T3 advised that, rather, the

“Ministry should make use of experts, especially from our National University to assist with policy implementation. Lastly, we should shift from reliance on textbooks to the use of ICT in our teaching, and the government should make sure all infrastructure needed is in place throughout the country. We are really trailing behind other countries.”

The above suggestion could be the reason for T1’s irritation when, she asked the question “why should we feed children who are not learning anything due to lack of resources?”

P22 also indicated that the MoET “should not forget resources, especially financial resources as they are central to the implementation of policies”. TC2 emphasised “proper planning, adequate financial resources and adequate training of stakeholders” as important to improve education policy implementation in Lesotho.

Additionally, some participants suggested that there is a need for political will for effective education policy implementation to be realised. In this regard, there are calls for a reform of the Lesotho education sector. This was according to PM1, who articulated a need “to reform the education sector so that we level the field for effective policy implementation.” This is because the current education is not conducive. To illustrate this, PM1 indicated that Lesotho “offers free and compulsory primary education where we also offer free meals to learners because most of them come from poor families where there is no food.” However, the problem, according to PM1, comes in when these learners “complete primary education and transition to secondary education, they are now expected to pay school fees.” Based on this, PM1 asked the

question: “How do you expect someone that cannot afford a meal to pay school fees? What kind of education policy implementation is it that we are now engaging here?”

In response to the question of what should be done to improve policy implementation, PU2 indicated that there is a need for an “Education Sector Policy”. This is because the Ministry of Education tends “to develop Unit or department based policies that are not consolidated or coordinated by the Planning Unit.”

Some participants indicated that the ongoing National Constitutional Reforms could be the answer to the challenges and problems of education policy implementation. This according to ES1, who said: “I am hopeful that the current ongoing national reforms should see the light of the day. I have hope that it is through the reforms that education policy implementation will be effected.”

The recommendations, suggestions and strategies put forth by the participants seem to imply that the participants were aware of the shortfalls that lead to poor education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. As such, their opinions seem to be intended to improve education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I explored the perceptions and realities that shape and inform people’s understanding about policy implementation and dissemination in the Lesotho education sector. These realities and perceptions were collected through individual semi-structured interviews with two Planning Unit personnel, two Teaching Council members, two education secretaries, two members of teacher trade unions, three principals, three teachers, four participants from the media (two print and two audio media), and members from non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Based on what emerged from the interviews it can be concluded that MoET has various challenges that affect effective education policy implementation. In the next chapter (7), implications of the above will be taken into consideration to to come up with a framework for education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

## CHAPTER 7:

# A FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN THE LESOTHO EDUCATION SECTOR

## 7.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to develop a framework that could assist in enhancing policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. I adopted the following objectives that guided this study and informed the development of the framework that could enhance education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector: These objectives are:

- To examine the nature and extent of policy implementation in general.
- To determine the context within which the implementation of Lesotho education policies take place.
- To investigate the perceptions and realities that shape and inform understandings about policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.
- To develop a framework that could assist in enhancing policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

The first objective required me to review literature on the nature and extent of policy implementation in general. This was done in chapters 2 and 3. In chapter 2, I focused on the concept policy, I unpacked what policy, education policy is, how it is conceptualised, and I briefly explored the policy process. Chapter 3 focused primarily on theories of policy implementation, conceptualisation of policy implementation, levels of policy implementation, factors suggesting policy implementation and challenges of policy implementation. Literature from these chapters suggests that policy implementation is a complex and intricate activity influenced by various factors.

The context of this research is Lesotho education. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, I analysed purposely selected Lesotho education laws, policies and strategic plans with the purpose of looking at the context within which they were developed and the context in which they are being implemented. I also looked at the values that influence the implementation of such laws and policies. Additionally, I briefly reviewed the contents

of such legislation to establish how it supports the effective implementation of the mentioned policies. Through framing policy analysis in the context of complexity theory, I conducted an analysis of Lesotho education policies and legislation with the aim of finding out their directives regarding implementation of education policies in the Lesotho education sector, as that would help in developing a framework that would facilitate for smooth and effective education policy implementation. The focus was mainly on The Constitution of Lesotho, 1993, The Education Act, No. 3 of 2010, Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009(CAP, 2009), Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development Policy, 2013 (IECCD Policy, 2013) and Education Sector Plan 2016-2026.

In chapter 5, I explored the methodology and the methods for collecting data. The data that I collected through semi-structured individual interviews were analysed thematically and the findings were presented in Chapter 6.

In this concluding chapter, I discuss the findings of the study and I make critical comments towards a framework for education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. The framework that will be presented is based on the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, the document analysis in Chapter 4 as well as the empirical findings presented in Chapter 6. I will also acknowledge the limitations pertaining to this study and pinpoint recommendations and suggestions for areas for further research.

In the next sections, I discuss the findings of my research. I do this against the background of a literature study conducted in Chapters 2 and 3 and a policy analysis done in chapter 4. Because the main aim of this study is to develop a framework for education policy implementation the Lesotho education sector, this discussion will be in line with the principles of policy implementation.

My literature reviews highlighted certain themes, which I further explored during the individual semi-structured interviews that I conducted with participants. I clustered the themes accordingly and in the next section, I present and discuss the data in relation to these themes in an integrated fashion.

## 7.2 Findings of the research

### 7.2.1 Knowledge about education policies and education policy implementation

Evidence from the literature suggests that education policy is a relatively new field of study and that previously. Education Policy Studies and education policies were not scientific enough (cf.1.1). It is also on this basis that policies were critiqued. However, with the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, perceptions about policies and Policy Studies also changed and the status of education policies were elevated to the extent that policies are now central to global development agendas (cf.2.2.2). My view is that within a context where policies are not regarded as significant, knowledge about policies and about its implementation is also not commonly shared and those affected by a policy might not have knowledge about its existence and or its value. In the case of Lesotho, the implementation of public policies in general and education policies to appears to play a very significant role in the development of the country.

The significance of policies implementation in development is emphasised by Ramappa and Jagannatham, (2010) for whom education (policy) has the potential of being a beacon of hope for economic growth and the improvement of the lives and livelihoods of people. Dialoke, Ukah and Maduangwuna (2017) also opine that poor or a lack of policy implementation adversely affect developing countries. By virtue of being a developing country, education policy implementation is of equal importance to Lesotho as it aspires to build a country that is founded on the principles of; “justice, equality, peace, prosperity, participatory democracy and mutual co-existence which underpin their way of life” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:3).

One would therefore expect that those affected by and responsible for policy and its implementation would have adequate and relevant information and knowledge about the policy. More so, it could also fairly be expected that these actors and stakeholders would have reasonable access to any education policy. This is especially important as the assumption is that knowledge of a policy and its implementation would promote the acceptance, a sense of ownership and buy-in into a policy and its implementation (UNESCO, 2015). More so for the OECD (1996) knowledge about policies is a basic

right, and it is a strong indicator of the health and well-being of a democracy and the effectiveness of a government.

However, while responses from some principals, teachers and members of the print media suggested that they have some information about some policies, responses of the rest of the participants suggest that they have very little or no information about education policies to (cf. 6.6.1). For example, P3, T2, AM1, and AM2 explicitly indicated that they are not aware of any policies. PM2 further suggested that they are not given any education policies [by the MOET].

The point raised by PM2, namely that they are not given any education policies is emphasised by various participants who complaint about the inaccessibility of Lesotho education policies. Whilst AM2 complaint about a lack of information about education policies, TC2, PU1, and ES2 indicated that, it was not easy to access policies in Lesotho. For ES2 the only way to get access to policies is when you “know people in the right offices from the Minister of Education”. It is for this reason that T1 got his/her policies from the internet. Accessing policies on the internet that are supposed to guide and inform practice might in itself not be a bad idea, and could in some contexts probably be regarded as ideal and the only way of getting hold of an education policy. However, for Lesotho that is characterised by poverty (World Bank, 2019) and where only 35 percent of Lesotho schools have access to the internet (George & Kolobe, 2014:117), using the internet to access education policies and so promote its implementation could probably not be a suitable option.

From the findings, it appears as if there is a problem when it comes to knowledge of policies by participants. This lack of knowledge may not be a good sign as it is likely to negatively affect the implementation of policies in the Lesotho education sector. This is because it is simply impossible to implement a policy that you do not know or have access to.

## **7.2.2 Understanding of policy**

Depending on their contexts and interactions with education policy (Birkland, 2016) different people define education policy, similar to public policy, differently. The literature (cf. Anderson, 2000; Birkland, 2016) suggested that policies are developed

in response to particular (perceived or real) problems. It is anticipated (and expected) that such policies would address the problem(s) they were developed for. One could therefore infer that education policies are also developed to address particular problems that are specific to education. This as it is geared towards realising the aims and objectives of education (Vienette & Pont, 2017; Fulcher 2016; Caldwell & Spinks in Delaney, 2017).

Of interest is of course the fact that public policy appears to also refer to whatever governments choose to do or not to do (Anderson, 2000; Dye, 2013). This suggests that whilst the expectation is that governments would respond to public challenges by developing a particular policy, government inaction, or in some cases reluctance to implement particular education policies and so address specific public or educational issues, also amounts to government policy (Hill & Hupe, 2014). In practice, this means that the absence of particular policy or the reluctance to implement a particular policy could in fact be government policy. Bearing in mind that policy is political (Rizvi & Lingard, 2011; Joffe, 2018; Levinson, Sutton & Winstead, 2009) and primarily considered to be a state function (Gale, 2003), the potential exists that policy could be used as a tool to exercise (and maintain) power. This is particularly true as I content that the state is not a neutral apolitical entity.

In general, participants interviewed (cf. N1, PU1, & PM1) share the view that education policies are guidelines, plans or blue prints that not only articulate the aims and objectives of education, but which also guide and give direction towards the realisation of the aims and objectives of education. Education policy lay down measures to address issues (potential problems) in education that could potentially enhance the achievement of the aims and objectives of education. What is of course significant is that participants seem to have an expanded view of education policy – a view that is not limited to education policy as only a guide or blueprint for education. Rather some link education policy to the achievement of broader socio-economic development aims and objectives of Lesotho. This as N2 (cf.6.3.3.1) links education policy to the realisation of Vision 2020 – a macro economic plan for Lesotho - and what the country (Lesotho) should do. This signals a realisation of the value of education policy in the broader development of the country, and her people. Such a view of education policy makes effective education policy implementation therefore an even greater imperative.

