

**EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE  
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND  
STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN LESOTHO POST-PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS**

by

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# DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, sincerely declare that this dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the degree

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is original and entirely my own work, except where other sources have been acknowledged. I also certify that this dissertation has not previously been submitted at this or any other faculty or institution.

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MG Makhate

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## SUMMARY

As indicated in Section 28(a) of the *Lesotho Constitution*, every Mosotho child has the right to the attainment of quality education. To enable quality education, the government has taken various measures to provide resources for effective and efficient teaching and learning. Based on my interest concerning the connection between the availability of resources and the attainment of quality education, I explored teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho post primary schools in this study. In the undertaking of this study, I conducted a literature review to gain an understanding of what is perceived as relevant resources for the basic functioning of a school, and by implication, for the delivery of quality education. Within the Lesotho context, it was found that quality education can be associated with the Constitution's statement that education should be aimed at the development of the entire human personality. Based on this understanding, I foregrounded Lesotho's commitment as a signatory of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, to the Sustainable Development Goal #4, which is aimed at the provision of equitable and quality education that leads to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

I complimented the literature review with a document analysis of documents I perceived relevant for the provision of quality education to all Basotho. My analysis of the *Lesotho Constitution (1993)*, *Education Act 2010*, *Education Sector Plan 2016-2026* and the *Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools (2006)* culminated in a policy framework that constitutes the different roles and responsibilities regarding the provision of resources towards quality education. In drawing on systems theory, the policy framework depicts not only the interconnectedness between various education-related policies, but foregrounds the interdependence of various role-players in the delivery of quality education. The delivery of quality education, however, remains dependent on these role-players assuming their assigned responsibilities in terms of the provision of resources, which in turn, are required for the provision of quality education.

Guided by the literature review and the document analysis, I conducted two semi-structured interviews and two focus group interviews with participants from two Lesotho post-primary schools in the Berea district. The schools were selected based on their perceived status regarding resources. The one is perceived as well-resourced while the other is perceived as under-resourced. Data generation subsequently involved conducting interviews with the two principals, and having focus group interviews with five teachers from each participating

school. The generated data assisted me in answering the main research question, namely *what are teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho post primary schools?* The findings revealed that the participants consider resources as very important for the delivery of quality education in the respective subjects they teach. They indicated that a lack of sufficient resources not only has an influence on the quality of teaching and learning, but by implication, on student performance as well. All the participants perceived resources, specifically teaching resources, at their respective schools as being insufficient for quality education. While the participants displayed agency regarding innovative ideas to address the lack of resources, they suggested that stakeholders such as the government through MoET, the school administration and the community at large should accept co-responsibility for the provisioning of sufficient resources for the attainment of quality education. The discussion of the findings was framed within systems theory's advocacy for the school as an organisation in which various role-players should be working interdependently towards of quality education for all Basotho.

The study concludes by proposing three suggestions for addressing the shortage or lack of resources in schools. In this regard, I advocate for teacher and principal associations to become more functional and active in spaces where challenges regarding resources can be deliberated, and where creative and innovative ideas for support can be generated. Framed within the understanding of a school as an organisation that remains dependant on various role-players to collectively contribute towards quality education, I suggest the strengthening of the relationship between the school and other stakeholders. In order to supplement the financial resources at a school, I also make some suggestions towards fundraising. In conclusion, this study reveals that teachers do perceive a close link between the availability of resources, the delivery of quality education and good student performance. While the availability of resources seems to be experienced as a problem within the context of teaching and learning, teachers are prepared to improvise and to generate creative ideas to account for insufficient resources so that quality education can continue and students can perform well.

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# CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Quality education has been defined as education that meets the basic learning needs of students (Musili, 2015). As such, quality education is aimed at creating the educational spaces for students to reach their cognitive and emotional capabilities that would enable them to deal with different challenges in life. De Leo (2012) also alludes to the expectation of societies that education should assist in developing those values, knowledge and abilities required to face various challenges. By implication, quality education has to do with inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes, but also enables the distinction of one school from another in terms of the quality of its teaching and learning (Chapman & Adams, 2002; Scheerens, Luyten & Ravens, 2011). It could subsequently be assumed that the quality of education can be measured in terms of how independent students become after the completion of their school careers, and in terms of their ability to address everyday challenges.

The realisation of quality education relies, *inter alia*, on the availability and the subsequent utilisation of various educational resources. In this regard, Leonardo (2004) labels quality education as the result of the extent to which the interaction between students and teachers is supported by the use of resources in the classroom. In a similar vein, Mugure (2012; Rasheed, 2004) supports the notion that the use of resources is vital for the attainment of goals and objectives, and that student performance is influenced by the sufficient and appropriate utilisation of resources. Although educational resources can take various forms such as human resources, infrastructure and teaching and learning material, there seems to be consensus that its provision and availability is important for the delivery of quality education and the enhancement of student performance. In this regard, Atieno (2014; Mugure, 2012; Ogochi, 2014) agrees that the most reliable components for the improvement of student performance are the availability of textbooks and supplementary teaching and learning materials; teachers who are well trained and motivated; and infrastructure such as buildings, furniture, playgrounds, toilet facilities and lighting. Resources required for teaching and learning in the classroom context can be visual, spoken or written. Oral teaching is important, but as noted by Ekpo and Igiri (2015; Candle, 2010), effective pedagogy requires the use of teaching material such as textbooks, teaching aids and laboratories. The rationale for the use of teaching material is that some concepts are best understood when visualised or demonstrated in laboratories as practical experiments.