In line with this, participants in general view education policy implementation as the realisation of the aims and objectives of a policy (S2; TC2) or the practical execution of a plan (the policy) (N1; N2; TU1; TU2). These participants' perspectives are confirmed by the literature review where education policy implementation is associated with realising educational objectives or as plans of action (Ekpiken & Ifere, 2015). The extent to which policy objectives are realised and development takes place is of course also indicative of the success of policy implementation (Cerna, 2013; Ikewhukwu & Chukwemeka, 2013). Of course, governments should not have a simplistic view of education policy implementation; neither should they regard policy implementation as a straightforward process.

Rather recognition should be given to the fact the policy implementation is complex, evolving (Arop, Owan & Ekpang, 2018) and multi-layered, multifaceted, dynamic and iterative. Birkland (2011) regards it as the most difficult aspect of the policy process, and I argue that the Lesotho government and MOET should treat education policy implementation as such.

In addition, the involvement of different stakeholders and interest groups with different (and at times opposing and conflicting) agendas should also be validated. I hold the view that any framework for effective education policy implementation for Lesotho should reflect this nature of the education policy implementation process.

### **7.2.3 Importance of education policy implementation**

The literature review shows that the importance of education policy and the implementation thereof has gained momentum and significance in recent years (Trainor & Graue, 2014). This is because education policy is meant to safeguard and ensure that the quality of education offered is upheld all the time (Honig, 2006).

The importance and significance of education policy implementation stems from the fact that education policies are developed in response to particular educational problems or the vision to realise certain educational aims and objectives. In the same vein, it is rather a waste of money and resources to have policies that are not implemented. Education policies are therefore implemented so that it can have a particular impact on education (Ball, 2006). This impact could be either to contribute



towards the development of education (Ling, 2017) or to improve the outcomes of education (Kosor, Perovic & Golem, 2019). The impact of policy on education could also relate to the change an education policy brings to everyday practices in schools (Viennet & Pont, 2017), or to behaviour in schools.

The government of Lesotho laid down clear directives as to the nature and aims and objectives of Lesotho education policies. In this regard is it the vision of the Lesotho Constitution (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993: Section 25(1), (2); and Chapter III, Section 26(1)) that all policies and by implication all education policies should advance and promote equality and justice for all its citizens, and that race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, shall not be used as discriminatory categories in the provision of education.

In terms of education policy, it is envisioned in the constitution that all education policies implemented in Lesotho shall promote human development, dignity and a respect for human rights and fundamental freedom; shall ensure that basic education is compulsory and available to all; that secondary, technical, vocational and higher education is accessible and free; and that fundamental education is encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed their primary education (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993: Chapter III, Section 28(a)-(e)). The education vision of the Lesotho government finds expression in the Education Act, Number 3 of 2010, where explicit pronouncements are made about the nature and aims and objectives of education policy and the assumed value and significance of its implementation (cf. 4.6.2).

From the findings of the interviews, one could discern that participants view education policy implementation as significant in realising the aims and objectives of education (S2; TC2; N1, TU1, N2). In addition, with the implementation of education participants view the implementation of policies as important for the education sector because it gives the sector direction, uniformity and homogeneity when dealing with education-related matters (PU1, PM1, PM2, S1, S2, and P2). So whilst education policy implementation is important, especially to ensure progress and development within the education sector, it is particularly its value to ensure that aims and objectives of education is realised that stands out for the participants.

## **7.2.4 Present status of education policy implementation in Lesotho**

Education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector is currently facing challenges brought by factors such as poor collaboration between and among MoET and other stakeholders, which can also be described as lack of stakeholder engagement. Also poor policy dissemination and incessant political turmoil are other factors that derail proper and effective education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. In what follows the most pertinent challenges of education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector are discussed.

### **7.2.4.1 Policy dissemination**

For policies to be implemented they need to be disseminated. Policy dissemination is the active spreading, the distribution, communication, circulation, promulgation sharing (Southwell, Gannaway, Orrell, Chalmers & Abraham, 2010) of policies to those that need to be informed about the policy, and whose lives will be impacted by the implementation of a particular policy. Therefore, it deals with creating an awareness or raising consciousness about a policy, but more so also to make sure that significant actors in the policy process and those that are responsible for policy implementation have access to the policy. To facilitate the dissemination of a policy particularly committed avenues, channels and planned strategies should be used (Lewis, Proctor & Brownson, 2018; Canary & Taylor, 2016). The implementation of policies will therefore not happen organically or spontaneously. Rather, effective policy implementation requires that a proper dissemination plan be developed and committed agents be identified that would ensure the effective distribution of information about the policy. Since it is so central to effective policy implementation, I would expect that consideration be given throughout the policy process for how a policy will be disseminated and how awareness of a policy will be created and raised. Strategies to communicate and raise consciousness about as well as to create awareness of a policy – thus the dissemination of a policy - should therefore already be considered in the early stages of policy development and it should be consistently implemented throughout the entire policy process, and to in the policy implementation stage. Information gained through continuous and consistent communication about a policy will most definitely enhance ownership and implementation of a policy.

However, it should be noted that embedded within the notion of (effective) policy dissemination are the expectations that governments, as those primarily responsible for policy development, be transparent, honest and forward coming about the policy (May & Barlow, 2015) and its aims and objectives. Within such a context, it becomes easier to develop relationships of mutual trust and respect, which in turn will promote and improve policy implementation.

The centrality of policy dissemination is important because it promotes ownership and acceptance (UNESCO, 2015) of a policy. It is only when education policies are owned by those that are affected by the policy, that support for such policies can be garnered and that effective implementation thereof can be secured. When policies are not owned, they are not embraced. To embrace an education policy supposes that it is enthusiastically and willingly accepted. My view is that such level of acceptance is largely possible when policies are properly disseminated, and all information about a policy is properly shared to all. The principle of transparency therefore becomes important in policy dissemination.

The interviews revealed serious concerns regarding education policy dissemination in Lesotho. From the responses of participants, it seems as if a culture of policy dissemination is absent within the Lesotho education sector. In short, it appears as if the Lesotho government and more specifically the MoET fails to disseminate education policies. Various participants (P1; P3) expressed their dismay with MoET's failure and inability to properly disseminate existing and new education policies within the Lesotho education sector. As can be expected, not only school principals are lacking information about policies, but perceptions are that learners, teachers and parents also lack information on policies that are used in the education sector. From the responses of the participants, it appears as if stakeholders hardly get any information from MoET about education policies. One participant (P3) indicated that parents only hear of policies and laws when "they are summoned to disciplinary hearings of their children in schools." The lack of information results in feelings of isolation and despondence as is illustrated in the words of P3: "sadly we are on our own; the Ministry does not inform us about policies."

What seems to hamper policy dissemination and the subsequent effective policy implementation in Lesotho is a lack of resources – and more specifically financial resources (PU1; TU2; S1; N2).

### **7.2.6 Resources**

The insufficient allocation of resources to enable the efficient dissemination and subsequent implementation of policy is to be blamed for discrepancies between policy objectives and practice (Berkhout & Wielemans, 1999). Resources could entail material -, financial -, managerial -, bureaucratic and technical resources, clear policy goals, committed and skilful leadership, sufficient financial resources, support by key legislatures, and coordination among supportive agencies and interest groups (Swanepoel & De Beer, 1997; Salvensen, Evenson, Rodriguez & Brown, 2008; Signe, 2017; Nasson & Samuel, 1990; Brynard, 2007; Rechel, Williams & Wismar, 2019). To this effect is it noticeable that a direct link exists between effective policy implementation and the availability of resources (cf. Brynard, 2007:564; Signe, 2017; Nasson & Samuel, 1990:181). The availability to resources is therefore an important precondition for successful policy implementation.

Notably important is that whilst financial resources are important, well-trained human resources and good government and governance in the form of skilled and dedicated leadership, government support and effective coordination and cooperation amongst various agencies tasked with and interested in education policy implementation, is equally and of vital importance.

It appears from the literature review (Chapter 4) and the interviews (Chapter 6) that Lesotho suffers from a severe shortage of resources. This shortage negatively impacts the effective implementation of education policies. For example, various authors (cf. Mosia, 2014; Kaphe, 2017) refer to the partial implementation of particular Lesotho education policies due to limited resources. Pitikoe (2016) also refers to the shortages of resources in many primary schools in Lesotho. The Lesotho government (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019) also acknowledges that resource shortages in schools and within the Lesotho education section in general, negatively impacts teaching and learning conditions, and teacher morale. Since teachers are primarily also involved in the implementation of education policies, the overcrowded classrooms, high student

teacher ratios, insufficient teaching and learning resources that are so characteristic of Lesotho education will necessarily and most probably have an adverse impact on effective policy implementation in schools, especially in the rural areas of Lesotho (Lekhetho, 2013).

During the interviews, participants confirmed findings from the literature review about potential resource shortages in Lesotho education. In this regard, PU1 explicitly stated, “we [MOET] do not have sufficient resources to disseminate and subsequently implement our policies. As such, most of our policies are never implemented.” N2 also indicated that the MOET “do not have resources”. From the responses it appears as if it is largely the unavailability of financial resources, and not so much a shortage of human resources (cf. 6.5.2), that negatively impacts MOET’s and the Lesotho government’s ability to ensure the effective implementation of education policies. This as participants indicated that MOET does have human resources, but that finances are the problem. One participant (cf. 6.5.2) indicated that the budget allocated to the Special Education Unit, goes entirely for the salaries of staff members and that no money is ultimately available for policy implementation.

Therefore, whilst it seems that MOET does have enough human resources to ensure effective policy implementation, financial constraints seem to hinder this process. Bearing in mind that policy implementation is costly; in Lesotho, more money should be made available for policy implementation

### **7.2.7 Politics**

It has been established that politics play a crucial role in the extent to which policies are and will be implemented (cf. 3.6.2). It has also been established that policy and the entire policy development process – of which policy implementation is part of- is rather political in nature (cf. 2.2.1). More so, the entire policy process in general and the policy implementation process to, could therefore be regarded as a product of and or informed by politics (Chakrabarty & Chand, 2016; Schultz, 2004; Birkland, 2016:17). Politics deal with power, and both are significant in the policy process because they influence the allocation of funds and resources, and ultimately the implementation of educational policies. In terms of the impact of politics on policy implementation, it was

observed that policies could not be successfully implemented without political interference (D'hurst, O'Sullivan & Scheiber, 2017).

In addition, those in power (Welsh, 2014) often use policy and its implementation (or the lack of implementation thereof) to gain political points. It can therefore be stated that the policy process in general and policy implementation is not a neutral, value-free and unbiased process, but rather a political process heavily influenced by politics and those in power. More so, policy is also used to maintain political power. Hence I contend that the politicisation of policy, also in Lesotho, has contributed to the formulation and implementation of overambitious policies solely with the aim of winning political capital, scoring political points and clinging to power. In Lesotho, this resulted in the creation of a highly unpredictable education context characterised by many tensions, contradictions and confusions in the education sector.

The issue of politics also relates to two very relevant aspects namely political stability and political will. In the former, ongoing and continuous changes in government negatively influence effective and efficient policy implementation (Ekpiken & Ifere (2015; Paudel, 2009:49). Whilst the latter relates to the extent that political leaders and significant political stakeholders demonstrate a genuine interest or willingness to ensure the effective and successful implementation of a policy.

It is my contention that politics in Lesotho also severely and negatively influence the effective implementation of education policies in Lesotho. For one, Lesotho is a country characterised by political instability. Incessant political turmoil and instability (cf. 4.3.1; cf. 4.5.1; Williams, 2019; Lekhetho, 2013) has resulted in various SADC interventions in the country and its politics (cf. 4.3.1; Weisfelder, 2014). So dire is the political situation in Lesotho that Mokotso (2019:1) opines that, “[t]here is sufficiently prevailing consensus that Lesotho has never experienced a stable democracy ever since political independence.” It is within this context of instability and political turmoil that in recent years Lesotho has established a number of very fragile and unstable coalition governments. The eminent outcome of this was a continuous and a distressing past at which Ministers of Education were changed (cf. 4.5.1) over the past years. Logically so, the continuous change of Ministers resulted in policy implementation being stalled.

The interviews confirmed that political instability in Lesotho has had a negative impact on education in the country in general, but also on education policy implementation to (cf. 6.6.5). During the interviews, various participants blamed the political crisis in Lesotho and politics on the poor conditions in Lesotho education (U1; AM2; AM1). PM1 and PM2 raised their concerns with the frequency with which governments in Lesotho are toppled and ministers are replaced. PM1 claimed that at times, a Minister just serves 6 months in government and he/she is replaced or the government is changed. In line with the influence of politics on policy, ES1 indicated that partisan politics have contaminated the Lesotho political system, and this has resulted in people no longer being hired on merit but on political affiliations. Earlier (cf.3.8.1, 4.5.2), it was indicated that well trained and skilled human resources are equally important resources for effective policy implementation. If partisan politics indeed inform the politics of Lesotho, as is claimed by the participant, then it can be expected that policy implementation will be hampered. This is because those that will be appointed into key positions might not necessarily have the knowledge and skills to ensure effective policy implementation.

Linked to politics and a prerequisite for effective policy implementation, is government's will (cf.3.6.2) – that is the will of the Lesotho government to improve conditions in education by the effective implementation of education policies. The extent of political will, of course also impacts on the nature of citizen participation in policy implementation (cf. Lesia, 2015). Vargas-Baron (2016) warns that ministers (and I want to assume public officials in general) might openly support the implementation of a particular policy, whilst behind the scenes they actively frustrate the effective implementation of the very same policy. It is therefore possible that Lesotho education ministers or Lesotho politicians and government officials could in public create the impression that they support and embrace a particular policy, but deliberately frustrate its implementation by not providing the resources to ensure its effective implementation. Khumalo (2018) hints to this when claiming that the MoET actively promotes the implementation of a policy on Inclusive Education, but at the same time it does not employ additional teachers, or build additional classrooms to ensure that the needs of all diverse learners are adequately catered for, and thus the effective implementation of the policy.



Similarly, participants accused the Lesotho government (and public office bearers in MoET) of lacking the political will to ensure effective policy implementation (cf. 6.6.5). PM1 sarcastically stated, “politicians just do things so that we can clap hands for them. They are not interested in improving our education”, while AM1 suggested that the Lesotho government is not interested in education as it has other priorities that keeps it busy. Participants also expressed their reservations as to whether the government and politicians have the political will to implement policies that would benefit and improve education in Lesotho (cf. 6.6.5). PM1 stated that Lesotho politicians lack political will, whilst AM2 called for political will in Lesotho so that all education policies can be implemented.

In essence, it appears that the rather unstable nature of the Lesotho politics, and an explicit lack of political will impact on government’s ability to effectively implement education policies that would benefit the country and improve education. It therefore becomes important that the political situation in Lesotho as well as political will should be considered as important determinants of effective policy implementation.

### **7.2.8 Stakeholder involvement**

In this study, stakeholders are considered to be those agents that are located outside the realm of the state or government, and they might include business, public -, private - and non-governmental organisations. The literature suggests that no policy can be successfully implemented without the involvement of different stakeholders and that effective policy implementation is primarily built on the involvement of and co-operative partnership with various stakeholders (Arop, Owan & Ekpang, 2018; Tereza, 2019; Khan, 2016). Involvement in policy implementation assumes that stakeholders should have knowledge about, understand the policy aims and objectives as well as the directives pronounced in the policy and develop a sense of ownership for policies (UNESCO, 2015; Mu, Li, & Fu, 2018; Cerna, 2013). Stakeholder involvement should be secured and maintained from the initial stages of policy development right through to the process. Stakeholder participation for effective policy implementation also implies that stakeholders are not only involved in every step of the policy process, but that all relevant information about a policy and its implementation is consistently communicated to all stakeholders. Whilst stakeholder involvement in policy



implementation can take up various forms, it is especially in the bottom–up and hybrid policy implementation approaches that the involvement appears to be significant, promoted and of particular importance (cf. 3.2 (a) & 3.2 (c)). With the inclusion of many and various stakeholders, the bottom-up and hybrid approaches signify a more transparent, all-inclusive and democratic approach to policy implementation and the involvement of stakeholders in policy implementation. Such stakeholder involvement in policy implementation is important as it ultimately determines the extent of policy implementation and therefore the outcome of a policy.

The Lesotho education system is best described as a joint venture or a partnership between the state and other stakeholders of which the church is the most significant stakeholder (cf. 4.1; 4.3.1; 4.4.2). The significance of stakeholders in the delivery of effective education is reflected in the Education Act 2010 Section 3(d) which acknowledges that the education system in Lesotho has many and diverse stakeholders. For the Education Act, these stakeholders are primarily the parents, school boards, the church, the Teaching Council and Teacher Unions (cf. 4.6.1). Whilst these stakeholders are explicitly identified in the Education Act, no reference is made of partnerships with NGOs. This despite the significant role NGO's play in the Lesotho education (cf. 4.4.1).

In this study, I looked at the roles played by the Non-governmental organisations (cf. 3.7.2), teacher unions (cf. 3.7.3), the media (cf. 3.7.4) and donors (3.7.5) as actors in the policy process, and more specifically in policy implementation. However, it is important to bear in mind that teachers and parents (as represented by School Boards) are integral to the Lesotho education and that they are equally important stakeholders and they are equally involved in policy implementation (cf. 4.6.2). Whilst I did not in detail discuss the roles of parents in policy implementation or explore it through the interviews any framework to policy implementation in Lesotho, should necessarily reflect and consider parents (School Boards) as fundamental to effective policy implementation. In the sections below, I discuss the roles of the various stakeholders.

#### **a) Non-governmental organisations (NGO's)**

From the literature, it appears that NGO's are generally and widely involved in policy processes to ensure effective policy-making and implementation (cf. Klugman, 2000; Thomas, 2001; Volmink & Van der Elst, 2017). The literature refers to their

involvement as being 'institutionalised'. Because of the close proximity to the people, NGO's could potentially play a significant role as policy activists. This is because they could be involved in advocacy for policy change and could serve as platforms for community participation in policy processes. In addition, they could assess and evaluate new policies, advocate for implementation as well as influence the nature of implementation. NGO's could also give access to financial assistance and other resources such as human capital and expertise and this places them in an ideal position to play a significant role in ensuring effective policy implementation (cf. 3.7.2).

Various NGO's are already established and active within the Lesotho education sector where they perform various function (cf. 4.4.1). From the interviews it appears that, NGOs are aware of and acknowledge that they have a role to play in ensuring effective education delivery in Lesotho through policy implementation. In this regard N2 referred to the "advocacy for the implementation of ... [policies]", and N1 regarded the duty of NGO's to "ensure that government fulfils its roles and responsibilities to the people." However, from the response of N1 it appears that NGO's in Lesotho are not effectively used in the implementation of education policies.

### **b) Teacher Unions**

Teacher unions are intensely involved in and they play a critical role in the education policy processes (Mafisa, 2017; Barber in Kudumo 2011; Govender, 2004; Cowen & Strunk, 2014). Teacher unions are variously involved in the policy process – where they bring fundamental social change by acting as advisors and consultants to policy. In policy implementation, to they influence how policies are received and implemented by those tasked with or expected to implement the policy.

Teacher unions are acknowledged as legitimate structures within the Lesotho education sector (cf. 4.6.2(e)). However, Lesotho Education Act (2010) is silent on the role of teacher unions in the policy process in general and policy implementation to. When it comes to the involvement of teacher unions in the policymaking process, it seems their role is quite limited. During the interviews, TU1 pointed out:

in the policy process starting from policy development or policy building. The Ministry always seeks our opinion on what to include in the policy. However, when it comes to policy implementation, it is a different story as they always

implement in isolation. We have been complaining about that tendency, but it has been in vain.

It also appears that there are inconsistencies in the involvement of teacher unions as indicated by the response from TU2, who states that,

the Ministry of education does not include us during policy implementation. I am also a teacher; I only see some of the policies when they are being implemented in the school where I work, but as a trade union, the Ministry never engage us.

The different responses given by the two teacher unions 'representatives are an indication that something is likely to be amiss in the manner in which MoET engages Teacher Unions in education policy processes. Teacher Unions therefore also represent the voice of teachers in policy processes. This means that in the event that Teacher Unions are not entirely and from the onset involved in policy processes, as is indicated by the participants, teachers are also not involved. Teacher are at the coal face of policy implementation. They are the ones who are actively involved with and in the execution of education policies. To ensure that they embrace, support and promote a particular policy, requires that they should be involved – be it through their Teacher Unions – in all policy processes. If not, it can be expected that teachers will not actively support the implementation of a policy, neither will Teacher Unions mobilise their members around the implementation of a policy. Rather, hostility between teacher Unions and MoET, or perceptions from Teacher Unions that MoET defy their significance in policy processes and policy implementation may just result in Teacher Unions using their power to canvas and mobilise their member against a particular policy. This will have a negative impact on policy implementation in schools, and across the Lesotho education sector. Teacher Unions should therefore be regarded as value stakeholders to ensure effective policy implementation.