However, quality education requires more support than the mere provisioning of teaching and learning material. In addition to community involvement as an important resource, because the school is part of the community from which the students are coming, Oyugi and Nyaga (2010) maintain that the sound management of school finances is imperative. As noted by Joubert and Bray (2007), the enhancement of teaching and learning is also dependent on sufficient classroom availability, the provision of electricity and the managing of other assets such as science laboratories and libraries. Whilst the provision of resources is essential for the establishment of a conducive space for effective teaching and learning, it also plays an essential role to reduce the effects of socio-economic factors on the academic achievement of students (Savasci & Tomul, 2013). Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often find themselves in impoverished circumstances, and are not able to buy or even supplement learning material and aids. The provision of resources to and by schools will therefore be beneficial to *all* students.

The foregoing exposition foregrounds the fact that effective teaching and learning require resources in various forms. If resources such as well-trained teachers, teaching and learning material, sufficient infrastructure and human resources feed into to the delivery of quality teaching and good student performance, then the opposite can be assumed in cases where resources are insufficient or even absent. In this regard, it can be accepted that some of the major constraints that lead to poor student performance include unqualified teachers, the lack of basic facilities, but also special facilities such as laboratories and libraries, poor inspection and poor monitoring of teaching and learning (Kochung, 2011; Musili, 2015; UNESCO, 2006). Although literature alludes to the relationship between resource availability and student performance, my research interest centres on this relationship as perceived by teachers who are expected to deliver quality education.

## **1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS**

Given the important role of educational resources and their contribution towards the delivery of quality education and subsequent good student performance, it could be assumed that resources are of equal importance for Lesotho education. When considering the type of education envisaged for Lesotho, it is important to first draw on the *Lesotho Constitution* (hereafter *Constitution*) of 1993, in which it is stipulated in Section 28(a) that

education is directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human right and fundamental freedoms.

While the *Constitution* sets the direction for education in Lesotho, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to achieve the aim of basic education, namely “equipping learners with knowledge, attitude and skills to enable them to respond to socio-economic and technological changes” (MoET, 2009:16).

According to Likoko, Mutsotso and Nasongo (2013), learning is an activity that involves interaction of students’ motivation, physical facilities, teaching resources, and skills of teaching and curriculum demands. Thus, the realisation of the aim for Lesotho education remains dependent on, for example, the “provision of physical infrastructure such as classrooms, science laboratories and workshops for the teaching of vocational subjects” (MoET, 2006:2). Schools, however, also require human resources, and in this regard, Section 20(2) of the *Education Act 2010* states that the (school) principal

shall be appointed by the appointing authority on such terms and conditions as may be specified by the Minister in consultation with the Minister responsible for finances and for a period of five years.

The responsibilities of the school principal are stipulated in the *Education Act 2010*. In Section 21(a) it is stated that “a principal is responsible for the organisation, management and day-to-day running of a school”. In this regard, Motsamai, Jacobs and De Wet (2011; Makhasane & Mncube, 2011) postulate that school principals in Lesotho post-primary schools have the responsibility to manage and plan for the improvement of education in their schools through the strategic utilisation of resources provided by the MoET and the school community. According to MoET (2006:s.2.3.2), the principal is also responsible for the general condition, maintenance of all buildings, new buildings and grounds, and the availability of equipment and facilities for proper teaching and learning in their schools. It is further stipulated in Section 21(b) of the *Education Act 2010* that “a principal is the chief accounting officer of the school and is responsible to the school board for the control and use of school funds”. In this regard, UNESCO (2000) states that the negligence of school funds by principals frequently leads to a scarcity of significant resources in schools as money is not available for the purchasing of text books or equipment. In addition, it should be noted that in Section 52 “the power to appoint... a teacher other than a teacher whose salary is paid by the government vests in a school board”. As such, the school board and not only MoET can therefore also provide human resources. Such resources are essential as they equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to be responsive to everyday challenges in Lesotho. In order to enhance the effectiveness of school and student

performance, the availability of various resources, such as teaching and learning resources, physical resources and human resources, is of utmost importance to Lesotho education.

Although measures have been taken to ensure that every Mosotho child receives quality education aimed at “the full development of the human personality”, concerns have been raised about poor student performance. In this regard, Lebata (2014) points out that poor performance in science subjects in Lesotho post-primary schools can be connected to the poor quality of science teachers, and a shortage of laboratory facilities and equipment necessary for practical work. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the science results of schools equipped with laboratories are better than those of schools without equipped laboratories (Lebata, 2014). Elsewhere, Hamer and Murphy (2015) confirm that a contributing factor to the failure rate is attributed to poor school management, inadequate resources and a lack of teacher devotion. While the latter observation supports the notion of a relationship between resources and student performance, Mokoqo (2013; Lekhetho, 2003) also allude to such a relationship when pointing out that poor academic performance may be an indication that there is a need to deal with factors within the school environment that could impact on students’ performance. In addition, these observations also fit into the perception that some schools in Lesotho are well resourced while others are under-resourced. As a result I have also observed that there seems to be a connection between student performances in Lesotho post-primary schools and the availability or lack of resources - well-resourced schools produce good results, while under-resourced schools tend to yield poor results (Lebata, 2014). As such, I would like to explore whether teachers perceive a relationship between the availability of resources and the performance of their students. A search on various databases, namely *Academic Search Ultimate*, *Education Source*, *Eric* and *Humanities Source Ultimate* revealed that no studies have been undertaken to explore such perceptions of Lesotho teachers in post-primary schools. Given this gap in research, I argued that by highlighting teacher’s understanding of such a relationship, light could be shed on a lack of resources as a possible reason for poor student performance in Lesotho. As such, the study has the potential to provide MoET with insight into teachers’ realities of working in circumstances in which some students are advantaged while others are disadvantaged because of the availability of resources. My study subsequently pivots on the question: *What are teachers’ perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools?* In order to pursue my research question, the following sub-questions were asked to guide my research endeavour:

- 1.2.1 What is the importance of resource availability for student performance?
- 1.2.2 What are the roles and responsibilities of Lesotho government regarding the provision of resources to Lesotho post-primary schools as espoused in government policies and documents?
- 1.2.3 What are teachers' perceptions with regard to the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance?
- 1.2.4 What comments and suggestions can be made with regards to resources availability and students' performance in post-primary schools in Lesotho?