### **C) The Media**

Because of its prevalence and its accessibility to the wider population, the media has a very important role to play in the policy process in general and in education policy implementation to (cf. 3.7.4). As such, the media influences the way in which policies are presented to those expected to and tasked with the implementation thereof and those that will be affected by its implementation (Bonal, 2000). Not only is the media an important agent that should be used for policy dissemination and implementation (Olper & Swinne, 2009) but it also sets the agenda which affect public opinion on

various policy issues (Kingdon, 2014), and makes possible communication between the community and policy maker (Leavy, 2013; Macharashvili, Basiliaia & Tangiashvili, 2015). In addition, as watchdogs over public policy implementation, the media also helps with the assessment of policy effectiveness (Ling, 2013); it influences policy decision (Mwangi, 2018), it enhances government accountable in case policies fail, and it increases inclusivity in policy processes (Mickloleit, 2014). It has been noted earlier that inclusivity, transparency and participation in policy implementation is important to ensure policy success.

With regard to the media and its role in Lesotho, Selinyane (2008) posits that the media in Lesotho is highly politicised as the stories it reports show traces of political bias.

Furthermore, a report by Matsasa, Sitheto and Wekesa (2019:4) on the state of the media in Lesotho, also stipulates that the Basotho

have felt that the media has become a loose cannon, which does as it desires. It does not uphold cardinal canons of the journalism profession such as accuracy, avoidance of bias, balance, truthfulness and observance of public interest, respect for the privacy rights of others as well as limitation to harm.

The implication of the foregoing statement is that there is some level of mistrust of the media among Basotho. Also it appears that the media is impartial in its reporting, and this is likely to affect the way it disseminates or communicates information on education policies. This is particularly true in the event that the media is aligned (or not) to a particular political party or the government of the day.

The interviews displayed a sensitivity on the part of participants about the value and the significance of the media in policy processes and policy implementation to (cf. 6.6.4). This is despite the view of AM2 (cf. also PM2) that as the media they are not performing their roles of policy dissemination or reporting on policy implementation effectively because they “are in the dark when it comes to education policy implementation.” They are only used to make a particular policy “popular even though [they] do not know it [themselves]” (PM2). Participants suggested that the Lesotho media should be used to disseminate information (AM1; P2; T1; T2) and to raise awareness about education policy, as it would enhance its implementation (AM2).

#### **d) Donors**

Whilst international aid and the influence of donors is common, especially in developing countries, it is also rather contested, particularly within the context of policy development (cf. 3.7.5; cf. also Asongu & Nwachukwu, 2015). Over the years, foreign donors have contributed significantly to countries on the African continent (Farah, Onder & Ayhah, 2018; Banyopadhay & Vermann, 2013). In countries where they have a footprint, donors are variously involved in the policy process. Their involvements extent the provision of financial support to include the provision of technical support as well as to assist in building capacity in an effort to bring changes in policies (Sakala & Mwitwa, 2017) and also to assist with the implementation of policies.

However, the involvement of donors in general and in policy processes and in policy implementation to is not as straightforward and innocent as one would expect it to be or as one is made to believe. Rather, donor aid comes with a price tag and in many cases it primarily advances the interest of the donor (Ali, Banks & Parsons, 2015). Whereas it also promotes dependency on the donor country and contributes towards rampant poverty in the receiving country (Kabonga, 2017) – a situation described by Farah, et al. (2018:9) as “dire and does not seem to be improving for the better”.

In addition, the issue of donors is also intrinsically linked to the phenomenon of policy borrowing and policy lending (cf. 3.8.2). Donor involvement creates favourable conditions for policy borrowing and lending to occur (Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). Policy borrowing exists because countries think that policies from the lender country will suit their needs and similarly address their problems (cf. 3.8.2). However, borrowed policies cannot be implemented in the borrower country – such as Lesotho – without making the necessary adjustments so that it can suite local needs and the local context. Modification for the local context is important to ensure the successful implementation of the borrowed policy (Birnbaum, 2000, and Ponzi & Koenig, cited in Alderman, 2014).

It should be noted that where donors are involved in (developing) countries, such countries are coerced into adopting policy positions that are favoured by and that are to the advantage of the donor. The direct impact of this is that receiving countries are

expected to adopt and to implement policies that are not necessarily relevant to the local context or local conditions and that do not suite the needs of the local people.

In addition, donors' lack of insight, their ignorance and their obliviousness, to local conditions, local politics, and aspirations of the local people result in them not being able to demonstrate a sensitivity to and predict the outcome of policy positions they enforce on countries. The result of this is that irrelevant policies many developing countries adopt and implement have disastrous effects on the local context. Verger (2014:16) who testifies that "developing countries-adopt global policies because they are externally imposed on them via aid conditionality" supports the preceding view.

It is the view of Monaheng (2007) that donor assistance has played a pivotal role in the Lesotho education sector. To, donor agencies such as the World Bank, Global Fund, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) United Nations Scientific, Education and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA), have been very active in assisting Lesotho education sector in "addressing curriculum and assessment policy, HIV and AIDS education, Human Right Education, Population Education and Environmental Education respectively" (Monaheng, 2007: 1).

The preceding claim by Monaheng (2007) is supported by some of the participants that were interviewed in this study, at it appears from the interviews that a number of donor countries and entities such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and the World Bank are either donating or lending money to Lesotho, with their own conditions attached. The interviews also revealed a sensitivity amongst participants of the role and impact of these donors on Lesotho education and Lesotho education policy processes and implementation. For example, some participants are upfront that the Lesotho education sectors implements, "donor driven policies that sometimes do not address [their] pressing needs, but those of the donors" (PU2; P1). N1 also refers to "imported policies that are not domesticated". Whilst P1 indicated that Lesotho develop and implement policies on instruction of donor countries "without asking any questions", T3 opined that Lesotho do things [implement policies] "just to impress the international community not to address our pressing needs as a country". The severity of the impact of donors on Lesotho education is aptly described by P1 when stating that "we [Lesotho] are dictated to", and S1 who stated that donors "test

their policies on us, in short we [the Lesotho people and the Lesotho education system] are guinea pigs”.

The danger of donor coerced policies is of course that such policies are not only irrelevant to the Lesotho context, but also they can never be effectively implemented - a reality that was confirmed by some participants. To illustrate this point S1 referred to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, which he/she stated, is “too expensive for [Lesotho] as a country but we [the people of Lesotho and the education sector] are stuck with it because some international donor decided we [Lesotho and Lesotho education] need to implement it.” S2 also indicated that Lesotho is now stuck with certain [irrelevant] education policies and that MOET cannot implement these policies “as we have no means to.”

The irrelevance of some Lesotho education policies was also highlighted in reference to the urban and rural areas of Lesotho. PM2 referred to the stark inequalities between rural and urban parts of Lesotho and the apparent disregard for this reality as is evident in the aims, objectives, and pronouncements found in certain policies – a disregard brought about by policies that are not sensitive to the Lesotho socio-economic conditions. The frustration with the influence of donors and the dismay with the inability of Lesotho government and MOET to take the Lesotho educational reality and the disparities between the urban and rural educational context of Lesotho into consideration, when adopting and implementing policies is loud and clear in the response of T3. In this regard, T3 asked, “take for example the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as stipulated in the CAP, one can ask, who in their right mind recommends that learners be taught ICT in a country where schools based in the rural areas do not have electricity?”

Lesotho adopted a policy on the localisation of the curriculum. With this policy, the aim is to shift towards a more relevant curriculum that will address the specific needs of the country. Decision to localise the curriculum started when Lesotho decided to mark Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) locally. This was followed by the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009 and later the introduction of the Lesotho General Certificate for Secondary Education (LGCSE), which replaced the COSC (Raselimo &Thamae, 2018:1). However, Raselimo and Thamae (2018:1) further point out that they cannot comment on the alignment of



LGCSE syllabi and the localisation policy framework, presumably because there is no alignment between the two at all. This is indicative of the haphazard and none harmonious nature of policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

Now, if the Lesotho government is serious about the localisation of education – that is making education relevant to the people of Lesotho and the Lesotho context – why then is there the perception that it allows itself to be dictated to and that it adopts and implements policies that appear to be in contrast to the educational needs of the people of Lesotho and the development of the country? Unless of course the policy on the localisation or Africanisation of Lesotho education is political rhetoric's or as Jansen (2002; also Anderson, 2000) calls it “policy symbolism”. If the policy of localisation is indeed an example of political symbolism, then it is understandable why no significant transformation is taking place within Lesotho education and Lesotho schools – despite the various policies that are adopted and implemented.

The issue of donor influence in Lesotho policy processes and policy implementation also brings to the fore current debates in Africa on the decolonisation of education. We have noticed that Lesotho was once colonised by Britain (Rosenberg & Weisfelder, 2013). We have also noticed that Lesotho education was heavily influence by colonialism and that current Lesotho education still shows remnants of its colonised past and the education the Basotho was subjected to (Ntombana & Mokotso, 2018; Mokotso, 2016; Ntsoaole, 2012). The colonial education the Basotho people was subjected to is also the motivation behind the move towards a localised education curriculum. This is indicated in one of the aims of the Curriculum and assessment Policy, 2009 that state that the framework aims to “... fully localise secondary education curriculum and assessment.” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009:V).

Furthermore, the policy also articulates that localisation of the curriculum was spurred by the Basotho philosophy of education which is based on an old adage that says “mphe, mphe ea; lapisa (molekane), motho o khonoa ke sa ntlo ea hae [meaning] unless you have your own means, you cannot live to your heart's content” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2009: 5 &6). The implication of the foregoing is that for Lesotho to be content in the education it provides to its citizens, it must localise its curriculum. I argue that Lesotho education will never be decolonised unless it is freed from its dependency



on donor support and donor ‘expert advice’ that uses education policy to maintain the colonialization of Lesotho.

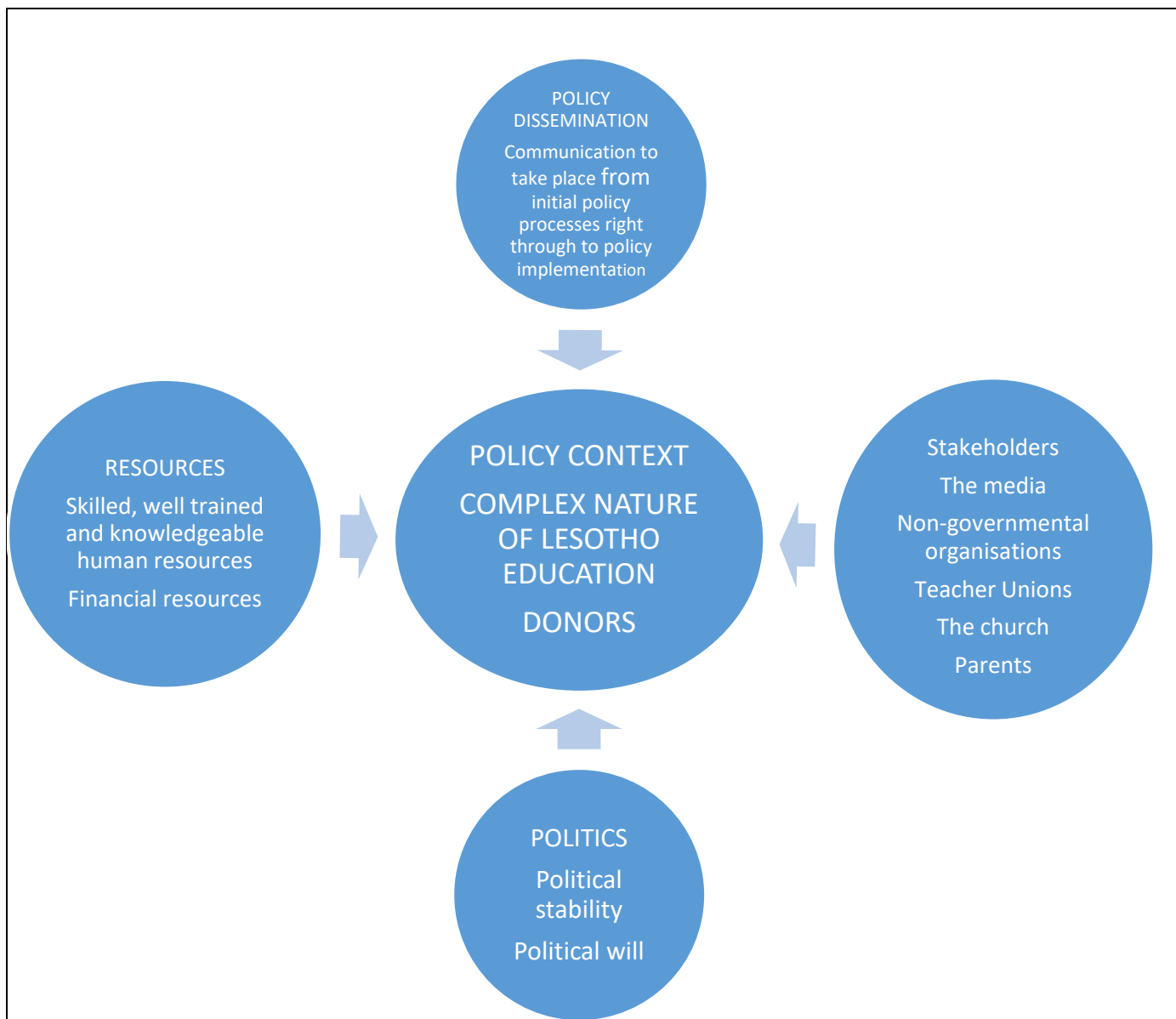
Having discussed the impact of donors on policy processes in Lesotho, it appears that a framework for effective policy implementation in Lesotho should probably not take into consideration and or reflect donor involvement in policy processes and policy implementation. Alternatively, such a framework should be sensitive to the impact of donor aid on education policy and ultimately on education in Lesotho.

All these are discussed to to narrow the policy implementation gap (cf. 3.6.1). A policy implementation gap exists where the intentions of a policy does not match up with the outcomes of that policy, resulting in implementation failure. This mismatch – or gap – could be the result of unsatisfactory or fragile systems (Leipold, 2016) or bureaucratic and political challenges (Buckner, Spencer & Cha, 2017). Indications are that a policy gap, resulting in policy implementation failures, exist within Lesotho education sector (Khoboli, Kibirige & O’Toole, 2013). During the interviews participants hinted to the existence of a policy implementation gap which derails policy implementation in Lesotho education (cf. 6.6.6), and they ascribed the existence of this gap especially to the absence of one unifying and overarching education sector policy (PU1; PU2; N1; TU1). The absence of an overarching education planning policy appears to result in “disintegrated policies” (PU1) and “stand-alone policies” (TU1). The disintegrated nature of Lesotho education policies appears to be the result of uncoordinated policy development and implementation processes (PU1), where some departments and units within MoET develop policies without consultation with or knowledge of the Planning Unit. In Lesotho, the Planning Unit is primarily responsible for the development and implementation of education policies. However, it appears that at times policies are developed and implemented without the knowledge of and or collaboration with the Planning Unit. The danger of this is that policies are not harmonised and synergised, which could impact negatively on their implementation. Synergy between policies are important as uncoordinated policies could give different messages, which in turn could impact on its implementation.

## **7.3 Towards a framework for policy implementation in Lesotho**

This study was conducted with the aim to develop a framework for policy implementation in Lesotho. This framework is derived from the findings of this study done against the backdrop of the literature review. From the findings of my study, I propose a framework for effective policy implementation in Lesotho.

In proposing this framework, it is important to bear in mind that the Lesotho government and MoET envisions an education system that will deliver quality education and that will respond to the needs of the learners and the Basotho people. It is evident from the research that the MoET developed various education policies that are aimed at improving Lesotho education, and so contribute towards the development of the country and her people. However, it is also evident that education policy implementation in Lesotho is challenged and hampered by various factors, that are either inherent to the education system or that are located outside of the education sphere. As a result, very few if any of the developed policies are ultimately effectively implemented. This has a negative impact on the education sector and on Lesotho's development. It is therefore in the interest of both Lesotho education, as well as the country that a framework be developed that could assist in the implementation of Lesotho education policies. It is with this in mind that the following framework is put forward.



**Figure 8 Framework for education policy implementation in Lesotho**

In making sense of this framework the following is important that MoET should consider and reflect upon to ensure effective policy implementation:

**a) Policy implementation is a complex process**

MoET should appreciate the fact that policy implementation is a complex process and it is iterative. Its complexity stems from the fact that policy implementation takes (or is supposed to take place) place at various levels. More so, various factors work in on the implementation of a policy, and different meanings and understandings are attached to a policy text and the message contained in it. As such it needs to be

approached with care, good planning, clearly articulated aims and objectives, and understanding and a recognition of and sensitivity for the factors influencing effective policy implementation, especially for those factors that are unique to Lesotho. Such an understanding will enhance a consciousness of possible pitfalls along the implementation process. Its iterative nature requires that MoET be reflexive and flexible during policy implementation to ensure the success of policy implementation. Policy implementation is only one phase of the policy process, and that the effectiveness of policy implementation is in essence determined by every preceding stage of the policy process.

**b) Policy implementation should reflect and be sensitive to the involvement of and collaboration with various stakeholders**

MoET should appreciate the fact that policy implementation is a collaborative process that is doomed to fail unless all relevant stakeholders are not acknowledged and involved in the process and unless collaborative partnerships with stakeholders are established. It is also in the interest of democracy and related principles of equality, equity, justice and transparency that strategies be developed to enhance stakeholder involvement in policy implementation in Lesotho education. Stakeholder involvement enhances policy implementation by promoting ownership of a policy and buy-in into a policy. Apart from the parents, and the church, which are primary stakeholders in Lesotho education, the following stakeholders should also be involved in policy implementation: the media, teacher unions, non-governmental organisations, churches and parents.

**i) Non-governmental organisations (NGO's)**

MoET should value the significant contribution NGO's, as activists, could make to policy implementation, and involve NGO's in education policy implementation. This involvement should not only be limited to the actual process of policy implementation but NGO's should be involved in every phase of the policy process. Their close proximity to the people and their collaboration with communities creates opportunity for and it also enhances the effectiveness of NGO's in policy implementation. NGO's contributes significantly to policy implementation by enhancing policy ownership through advocating policy implementation, creating opportunities for

community participation and involvement in policy implementation, by assessing and evaluating new policies and their implementation, influencing the nature of policy implementation; by giving access to various resources of which financial resources are paramount for Lesotho.

**ii) Teacher Unions**

MoET should value the contribution teacher unions could make towards education policy implementation. The appreciation of the value of teacher unions to policy implementation should be informed by a realisation that teacher unions are not only primarily concerned with and geared towards protecting the rights and interests of their members, but that teacher unions are also concerned with the transformation and the improvement of education. There is therefore no need to be hostile towards teacher unions, instead, good relationships with teacher unions could enhance policy implementation. Through their involvement with teachers, who happens to be important implementers of education policies and who are at the coalface of implementation, teacher unions determine how policies are received, and perceived and to what extent they will be implemented by teachers.

**iii) The media**

MoET should realise that the media is an important role player in policy implementation and it makes possible communication between the community and government. As watchdog over public policy implementation, the media also helps to evaluate policy implementation and it influences government decision on policy implementation. In addition, the media also ensures that government is held accountable for any policy implementation failures, and it enhances inclusivity in policy processes. Notwithstanding this, the media can also be used in the dissemination of policies. This they can do effectively because of their wide coverage via printed media and the radio.

**iv) The churches**

MoET should appreciate and value the churches as part of the major role players in education policy implementation and ensure that they are

consulted and included in main decision making on policy processes. The inclusion of the churches should stem from the fact that they own and control the majority of schools in Lesotho, and failure to have their buy-in on policy implementation could jeopardise and frustrate the process, leading to poor or lack of implementation.

**v) The parents**

MoET should also acknowledge that parents, through the School Boards, are significant role players in the implementation of education policy. By virtue of them being part of the so-called tripartite structure, Lesotho education does allow for the involvement of parents in school governance, even though their roles are not clearly stipulated. However, it is important that parents are included in policy processes, to policy implementation. By not involving parents, MoET runs the risk of hostility and lack of cooperation from the parents when it comes to education policy implementation. For example, during the implementation of the Free and Compulsory Primary Education parents refused to buy stationery for their children when MoET delayed to supply it to schools. The argument of the parents was that it is the role of MoET, not them (parents) to provide stationery. This example is just one of the few indications of how, an oversight to engage parents can be detrimental to the implementation of education policy.