### **1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

In alignment of my research question, the aim of my study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools. As such, the objectives of my study are to:

- 1.3.1 determine the importance of resource availability for student performance;
- 1.3.2 analyse documents and policies in order to highlight the roles and responsibilities with regard to the provision of resources to post-primary schools in Lesotho;
- 1.3.3 explore teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools; and
- 1.3.4 comment on and make suggestions regarding resource availability and student performance.

### **1.4 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Mertens (2010; Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014; Rahi, 2017; Shannon-Baker, 2016) defines a paradigm as being composed of certain philosophical assumptions that not only serve as a way or a guide of looking at the world, but also to direct action and thinking. The philosophical assumptions associated with a paradigm pertain to what Mason (2010) refers to as ontology, epistemology and methodology. While ontology refers to the way in which reality is perceived, epistemology relates to beliefs about how people or researchers specifically think in order to find new knowledge (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). Methodology relates to the assumptions regarding the approach one should use to gather information based on these epistemological and ontological assumptions (Antwi & Hamza, 2015).

Within the context of research, a research paradigm would subsequently assist the researcher to view the world through a particular lens that will help him or her to find answers to the research questions, or solutions to the research problem, as well as to find the

knowledge that is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge (cf. Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014). A research paradigm subsequently assists the researcher not to dwell on his or her own knowledge, but to rather determine what questions are considered important for an investigation, and the processes needed for answering those questions (cf. Lincoln *et al.*, 2011; Mason, 2010).

In my study, I used systems theory as the guiding paradigm. Systems theory stresses the importance of exploring the world at the level of systems made up of interdependent and interacting parts (Ahrweiler, 2011; O'Leary, 2011; Pickel, 2011). By implication, the system depends on the environment in which it is established. Systems theory, like any other paradigm, is associated with various philosophical assumptions. With regard to ontology, systems theory perceives reality through the relationship among the elements of the system and not the individual parts of the system (O'Leary, 2011). As such, if one part of the system does not function well, the whole system might be affected. Thus, based on this perception of what is real, the epistemological perspective subsequently alludes to the construction of knowledge through the observation of what the systems do collectively (Oredein, 2016). The methodological viewpoint in systems theory, as Pickel (2011; Stichweh, 2011) puts it, relates to the assumption that in order to understand how reality exists, there has to be an understanding of collectiveness and interwovenness, which allows the researcher to gain information about the topic under study. As such, the reality, knowledge, as well as the methodologies in systems theory consequently contribute to the outputs of an organisation by interdependently working jointly with the environment in which it is found.

According to Mania-Singer (2017), the school is a system in which two or more people work together in an organised way to reach common goals. Within the context of my study, I focus on the school as an organisation in which role-players have to work together to achieve certain outcomes, such as, for example, good quality education and good student performance. The school as an organisation does not operate in isolation. Of relevance for my study is the assumption that the availability and/or lack of resources has an impact on student performance. It is however, the responsibility of the Lesotho government, through the support of MoET, to promote quality education through, *inter alia*, the provision of resources. It is in this regard that I perceive systems theory as relevant for my study. System theory advocates the interdependence and interconnectedness of the school, for example with MoET. The assumption is that it is not easy for the school to operate in isolation. It should be a collective effort from all role-players, as the different parts in the field of

education who need one another, to attain the goals of the school as organisation (cf. Ahrweiler, 2011; O'Leary, 2011; Pickel, 2011). From both an ontological and epistemological point of view, I proceed from the assumption that the school as an organisation cannot work in isolation to achieve its objectives. Given the assumption that the school requires an interconnectedness between all the stakeholders to attain the set goals, one can assume that a low level of interconnectedness may be an indication that there is a need to deal with factors within the school environment that could affect student performance (cf. Mokoqo, 2013).

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Yin (2014; Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2014; Pandey & Pandey, 2015), the research design is an outline for a study. This entails the questions to be studied, the data relevant for study, and the method for data analysis. As a research design is used with the intention of addressing specific research questions, it is crucial that such a design is logical and coherent for the attainment of the relevant information to be implemented in the research process. While the research design functions to answer the research questions and address the collection of data in an unambiguous manner, it simultaneously foregrounds the research methodologies and research methods to be employed in the study.

Research methodology can be defined as the strategy by which the researcher sets out the approach to solve the research problem, and includes the general principles for the generation of new information (Jamshed, 2014; McGregor & Murname, 2010). According to Long (2014; Hesse-Biber, 2015), the research methodology guides the philosophical assumptions underpinning a study. It further gives direction to the choice of research methods. Research methods, however, are not the same as a methodology, as they are regarded as the tools that are used to collect information and generate data for a study (Gabriel, 2013; Long, 2014). While a methodology constitutes the approach to a particular study, research methods are found within such an approach, albeit with the aim of assisting in the achievement of research objectives.

In this study, a qualitative research methodology was used, while research methods typically associated with a qualitative approach were employed. In the subsequent sections I first explain my reasons for opting for a qualitative methodology. Following from this exposition, I deliberate on the research methods I deemed most appropriate for realising my research

objectives (cf. 1.3). These include a literature review, a document analysis, semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview.

### **1.5.1 Research methodology**

Research methodology is defined by Brink, Van der Walt and Van Rensburg (2012; Daniel, 2017) as the concept that informs the reader of how an investigation was carried out to solve a particular problem, or to answer particular research questions. By implication, each question in a study needs to be rooted in a research methodology (Hesse-Biber, 2015). With regards to types of research methodologies, a typical distinction is made between a qualitative research approach which is interested in the nature of the social world of the research participants, and a quantitative research approach, aimed at the analysis of numeric information usually collected under conditions of control through statistical procedures, (Brink *et al.*, 2012; Langkos, 2014). It can therefore be assumed that research questions would be rooted in either a qualitative methodology or a quantitative methodology.

For this particular study I adopted a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is premised on the assumption that reality is a social construct, as individuals give meanings to things through their explanation and experience of phenomena (Creswell, 2013). Seeing that people perceive things differently, one could assume that explanations will also differ – hence the assumption that reality is socially constructed, implying that there can be no single understanding of it. A qualitative research approach is further based on the assumption that human actions are strongly influenced by the settings in which they occur (Brink *et al.*, 2012). As qualitative research is concerned with understanding social background from the perspective of the research participants, the qualitative researcher would typically become absorbed in the participants' responses and the phenomena under study (Langkos, 2014). It is in this regard that Roller and Lavrakas (2015) stipulate that within the framework of a qualitative research approach, the researcher could gather information in an unstructured, structured or semi-structured way in order to gain insight into people's feelings about the topic under study. Given the nature of qualitative research, qualitative studies are mostly explanatory, descriptive and inductive in order to tackle even sensitive issues to help researchers answer research questions (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2005).

As already indicated, this study is directed by a qualitative research methodology. My study is aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance. In this regard, a qualitative methodology was deemed

most appropriate due to its interest in the nature of the social worlds of the research participants. By adopting a qualitative research approach, I will be able to explore how the research participants not only make sense of their own individual experiences, but also understand how such experiences are influenced by the different settings in which they occur. As a qualitative research methodology is characterised by generating information from the natural setting of the researched population, this approach also assisted me in opting for research methods that are typical associated with naturalistic inquiry. Directed by a qualitative approach, I made use of a literature review, document analysis, semi-structured interviews and a focus group interview as data generating methods. This enabled me to engage in the natural setting of my research participants, while granting them the freedom to express themselves in this setting.

### **1.5.2 Research methods**

According to Chiumento, Rahman, Machin and Frith (2017; Long, 2014), research methods are activities or tools which are designed to gather and generate information in a research undertaking. Creswell (2014) attests that research methods involve the forms of data collection, analysis and interpretation that are useful in research. As my research aim is to explore teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance, I opted for research methods that would best assist me in achieving my research objectives (cf. 1.3), namely a literature review, a document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group interview.

#### **1.5.2.1 Literature review**

A literature review is defined as the systematic process of reading, digesting and critically evaluating studies done that are related to a researcher's study (Mertens, 2014; Van Wyk & Okeke, 2015). The process of conducting a literature review requires the demonstration of knowledge and the ability to critically evaluate information. As noted by McNiff (2014), the reviewing of literature is to ensure that a study fits into other researchers' world by acknowledging what has been done on the particular topic. The review also helps the current researcher to relate the information with the current research problem. Mertens (2014), however, cautions that the aim of a literature review is not to simply provide a direct extension of existing research, but rather to assist the researcher to arrive at a creative idea that draws on the literature review in an attempt to explain the research topic and build a justification for the problem under study. The literature review subsequently plays a crucial role as it assists the researcher to decide what to rephrase after examining previous

researchers' flaws. Reviewing literature is therefore ideal for combining the materials and ideas on data collection procedures adopted by preceding researchers (McNiff, 2014). The insinuation is that a literature review intends to contribute towards a clear understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been recognised.

Van Wyk and Okeke (2015) indicate that there are several advantages associated with a literature review. By reviewing literature, emerging researchers learn how relevant sources can be used to support or oppose their points of view, thus enabling a researcher to engage critically in the argument. Another advantage is that a literature review assists the researcher in identifying similarities and differences between existing literature and the work that is being studied. There are, however, disadvantages associated with a literature review. According to Van Wyk and Okeke (2015), the review of literature can be very time consuming, as the researcher has to read various sources in an attempt to relate the works of other scholars to the topic under study. Rakotsoane (2012; Galletta, 2013) warns that as the internet is often used as part of a literature review, researchers have to be very careful in evaluating such sources as there is often no quality control over the information posted on the internet.

In my study, I had undertaken a literature review to gain understanding of the importance of the availability of resources for student performance (cf. 1.3.1). I made use of secondary sources in particular. In other words, I drew on information that has already been collected by others as found in written works such as books and journals and on websites (cf. Creswell, 2012; Mciza, Dlamini, Khama and Motsu, 2015). I also consulted primary sources in the sense that I drew on scholarly works that collected and generated data through interviews and documents on topics related to my research interest (cf. Van Wyk & Okeke, 2015). The importance of a literature review for my study is that it assisted me to gain understanding of the importance of resources in the teaching and learning context. It further assisted me in acquiring insight into the relationship between resources and student performance. In addition, such an understanding served as the background for the document analysis (cf. 1.3.2) and the empirical undertaking (cf. 1.3.3) in the subsequent chapters of this study.