**c) Policy dissemination is a prerequisite for effective policy implementation**

MOET should realise and appreciate the fact that no effective policy implementation can take place without the effective dissemination of education policies. This implies that education policies should be properly communicated and widely distributed to ensure its successful implementation. The dissemination of a policy should be an integral part of the policy process and it should not be left to when the final policy is completed and about to be implemented. Rather information about an education policy or the intention to develop a policy should be communicated from the initial stages of the policy process to all ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved. This will ensure the buy-in and ownership of the policy which in turn will promote its effective implementation. Although MOET has a designated unit – The Planning Unit, for policy development, there seems to be lack of coordinated efforts to ensure policies are

disseminated and so guarantee the success of the policy development processes and the implementation of education policies. To this effect, MOET can make use of can make use of NGOs, education secretaries, media, and train teachers so that dissemination is accelerated.

**d) Sufficient resources should be made available for effective education policy implementation.**

MOET should realise that policy implementation requires sufficient resources. Resources that should be made available are trained and skilled human resources, financial resources and other relevant infrastructure. The availability of financial resources is meant to ensure that information about policies is communicated and to make sure that the policy development process and policy dissemination is uninterrupted and unfettered. Trained and skilled human resources are supposed to ensure that the policy process unfolds in a way that will ensure that a policy is developed that meet that needs of the education sector and of the Basotho people. More so it is also meant to ensure that policies are effectively implemented. The value of relevant infrastructure to ensure that policies are effectively implemented can never be over-emphasised. As such, strategies that can be used include drawing a budget for policy dissemination, find suitable means for dissemination and strategically have sufficient human and financial resources for policy implementation.

**e) The influence of donors in education policy processes and policy implementation should be minimised**

MOET's reliance on donors for policies that are aimed at addressing the education needs of Lesotho should be limited and MOET should realise that the needs of the Lesotho education sector and that of the Basotho people are unique and context specific. This implies that the education sector and the Basotho people expects policies that respond to this uniqueness and to the reality of the Lesotho education sector and the Basotho people. Having said this, it is therefore important that should MOET really and earnestly wish to improve Lesotho education, it needs to develop and implement education policies that reflect the Lesotho context and the aspirations of the Basotho people. MOET and the government of Lesotho should therefore limit its dependence on foreign policies and the 'generous' assistance of donors with policy development and policy implementation. These donors claim to know what the

Lesotho education sector needs, and what the aspirations of the Basotho people are. However, the policies donors develop (or coerce MoET to adopt) and that MOET implements are divorced from the realities of either the education sector or the country. Less dependence on donors and donor added policies will also signal MOETS sincere aspiration to localise education and to break the grip of colonialization of the Lesotho education.

**f) The current political situation and -instability in Lesotho impacts negatively on effective policy implementation**

Whilst the political nature of policies and that of the entire policy process has its own bearing on effective policy implementation, MOET should also be cognisant of the fact that the current political instability in Lesotho does not promote effective policy implementation. This as the frequent change of government creates a policy context that is not stable and therefore not conducive to effective policy implementation. Frequent changes in government result in frequent changes of education ministers and senior officials, many of which are then replaced with partisans, which might not necessarily have the required skills, knowledge or political will to ensure effective education policy implementation. This destabilises and disrupts not only the education sector, but also policy implementation and it result in discontinuity in and incoherent policy implementation.

## **7.4 Policy implementation and Complexity Theory: a note on the complex nature of education policy implementation**

Complexity theory assumes that reality consists of a complex system comprised of dynamic networks of relationships with various components that are connected and which interact as a whole and not as separate parts. Therefore, complexity theory describes and also explains to us the complexity of our reality, our world or phenomena within this world. As a result, complexity theory does not conform to a linear course of events. This characteristic of complexity theory aligns well with notions of the policy process as a non-linear process. As such, it helps us to understand how the Lesotho education policy reality functions and or how it should be understood. It therefore supposes that we understand the policy process in Lesotho as a complex



phenomenon informed and guided by a rather and equally complex network of factors that influences policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

In this study, I referred to the complex nature of the policy process and of policy implementation that is informed by the socio-political factors. More so, the complex nature of the policy process, also stems from the fact that policy does not happen in a vacuum, but it happens within a particular context where various factors inevitably work in on the process and the implementation. The complex nature of the policy process and of policy implementation therefore requires from MoET a sensitivity and an awareness of the multiple factors which collectively work in on and hampers effective policy implementation in Lesotho. It is within the realisation that policy implementation is a complex process that transformation and change is possible.

In this study I demonstrated how complex education policy implementation in Lesotho is. In this regard, I referred to various factors that in one way or the other impact on effective policy implementation. These factors which include politics, resources, stakeholders, etc., create the complex context within which education policy implementation in Lesotho takes place. Applying complexity theory to Lesotho education policy processes, I realise that it is impossible to ensure effective policy implementation unless MOET acknowledges, appreciates, and reflects in the policy implementation process, the interconnectedness of these factors. Such a sensitivity will not only value the context within which policy happens, but it will also enhance a non-linear approach towards policy implementation. Such an approach will for example give more recognition and prominence to the various stakeholders and interest groups in the education sector, and the various factors that are at play in policy implementation, and so enhances effective policy implementation.

It is my contention that unless MOET appreciates and acknowledges the complexity of the education policy process and the equally complex nature of education policy implementation, will the vision of an improved education sector informed by responsive education policies not be realised.

This interconnectedness can also be illustrated by a cow. The reason for using a cow is that in the Basotho culture a cow is a very important animal. To that effect Basotho even have a proverb that says “*khomo ke Molimo o nko e metsi*” loosely translated “a cow is a god with a wet nose.” The meaning behind this proverb is that a cow is sacred

to Basotho and holds a status of a god. By using a cow, I am aligning my study with the believes and principles that Basotho swear by.

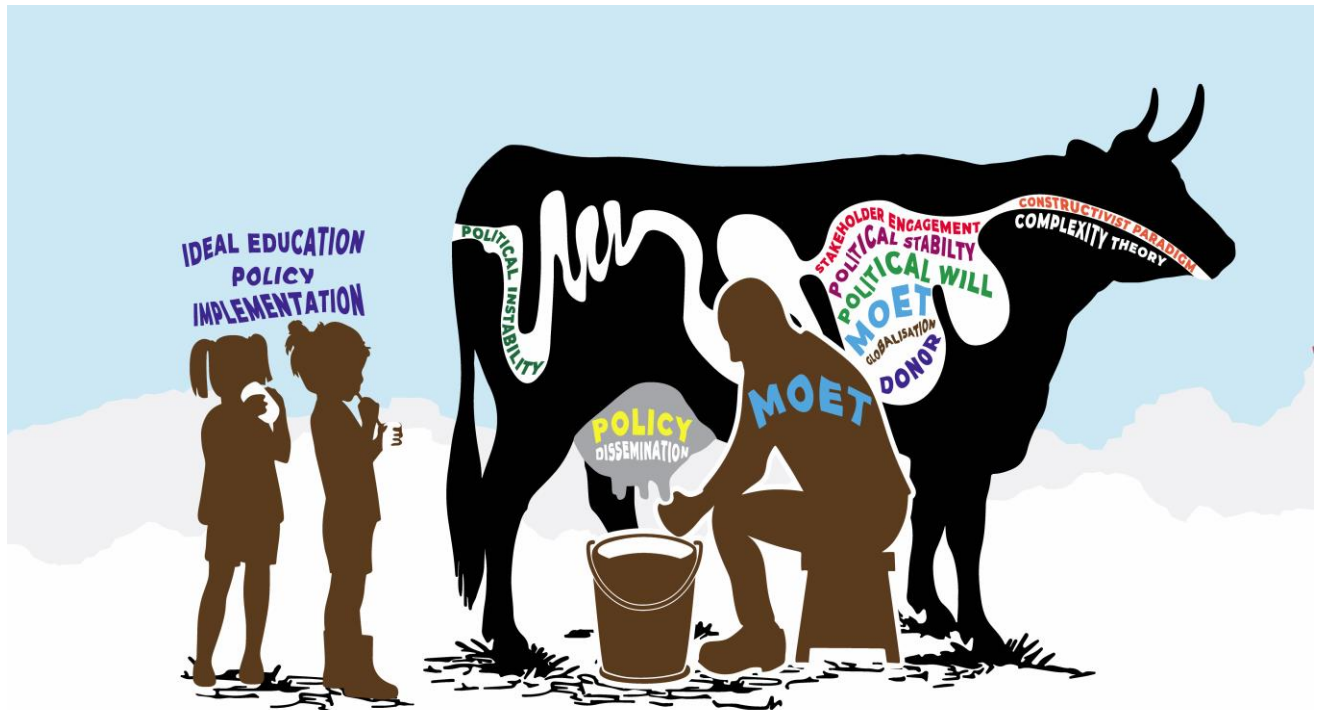


Figure 9: Ideal Education Policy implementation

## 7.5 Contribution of the study

The aim of this study was to develop a framework that could assist in enhancing policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. The adoption of various objectives enabled me to work towards the realization of that aim. Having done that it is my hope that this study will contribute to a better understanding of the Lesotho education policy process in general, and policy implementation to. Significantly, from a conceptual point of view, this thesis has provided insights into education policy implementation in Lesotho, whilst it also shed light on significant and relevant factors that variously impact on education policy implementation in Lesotho. Of particular importance is the critique of taken-for-granted stakeholders and practices in Lesotho education which has contributed to current discourse on stakeholder involvement in policy processes.

In line with the aim of this study, a framework for policy implementation in Lesotho education sector was developed. This framework emanated from the literature and the views of the participants. It is hoped that this framework will assist MoET to improve education policy implementation in Lesotho, by being cognisant of and by focusing on the various important roles stakeholders ought to play in and contribution they ought to make towards effective education policy implementation in Lesotho. It is hoped that such an awareness will enhance greater stakeholder involvement in education policy implementation and result in a more inclusive policy implementation approach. It is my view that this framework will assist MoET in the entire policy process, from the policy initiation process to policy implementation and policy evaluation. More so it will also assist with policy dissemination. Thus, the use of this framework during and throughout the education policy process will enhance more effective policy implementation and it will improve education in Lesotho, and contribute towards the development of Lesotho and the progress of the Basotho people.

It is also anticipated that MoET will use this framework to plan for effective policy implementation from the onset and as an integrated stage of policy development, and not see policy implementation as the penultimate stage of the policy development process. In addition, this framework will help MoET to strengthen relationships with stakeholders involved in Lesotho education, maximise the impact these stakeholders could have on effective policy implementation.

It is hoped that this proposed framework will benefit the Lesotho education sector in general, and MoET to. As part of my responsibility towards MoET and all the participants who contributed in this study, but also because of my concern about education in general and education policy implementation to, this framework will be communicated to and discussed with MoET and all relevant stakeholders and participants of this study. What follows are the limitations I experienced during the course of this journey.