### **1.5.2.2 Document analysis**

According to Bowen (2009; Owen, 2013), document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to the issue

that is being researched. In a similar manner, Kutsyuruba, Christou, Heggie, Murray and Deluca (2015) define document analysis as an efficient way for evaluating and reviewing documents for use in research. Documents suitable for analysis could either be primary or secondary in nature. Bowen (2009; Mertens, 2014) indicates that primary documents are those documents that were written on information produced by eyewitnesses on their experiences of an event. Secondary documents are regarded as documents that were produced by writers who were not there when an event occurred, but only used information they read from eyewitness accounts. Bowen (2009; Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2014) also attests that documents such as books, journals, newsletters and diaries can provide detailed coverage of events to assist researchers. However, the researcher's decision of deciding which documents are most appropriate for analysis depends on the topic under study.

Document analysis has several advantages. In this regard Chen (2015; Bowen, 2009; Creswell, 2014) indicates that information in a document is easy to access. It is also cheaper to find documents (as opposed to conducting face-to-face interviews), especially if they are kept in the local vicinity where the researcher can access them. Another advantage highlighted by Bowen (2009) is that document analysis can provide additional information to the existing knowledge of the researcher. However, as with all research methods, there are also some disadvantages associated with the analysis of documents. As noted by Creswell (2013), a document analysis is rendered problematic if documents are not well written and the researcher has difficulty to extract relevant information.

The rationale for analysing documents in my study was based on my objective to highlight the roles and responsibilities of the Lesotho government with regards to the provision of resources to post-primary schools in Lesotho (cf. 1.3.2). As the provision of resources is a government responsibility, I opted for the analysis of various Lesotho policies and acts, such as the *Education Act 2010*, the *Constitution of Lesotho 1993*, *Education sector plan 2016-2026* and the *Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools in Lesotho* (2006). I selected these documents because they can shed light on the responsibilities of MoET with regards to the provision of resources to high schools in Lesotho. The document analysis will assist me in highlighting the roles and responsibilities with regards to resource provision. It will also assist me in drawing up the schedules for the semi-structured interviews and the focus group interviews. In addition, the document analysis undertaken in my study will have the advantage of also corroborating the information obtained via the interviews (cf. Bowen, 2009).

### 1.5.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

According to Pandey and Pandey (2015; McNiff, 2014), an interview can be defined as a method of data collection in which the researcher gets answers from the researched in a face to face encounter or through a telephone call or personal meeting. An interview is further perceived as a session where the interviewer asks questions to the interviewee(s). The answers are either written down during the interview process, or are audio recorded and transcribed at a later stage (Van Wyk & Okeke, 2015). One of the advantages of face-to-face interviews is the opportunity for both the researcher and the research participants to reconstruct meaning together. This enhances understanding of the issue being discussed. Interviews can take different forms, and the common distinction is between structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. Each of these have their own advantages and disadvantages (Dixon & Singleton, 2013).

According to Van Wyk and Okeke (2015; Dixon & Singleton, 2013), the structured interview is a formal interview that leaves no room for flexibility. For a structured interview, the researcher prepared specific questions that are asked to all interviewees in exactly the same order. Although a structured interview makes data collection relatively easy, as there are no distractions, it has the disadvantage that the researcher only works with the prepared questions. This leaves no room for the interviewee to express his or her feelings or perceptions about the matter, while this additional information could be particularly beneficial to the research. A structured interview leaves little room for the building of trust between the interviewer and interviewee, meaning that a lower level of rapport can be built (McNiff, 2014; Van Wyk & Okeke, 2015). While structured interviews are not flexible, unstructured interviews are more free-flowing, often beginning with a broad, open question concerning the area of study, followed by subsequent questions based on the participants' responses (Galletta, 2013; Van Wyk & Okeke, 2015). Although an unstructured interview opens the possibility for the collection of more data, it can be very time-consuming, as interviewees are permitted additions and the expression of feelings (Dixon & Singleton, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are, according to Galletta (2013), interviews where the researcher prepares a list of topics to explore, and formulates questions in this regard.

However, unlike the case of a structured interview where the interviewer only asks the prepared questions in the predetermined order, the semi-structured interview encourages an interviewee to elaborate and to offer new information. By implication, semi-structured interviews allow for free responses as the focus is not on 'yes' and 'no' responses. Rather,

the pre-established questions are aimed at achieving the study objectives in that the interviewees are allowed to add some information on the topic under discussion (Dixon & Singleton, 2013). Although semi-structured interview allows for flexibility, it might invite unexpected behaviour in terms of the moods of the interviewees in the interpretation and presentation of reality. As noted by Creswell (2013), such unexpected behaviour can lead to the dilution of the rich data already collected.

For this study, I decided against formal and nonflexible structured interviews. I also decided against unstructured interviews, which have their own set of disadvantages. Rather, I decided to make use of semi-structured interviews because it allows for some flexibility during the interviews. The face-to-face nature of semi-structured interviews was also appealing in the sense that such conduct would strengthen the interpersonal relationships between myself and my research participants (cf. Galletta, 2013). One of the advantages of a semi-structured interview is that a comfortable space can be created where there is no need to rush through the interview (cf. Dixon & Singleton, 2013). As I want to generate rich data, semi-structure interviews are most appropriate in the sense that I would be able to probe for deep reflection and explore the attitudes, beliefs and values of the participants in my attempt to understand their perceptions of the relationship between resources availability and student performance (cf. 1.3.3). In addition, a semi-structured interview also grants the opportunity for the interviewee to elaborate and to add more questions, all of which feeds into the generation of more rich data.