## **7.6 Limitations of the study**

A significant constraint I encountered was that I conducted my study amidst the COVID-19 crises. It took longer than anticipated to collect data as I was at some point

disrupted by national lockdowns due to COVID-19. I suspect I also did not get some of the information I would have gotten if times were different.

Due to time and financial constraints, the number of participants in this study was limited. Time and finances allowing, I would have liked to include District Education Officers in this study. These are the people that oversee education activities at the district level even though their offices and roles are not included in the Education Act, 2010. I believe their encounters and interactions with teachers and principals place them conveniently to assist in the effective implementation of education policies.

I would also have liked to include schools' inspectors in the study. School inspectors are tasked with the inspection of progress in schools and reporting back to the Ministry. The inspectors are conveniently placed so that they can quickly spot when policies are not being implemented or when they are being implemented poorly.

Lastly, it would have been beneficial to the study and the Ministry of Education and Training if I had included the opinions of legislatures, mainly because they are politicians. The reason being almost all participants seem to blame the politics and politicians for political instability and its impact on education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. I believe their views would have shed light on politicians' role in education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector.

## **7.7 Areas for further study**

The study found that there are factors that impede education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector. As such, I developed a framework to enhance education policy implementation. During the course of my research journey, I identified areas which variously impact policy implementation and which I think should be further investigated. These areas include:

- The extent of education policy dissemination to improve education policy implementation.
- Exploring the impact of Lesotho bureaucrats on Lesotho education policy implementation; this is because bureaucrats are supposed to be experts that advise the PS and ministers on the best ways that could be used to enhance education policy implementation.

- An investigation into the strategies that could augment stakeholders' collaborations with the Ministry during education policy implementation.

## 7.8 Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to develop a framework that could enhance the implementation of education policy in the Lesotho education sector. To address this aim, I followed the succeeding steps:

In Chapters 2 and 3, I conducted a literature review **to examine the nature and extent of policy implementation in general**. In chapter 2, I contextualised policy implementation to establish the nature of the education policy. In Chapter 3, I looked into factors that suggest policy implementation factors influencing education policy implementation and challenges of policy implementation.

In Chapter 4, I reviewed literature and analysed documents intending **to determine the context within which the implementation of Lesotho education policies occurs**. I looked at context-specific factors that affect education policy implementation in Lesotho. Additionally, in chapter 5, I embarked on **research methodology**. The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the methodology that underpins this study.

Chapter 6 investigated **the perceptions and realities that shape and inform understandings about policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector**. I conducted semi-interviews with a total of twenty (20) stakeholders comprising (two members of the Planning Unit, two members of the Teaching Council, two school secretaries, two members from teacher trade unions, three principals, three teachers, two members of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and four members of the media-two print media and two audio media).

In Chapter 7, I answered the question of what **framework can be developed to enhance policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector?** My findings

propose that education policy implementation is not effective in the Lesotho education sector. Poor education policy implementation can be blamed mainly on political instability, lack of stakeholder engagement by MOET, a comprehensive education sector policy and poor dissemination of policies. Based on the findings from the study, I contend that education policy implementation in the Lesotho education sector will not be effective unless there is a framework that guides it. As such, I developed such a framework to enhance education policy implementation.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX-A

### LETTERS OF CONSENT

#### PERMISSION LETTER

##### Researcher

Kelello Alicia Rakolobe

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##### Study Leader

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08 October 2019

The Principal Secretary  
Ministry of Education and Training  
Maseru

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH THE MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION, TRAINING OFFICIALS and TEACHERS IN LESOTHO SCHOOLS**

This letter serves as my request to conduct interviews with personnel in the Ministry of Education and Training Planning Unit, members of the Teaching Council and Education Secretaries.

I, Kelello Alicia Rakolobe, student number 2009070539, am a registered student at the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State pursuing the degree, PhD. in Education Policy Studies. Currently I am busy with a research project aimed at developing a framework that will hopefully enhance education implementation in Lesotho. Hence the preliminary topic of my study is:

### **Towards a framework for education policy implementation in Lesotho.**

As part of my project I need to conduct interviews with various stakeholders in education. I therefore humbly request your permission to conduct interviews with officials in the Planning Unit, the Teaching council and School Secretaries. I believe their expertise and involvement in the field of Education and the Lesotho education policy making environment, would add value to my study and it will enable me to achieve the aim of this project.

Interviews are completely voluntarily, that is participants are free to choose whether or not to participate. Participants are also free to withdraw from the interview at any time should they feel that they cannot continue. Interviews are confidential and data generated will be handled with utmost care to protect participants' identities and that of the departments/units they are affiliated to. To ensure confidentiality, I will not identify participants in the study, rather I will use pseudonyms.

Let me further assure you that participant participation in the study will not be harmful to anyone or their place of work and that as a researcher I will try my best to protect both, and to treat them with utmost respect and dignity. Interviews will be tape recorded, should participants give permission to that, as a way of capturing all the information and the interview will be approximately thirty minutes long. Interviews will be conducted at a time and a place that is convenient to the participants. However, it will not be during working hours or disrupt normal work activities. I promise to answer any questions that you might have about this study any time prior to, during or after the interviews as honestly as I can.

My contact numbers as well as those of my promoter appear on the cover page of this request. Please feel free to contact any one of us should you need more information.

I am awaiting in anticipation on your response.

Sincerely

.....

**Keello Alicia Rakolobe**

**Researcher**

Kelello Alicia Rakolobe

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**Study Leader**

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08 October 2019

The Editor

Local Newspaper

Maseru

Dear Sir/madam

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH THE JOURNALISTS**

This letter serves as my request to conduct interviews with journalist working at your newspaper.

I, Kelello Alicia Rakolobe, student number 2009070539, am a registered student at the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State pursuing the degree, PhD. in Education Policy Studies. Currently I am busy with a research project aimed at developing a framework that will hopefully enhance education implementation in Lesotho. Hence the preliminary topic of my study is:

**Towards a framework for education policy implementation in Lesotho.**

As part of my project I need to conduct interviews with various stakeholders in education. I therefore humbly request your permission to conduct interviews with some journalists. I believe their expertise and involvement in the field of Education and the Lesotho education policy making environment, would add value to my study and it will enable me to achieve the aim of this project.

Interviews are completely voluntarily, that is participants are free to choose whether or not to participate. Participants are also free to withdraw from the interview at any time should they feel that they cannot continue. Interviews are confidential and data generated will be handled with utmost care to protect participants' identities and that of the departments/units they are affiliated to. To ensure confidentiality, I will not identify participants in the study, rather I will use pseudonyms.

Let me further assure you that participant participation in the study will not be harmful to anyone or their place of work and that as a researcher I will try my best to protect both, and to treat them with utmost respect and dignity. Interviews will be tape recorded, should the participants give permission to that, as a way of capturing all the information and the interview will be approximately thirty minutes long. Interviews will be conducted at a time and a place that is convenient to the participants. However, it will not be during working hours or disrupt normal work activities. I promise to answer any questions that you might have about this study any time prior to, during or after the interviews as honestly as I can.

My contact numbers as well as those of my promoter appear on the cover page of this request. Please feel free to contact any one of us should you need more information.

I am awaiting in anticipation on your response.

Sincerely

.....

**Kelello Alicia Rakolobe**



**Researcher**

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08 October 2019

The Director

Teacher Trade Union

Maseru

Dear Sir/madam

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH TEACHER UNIONS**

This letter serves as my request to conduct interviews with staff members of your Trade Union.

I, Kelello Alicia Rakolobe, student number 2009070539, am a registered student at the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State pursuing the degree, PhD. in Education Policy Studies. Currently I am busy with a research project aimed at developing a framework that will hopefully enhance education implementation in Lesotho. Hence the preliminary topic of my study is:

**Towards a framework for education policy implementation in Lesotho.**

As part of my project I need to conduct interviews with various stakeholders in education. I therefore humbly request your permission to conduct interviews with some of your staff members. I believe their expertise and involvement in the field of Education and the Lesotho education policy making environment, would add value to my study and it will enable me to achieve the aim of this project.

Interviews are completely voluntarily, that is participants are free to choose whether or not to participate. Participants are also free to withdraw from the interview at any time should they feel that they cannot continue. Interviews are confidential and data generated will be handled with utmost care to protect participants' identities and that of the departments/units they are affiliated to. To ensure confidentiality, I will not identify participants in the study, rather I will use pseudonyms.

Let me further assure you that participant participation in the study will not be harmful to anyone or their place of work and that as a researcher I will try my best to protect both, and to treat them with utmost respect and dignity. Interviews will be tape recorded, should the participants give permission to that, as a way of capturing all the data and the interview will be approximately thirty minutes long. Interviews will be conducted at a time and a place that is convenient to the participants. However, it will not be during working hours or disrupt normal work activities. I promise to answer any questions that you might have about the study any time prior to, during or after the interviews as honestly as I can.

My contact numbers as well as those of my promoter appear on the cover page of this request. Please feel free to contact any one of us should you need more information.

I am awaiting in anticipation on your response.

Sincerely

.....

**Kelello Alicia Rakolobe**

**Researcher**

Kelello Alicia Rakolobe

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**Study Leader**

Dr. KLG. Teise

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08 October 2019

The Station Manager

Local Radio Station

Maseru

Dear Sir/madam

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH STATION MANAGER AND PRESENTERS**

This letter serves as my request to conduct interviews with your Station manager and presenters. I, Kelello Alicia Rakolobe, student number 2009070539, am a registered student at the Faculty of Education, University of the Free State pursuing the degree, PhD. in Education Policy Studies. Currently I am busy with a research project aimed at developing a framework that will enhance education implementation in Lesotho. Hence the preliminary topic of my study is:

**Towards a framework for education policy implementation in Lesotho.**

As part of my project I need to conduct interviews with various stakeholders in education. I therefore humbly request your permission to conduct interviews with the

station manager and or presenters. I believe their expertise, knowledge of and/or involvement in the field of Education and the Lesotho education policy making environment, would add value to my study and it will enable me to achieve the aim of this project.

Interviews are completely voluntarily, that is participants are free to choose whether or not to participate. Participants are also free to withdraw from the interview at any time should they feel that they cannot continue. Interviews are confidential and data generated will be handled with utmost care to protect participants' identities and that of the media house/departments/units they are affiliated to. To ensure confidentiality, I will not identify participants in the study, instead use pseudonyms.

Let me further assure you that participant participation in the study will not be harmful to anyone or their place of work and that as a researcher I will try my best to protect both, and to treat them with utmost respect and dignity. Interviews will be recorded, should participants give their permission to this, as a way of capturing all the data and the interview will be approximately thirty minutes long. Interviews will be conducted at a time and at a place that is convenient to the participants. However, it will not be during working hours or disrupt normal work activities. I promise to answer any questions that you might have about this study any time prior to, during or after the interviews as honestly as I can.

My contact numbers as well as those of my promoter appear on the cover page of this request. Please feel free to contact any one of us should you need more information.

I am awaiting in anticipation on your response.

Sincerely

.....

**Kelello Alicia Rakolobe**

**Researcher**

Kelello Alicia Rakolobe

Ha Lekhema

P.O. Box 649

Mohale's Hoek

Lesotho 0800

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Dr. KLG. Teise

Faculty of Education

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08 October 2019

The Director

NGO

Maseru

Dear Sir/madam

**RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH STAFF MEMBERS**

This letter serves as my request to conduct interviews with journalist working at your newspaper.

I, Kelello Alicia Rakolobe, student number 2009070539, am a registered student at the University of the Free State pursuing the degree, PhD. in Education Policy Studies. Currently I am busy with a research project aimed at developing a framework that will enhance education implementation in Lesotho. Hence the preliminary topic of my study is:

## **Towards a framework for education policy implementation in Lesotho.**

As part of my project I need to conduct interviews with various stakeholders in education. I therefore humbly request your permission to conduct interviews with some members of your staff. I believe their expertise in the field of Education and the Lesotho education policy making environment, would add value to my study and it will enable me to achieve the aim of this project.

Interviews are completely voluntarily, that is participants are free to choose whether or not to participate. Participants are also free to withdraw from the interview at any time should they feel that they cannot continue. Interviews are confidential and data generated will be handled with utmost care to protect participants' identities and that of the departments/units they are affiliated to. To ensure confidentiality, I will not identify participants in the study.

Let me further assure you that participant participation in the study will not be harmful to anyone or their place of work and that as a researcher I will try my best to protect both, and to treat them with utmost respect and dignity. Interviews will be tape recorded as a way of capturing all the information and the interview will be approximately thirty minutes long. Interviews will be conducted at a time and a place that is convenient to the participants. However, it will not be during working hours or disrupt normal work activities. I promise to answer any questions that you might have about, during or after the interviews as honestly as I can.

My contact numbers as well as those of my promoter appear on the cover page of this request. Please feel free to contact any one of us should you need more information.

I am awaiting in anticipation on your response.

Sincerely

.....

Kelello Alicia Rakolobe

**Please complete the requested information below and return to the researcher who will provide you with a copy of this consent letter.**

**Research Study:** Towards a framework for education policy implementation in Lesotho

**Aim:** The aim of this PhD study is to develop a framework that will enhance education policy implementation in Lesotho

**Researcher:** Kelello Alicia Rakolobe

**Study leader:** Dr. KL Teise (SPU)

**Name and Surname of participant**.....

**Contact number:** .....

- I hereby give voluntary and informed consent to participate in the abovementioned research study.
- I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and what the risks and benefits are.
- I give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation, subject to the stipulations she has indicated in the above letter.
- I understand the researcher's commitment to not identify me in any way in the research report.
- I give permission/do not give permission for the interview to be tape recorded. (Please **underline** your choice).

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Interview Questions**

#### **Interview questions for teachers**

1. Tell me about your current work at the institution and the period in this job.
2. What do you understand by the concept education policy and education policy implementation?
3. What according to you is the importance of education policy in the Lesotho education sector?
4. Which Lesotho education policies are you aware of and do you have copies of these policies at the school? If no, why is it that you do not have copies? If yes, how did you obtain those copies?
5. Who according to you is primarily responsible for the implementation of education policies? Explain your answer.
6. Are you in any way involved in the implementation of education policies? (Explain your role)
7. Tell me about the assistance your school gets from MOET with regards to the implementation of policies?
8. What is your view about the capacity of school management to ensure the effective implementation of national education policy?
9. What positive factors within the Lesotho education system enhance the implementation of education policies? (Particularly the implementation of education policy in your school)
10. Which factors according to you impact negatively on the implementation of education policies?
11. In your opinion, do you think globalisation has an impact on education policy implementation in Lesotho? Explain your answer.
12. What do you recommend could be done to enhance education policy implementation in Lesotho schools?
13. To what extent are you assisted by NGO's with the implementation of education policies?
14. Do you think the media could play a role in the implementation of education policies? Explain your answer please.



15. Is there any information you would like to share with me that I did not ask, which is related to education policy implementation?

## Interview questions for principals

1. Tell me about your current work at the institution and the period in this job.
2. What do you understand by the concept education policy and education policy implementation?
3. What according to you is the importance of education policy in the Lesotho education sector?
4. Tell me about the national education policies you have access to at your school.
5. As a chief accounting officer what in terms of national education policy implementation is your role?
6. What is your understanding of the role of MOET in education policy implementation? Explain your answer
7. What positive factors within the Lesotho education system enhance the implementation of education policies? (Particularly the implementation of education policy in your school)
8. Which factors according to you impact negatively on the implementation of education policies?
9. What in your opinion is the impact of globalisation on education policy implementation in Lesotho? Explain your answer.
10. How does the MOET ensure the effective implementation of education policies?
11. How often do you get information on policy implementation from MOET?
12. To what extent do you get assistance from the MOET with the implementation of policies?
13. To what extent are you assisted by NGO's with the implementation of education policies?
14. Do you think the media could play a role in the implementation of education policies? Explain your answer please.
15. What do you recommend could be done to improve education policy implementation in Lesotho?
16. Is there any information you would like to share with me that I did not ask, which is related to education policy implementation?

## **Interview questions for officials (Teaching council, Planning Unit and Education Secretaries).**

1. Tell me about your current work at the institution and the period in this job.
2. What do you understand by the concept education policy and education policy implementation?
3. What according to you is the importance of education policy in the Lesotho education sector?
4. Tell me about education policy formulation in the MOET.
5. How do you ensure the effective implementation of education policies?
6. To what extent are you making use of other stakeholders during policy implementation? Please explain.
7. What positive factors within the Lesotho education system enhance the implementation of education policy?
8. Which factors, according to you, impact negatively on the effective implementation of education policy?
9. How do you mitigate the impact of those factors on policy implementation?
10. In your opinion, do you think globalisation has an impact on education policy implementation in Lesotho? Explain your answer.
11. Tell me about the accessibility of Lesotho education policies.
12. Please explain how you normally monitor and supervise the implementation of a policy once it gets to the schools and other stakeholders?
13. Do you think MOET has the resources to effectively implement education policies? Please explain.
14. To what extent are donors involved in the implementation of education policies in Lesotho?
15. What do you recommend could be done to improve education policy implementation in Lesotho?
16. Is there any information you would like to share with me that I did not ask, which is related to education policy implementation?

## Interview questions NGOs and Trade Unions

1. Tell me about your current work at the institution and the period in this job.
2. For how long has your institution been operating?
3. What do you understand by the concept education policy and education policy implementation?
4. What according to you is the importance of education policy in the Lesotho education sector?
5. Are you or your organisation involved in the implementation of education policies? (If yes, explain how you are involved, if no, explain why you are not involved.)
6. As the NGOs/Trade Unions, do you think the government is doing enough to ensure education policy implementation? Explain your answer.
7. What role do you play to ensure that MOET fulfils its mandate in education policy implementation?
8. Do you think MOET has the resources to effectively implement education policies?
9. What advise can you as the NGOs/Trade Unions give the government to ensure that education policies are effectively implemented?
10. In your understanding what is/should be the role of MOET in the implementation of policies?
11. Have you collaborated with MOET on education policy implementation? If yes explain when and how that was done.
12. Which factors, according to you, impact negatively on the effective implementation of education policy?
13. In your opinion, do you think globalisation has an impact on education policy implementation in Lesotho? Explain your answer.
14. Does your organisation have sufficient resources to support and sustain education policy implementation in Lesotho? (Explain your answer)
15. What do you recommend could be done to improve education policy implementation in Lesotho?

16. Is there any information you would like to share with me that I did not ask, which is related to education policy implementation?

## Interview questions (media)

1. Tell me about your current work at the institution and the period in this job.
2. What do you understand by the concept education policy and education policy implementation?
3. What according to you is the importance of education policy in the Lesotho education sector?
4. Which education policies are you aware of? (just a list)
5. Has the Ministry of Education and Training ever invited you to take part in any of their policy processes? If yes, explain when that happened and what your role as the media was.
6. In your opinion what is or should be the role of the media in education policy implementation?
7. Can you say your station/newspaper is effectively fulfilling that role? (Explain your answer).
8. As the media, do you think the government is doing enough to ensure education policy implementation? Explain your answer.
9. As the media, do you think you have a role to play in policy implementation? If yes, what is that role? If no, explain your answer.
10. Which factors, according to you, impact negatively on the effective implementation of education policy?
11. How do you mitigate the impact of those factors on policy implementation?
12. In your opinion, do you think globalisation has an impact on education policy implementation in Lesotho? Explain your answer.
13. What do you recommend could be done to improve education policy implementation in Lesotho?
14. Is there any information you would like to share with me that I did not ask, which is related to education policy implementation?

## APPENDIX C

### Ministry of Education and Training Permission letter



*THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO*  
*MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING*

Our Ref. ED/A/1

11<sup>th</sup> November, 2020

Ms Kelello Alicia Rakolobe  
National University of Lesotho  
P.O. Roma 180  
Lesotho

Dear Ms K. Rakolobe

**REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION &  
TRAINING STAFF, SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS**

I am most pleased to inform you that my office has thoughtfully considered and approved your request to conduct your study with the Ministry staff, school principals and teachers in the selected schools as such the authority to proceed with your study and research has been granted.

By copy of this letter, MOET staff, school principals and teachers are advised to accord the researcher audience and support she will need during her field of work. However, it must be noted that the staff is at liberty to exercise their right to either participate or decline in the research. I wish the candidate a good health and success in her endeavour and hope her research will provide us with useful feedback on institutional policy direction in the Ministry of Education and Training.

Kind regards. ✦

  
**DIRA KHAMA (Ph.D.)**  
**PRINCIPAL SECRETARY – BASIC EDUCATION**

Cc: Director Planning Unit  
CEO Teaching Service  
School Principals

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# Turnitin Report

## Submission

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