#### **1.5.2.4 Focus group interviews**

A focus group interview is the process of generating data through an interview with a group of people (Creswell, 2012). These interviews are conducted to generate data from the shared understanding from different people, as well as to get views from specific people on the topic under study. According to Kumar (2011; Krueger & Casey, 2015), focus groups interviews explore the perceptions, experiences and understandings of a group of people who have some common experience with regards to a specific situation or event. For example, in my study, my contention is that my participants would be able to explore their perceptions regarding resource availability and student performance in school. The assumption is therefore that in a focus group interview, broad discussion topics are developed beforehand by the researcher to allow for the gathering of rich data. This generation of rich data is made possible when the researcher allows the interview to take any direction. By implication, focus group interviews can involve unstructured and generally

open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to produce views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2014).

As the purpose of a focus group interview is to gather information about a specific or focused topic in a group environment, the researcher needs to stimulate the interview by raising certain issues pertaining to a particular topic. The facilitator of the interview must allow for discussion and interaction by the participants. As such, the success of a focus group interview is affected if the researcher is not skilled in managing the group's interaction (Kumar, 2011). However, one of the advantages of a focus group interview is that it provides a more natural environment than that of the individual interview, because participants are influencing and influenced by others as though they are in a real life situation (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The possibility subsequently exists that, in this way, different and high quality data may be generated from the various participants in a social context.

The decision to make use of focus group interviews was influenced by the advantages associated with this method of data generation. These advantages include the generation of rich qualitative data with reasonable speed, and the opportunity for immediate feedback or clarification on a participant's viewpoint with the contributions of other group members (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). A focus group interview also enables the researcher to take into consideration not only what is said, but also gestures, facial expressions and other forms of non-verbal communication. It has also been noted that a focus group interview is useful when the individuals are more willing to open up in a group as opposed to individual interviews (Creswell, 2012; Barbour & Morgan, 2017). In this regard, when conducting a focus group interview, the researcher has to encourage all participants to talk and to take turns talking. It is assumed that the interaction among interviewees are likely yield the best information when there is cooperation amongst themselves.

However, as with all research methods, there are certain disadvantages of a focus group interview that need to be taken into account. According to Dilshad and Latif (2013), it is sometimes very difficult for the researcher to compile a group with the required characteristics to yield rich data. Also, according to Creswell (2012), the researcher usually has difficulty taking notes during a focus group interview, and even when the interviews are audio recorded, it might be difficult to distinguish the voices of the different participants. Because of the nature of group conversation, some participants may follow the responses of other participants, even when they do not agree with them (Kumar, 2011). Kumar (2011)

further indicates that the researcher has to be in control. In a case where the interviewer lacks control over the interview discussion, however, there may be disruptions that may negatively affect data generation.

In my study, I opted for focus group interviews, as the advantages of this method outweighs the disadvantages. One of the reasons for opting for focus group interviews is that they create the opportunity for the participants to discuss their understanding and perceptions of the importance of resource availability for student performance amongst themselves. My contention is that the participants may be more comfortable talking in a group than in individual interview. I am also working from the assumption that interaction with others who share similar experiences and opinions, might generate more discussion and lead to more rich data. Since the focus group interviews with the teachers would follow after the semi-structured interviews with school principals, I regard the focus group interviews as complementary to the data generated through face-to-face interviews. Thus, in order to explore teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and students' performance in Lesotho post-primary schools (cf. 1.3.3), I made use of focus group interviews with the teachers to complement the data generated through semi-structured interviews with the principals.

### **1.5.3 Participant selection**

Various criteria should be taken into consideration when suitable participants are selected for a study. In this regard, Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016) note that the researcher should select participants across a broad spectrum relating to the topic under study, and look for the experts in the field to provide rich data. With these criteria in mind, qualitative research researchers often make use of purposive selection, and can also make use of convenience selection. According to Dixon and Singleton (2013; Bryman & Bell 2015; Kumar, 2011), purposive selection is the careful selection of participants based on their abilities to help the researcher to achieve the objectives of a study. A researcher would therefore select those people who are likely to have the required information and are willing to share such information. A purposive selection of participants is advantageous, as it permits the researcher to decide on who to use in the study. It also allows the researcher to assess the availability and the willingness of potential participants before involving them in the process of data generation (Etikan *et al.*, 2016; Kumar, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Purposive selection consequently allows the researcher to use participants who are knowledgeable on the topic under study and who can provide rich information.

While purposive selection involves the careful selection of participants based on their abilities to help the researcher to achieve the objectives of a study, convenience selection refers to the selection of participants based on the availability of time and money, and the convenience of location (Merriam & Tisdell 2015; Etikan *et al.*, 2016). In convenience selection, the researcher selects those participants who are easily accessible and who are willing and available to be involved in the study (Creswell, 2012).

For the selection of participants in my study, I made use of both purposive and convenience selection. The rationale of utilising purposive selection is to involve participants who I regard as the most knowledgeable about my research topic, namely the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools. As such, my first criterion for selection is teachers and school principals, because they make use of resources on a daily basis. They are also best positioned to perceive students' performance due to the availability or unavailability of resources in schools. The school principals are responsible for ensuring that resources are made available to enable sufficient teaching and learning (Joubert & Bray, 2007). The second criterion for my participant selection is to work with high school teachers who teach subjects that have different requirements in terms of resources. Teachers who teach Mathematics, Science, Religious Studies and Business Education will be selected to participate in the study. These teachers require resources *inter alia* laboratories, mathematics equipment, computers and libraries. It is my contention that their different experiences will shed light on how the availability and/or lack of resources affect teaching and learning. A third criterion was used. Given the possibility that the availability of resources might foreground different perceptions, some participants were selected from what is perceived to be a well-resourced school. Other participants were selected from a perceived under-resourced school. A school is regarded as well- resourced when there is availability of human, physical and financial resources, while a school with inadequacy of such resources is perceived as under-resourced (cf. Mugure, 2012).

In deciding on purposive selection, I also considered convenience in the sense that it is important that my study is time and cost effective. As I work in the Berea district in Lesotho, I decided to select two high schools from this district as they and the participants are easily accessible. I selected 12 participants in total, namely the two school principals and five teachers from each school.

### **1.5.4 Data analysis**

According to Creswell (2013; Rakotsoane, 2012), data analysis is the process of inspecting and modelling data with the intention of discovering useful information in the data. By implication, data analysis is the act of preparing and organising data in a study. In order to make the process of data analysis easier, there are some steps that can be followed. According to Creswell (2012; 2014; Rakotsoane, 2012), data can be inducted by moving from particular pieces of information to more detailed or complicated information. In order to deal with the data, codes can be used to enable the researcher to divide the data into themes. However, the researcher is required to read the data several times in order to become familiar with the information supplied by the participants. One of the advantages of reading through the data several times is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to return to the participants for more information to fill in the gaps in the participants' stories, if necessary. It is imperative to mention that data can be analysed using qualitative or quantitative methods of research (Creswell, 2012; cf. Burch & Heinrich, 2016). As such, in my study I employed the qualitative research method that does not employ data in a numeric manner, but uses written words. As previously indicated, I generated data by means of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews (cf. 1.5.2). I took notes during the face-to-face and focus group interviews. Moreover, to make it easier for me to do the analysis, I colour-coded similar responses to see what themes emerged from the data. The organisation of the coded data into themes simplified my analysis and assisted me to organise my research findings (cf. Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017; Creswell, 2012). The interpretation of the themes was informed by the information I gained from the literature review and the findings from the document analysis. Thus, by implication, the data was read and interpreted through my general understanding of the importance of resource availability for student performance (cf. 1.3.1) and the legislative framework that informs the roles and responsibilities for the provision of resources to post-primary schools in Lesotho (cf. 1.3.2).

## **1.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY**

According to Kumar (2011; Samuel, 2017), research trustworthiness postulates that the researcher's words can be trusted as representing truthful statements. On the same note, Yin (2011) indicates that research truthfulness carries vital importance in qualitative research as people want to know that the researcher has gone a great length to conduct the research accurately. In my study, I ensured trustworthiness by taking certain steps in ensuring the *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability* of the study.

According to Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010; Cooper & Schnindler, 2014; Flick, 2014), the *credibility* of a study refers to the extent to which the researcher is confident that the study findings are truthful. Credibility in this study was ensured by involving the participants in two different methods of data collection, namely semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. During the interviews and focus group interviews the participants were given the opportunity to request clarification where needed. I also crosschecked the transcriptions with the participants so that they can verify them as a correct presentation of their comments. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), credibility is ensured when the researcher does a peer review, which entails that the researcher asks a colleague to examine the field notes and ask the questions to determine whether the aim of the research will be achieved. In this regard, my supervisor played an important role in examining my field notes and by asking critical questions throughout the research process.

*Transferability* is about how the researcher is able to demonstrate that the study's findings is applicable to other contexts (Kumar, 2011; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). To ensure transferability, I provided sufficient information in this study about the process of data generation through document analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, to enable the use of the information in similar contexts. For instance, if a researcher is interested in doing a study on resources in the educational context, the information provided in this study could be useful. Again, stating the methods of data generation in my study would enable researchers to opt for using the same methods if they think they are suitable in their contexts.

*Dependability* refers to the extent to which a study can be repeated by other researchers and yield the same results (Kumar, 2011; Merriam, 2009). In this regard, Ary *et al.* (2010) give an example in which two researchers can divide the data and independently analyse it and compare results. If there is a connection between the results, it proves that there is dependability. To ensure dependability in this study, the information generated from my participants will be made available for use by other researchers.

Anney (2014; Koolin, 2014) postulates that *confirmability* deals with the question of whether the research findings could be repeated with the same participants to confirm neutrality and to avoid bias. On the same note, Dawson (2016) attests that in order to ensure confirmability, questions such as “can all results be confirmed or corroborated? Have the methods been well described? Can they be followed by other researchers?” should be asked. If the

answers to these questions are positive, then there will be confirmability in the study. In order to ensure confirmability in my study, I paid attention to coherence in terms of the information gathered as well as the interpretation of this data (cf. Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). I also kept an audit trail in which I noted all my research activities, from the beginning of my study to the end (cf. Anney, 2014; Wildemuth, 2009).

## **1.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In order to ensure that a study adheres to basic ethical requirements and that no harm is done during the research process, certain principles should be adhered to. Ethical considerations subsequently refer to the rights of participants and are concerned with the fact that lack of proper attention to ethics can potentially affect the participants (Creswell, 2012; Louw, 2014; Rakotsoane, 2012).

In my adherence to ethics, I ensured that all participants give informed written consent. As such, I assured the participants that if they decide to participate in the study, their dignity, privacy, and their interests will be respected. Although the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews cannot be anonymous, the information would be treated as confidential. In addition, their identities and that of their schools will not be revealed in the research report, as pseudonyms would be used rather. Apart from that, the participants would be informed that their involvement in the interviews and focus group interviews is voluntary and they can withdraw from the study at any time without any questions asked.

I applied and received permission to undertake my study from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State Faculty of Education (cf. Appendix A). In addition, I was granted permission to conduct the study by the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho (cf. Appendix B), and by the principals of the selected schools (cf. Appendix C).

## **1.8 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

In this section, I discuss the scientific scope of the study, as well as the geographical demarcation.

### **1.8.1 *Scientific demarcation***

Bartlett and Burton (2016) define education policy as the blueprint by which the aims of education are put into practice. These authors further postulate that education policy

involves examining the actions of government, the laws and initiatives that shape the functioning of educational systems. Similarly, Ball (2017; Hodkinson, 2016) attests that education policy is about change, and changing the principles on which education has to function and has functioned before. Given that MoET (2009) has to ensure that education provided in Lesotho is of good quality and accessible to every Mosotho child, the government has to oversee that policies are implemented. As such, one could assume that education policy gives direction on the decisions that need to be made in order to achieve quality education for all in the country. Within the Lesotho context, education policies should enable schools as institutions to function for attainment of the goals set by MoET. Given the understanding of education policy, the study of policy, also known as education policy studies, would entail the examining of the actions of government, the laws and initiatives that shape the functioning of educational systems (Bartlett & Burton, 2016).

In this study, the focus is on teachers' perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance (cf. 1.3). It is, however, the responsibility of the Lesotho government to ensure quality education, *inter alia* by means of the provision of resources. As noted in MoET (2009:1):

the goal of the Ministry of Education and Training has been to ensure accessibility, quality, equality and relevance in the education sector...the initiative towards achievement of this include provision of textbooks and stationery for primary education and book rental for secondary education learners.

As the government aims to monitor quality education relevant for the needs of the nation (cf. MoET, 2009), and given its responsibility to ensure such quality, I will analyse various Lesotho education policies and other relevant documents to gain an understanding of the government's responsibility with regard to resource provisioning. My contention is that if the government wants to ensure quality education, and if there is a link between student performance and resource provisioning, then the Lesotho government's education policies should, by implication, be inclusive of how the provision of resources in schools will be achieved. As I analysed and worked with Lesotho policies and related official documents, I conclude that this study is demarcated to Policy Studies in Education.

### **1.8.2 Geographical demarcation**

My study setting is the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, a country that is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. As a constitutional monarchy situated in the

southern part of Africa, the country consists of ten districts. My study will be undertaken in two high schools in the Berea district, in the northern part of Lesotho (cf. Figure 1). As I also reside in Berea, the two selected schools are within close vicinity and were selected based on convenience.



Figure 1. Map of Lesotho (<http://www.mapsopensource.com/lesotho-map.html>)

## 1.9 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

In addition to this chapter that gives a general overview and orientation of this study, the research report unfolds through various chapters. In Chapter 2, I draw on literature in order to unpack the importance of resource availability for student performance. The focus in Chapter 3 is on document analysis, with the specific objective to highlight the roles and responsibilities of the Lesotho government regarding the provision of resources to post-primary schools. In Chapter 4, I explore teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance by interpreting the data generated

through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. Chapter 5 constitutes the final chapter of the study and entails comments on and suggestions regarding teachers' perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance.

## **1.10 SUMMARY**

This chapter served as a general orientation to and overview of the study. I introduced the study focus with specific reference to the main research question, the subsidiary questions and the aim and objectives. I framed the study within systems theory as my research paradigm and indicated the methodology and the various methods employed in the undertaking of this study. Issues related to trustworthiness and ethics were also addressed. The demarcation of the study explains the geographical location as the Berea district in Lesotho and positions the study as Education Policy Studies.

In the next chapter, I focused on the literature review to help me achieve the objective of determining the importance of resources on student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools.

## CHAPTER 2: RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I indicated that the government of Lesotho aims to provide quality education for every Mosotho child by *inter alia*, taking various measures to provide rental textbooks and bursaries for students (cf. MoET, 2009). The objective of this chapter is to review literature in order to gain an understanding of the importance of the provision of resources for student performance (cf. 1.3.1). My motivation for the literature review was primarily informed by indications that the availability of resources has a positive impact on student performance, whereas a lack of resources can lead to poor student performance (cf. Mugure, 2012; Hamer & Murphy, 2015). As this study was aimed at exploring teachers' perceptions in this regard, I deemed it necessary to first gain, through a review of relevant literature, an in-depth understanding of the importance of resources in the teaching and learning context, and to strengthen this understanding by acquiring insight into the relationship between resources and student performance. The elucidation of this relationship not only served as the background for the rest of the study, but was in particular useful for the document analysis (cf. Chapter 3) and the drawing up of the interview schedules for the empirical undertaking (cf. Chapter 4) of this study.

In order to realise the objective for this chapter, I first provide an exposition of the link between education and the sustainable development goals as captured by the United Nations. My intention with this general overview is to foreground how education is globally perceived as a matter of importance and concern. Against this background, I present a general overview of different forms of resources in education, with specific reference to their importance for the delivery of quality teaching and learning. In order to highlight the link between the availability of resources and student performance, I conclude the chapter by drawing on three case studies to indicate how this perceived relationship has relevance for Kenya, Nigeria and Eswatini.

### 2.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND EDUCATION

Sustainable development is concerned with the wise use of resources for the present generation, while not compromising the needs of future generations to utilise the same resources (Mciza *et al.*, 2015). The assumption is that the sustainable use of resources is

not only the concern of the people in general, but also more specifically, the concern of the school with the aim to improve student performance (cf. 1.1). As my study focuses on the availability of resources toward student performance, the sustainable use of resources in schools is imperative. However, in order to consider this imperative, I deem it necessary to first sketch a more general background on how education is considered and perceived globally. In consideration of the challenges the world is facing, such as the global warming and extreme poverty, it is my contention that the inclusion of the Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter SDGs) in my study may shed some light on the importance of education. The expectation of societies is that education should assist in developing the knowledge, values and abilities required by students to face the various challenges they are confronted with in everyday life (cf. De Leo, 2012). By implication, it is assumed that education is an important factor in terms of bringing about sustainable development for eradicating *inter alia* poverty and global warming. However, it is important to begin with an exposition of the Millennium Development Goals (hereafter MDGs) as they were introduced prior to SDGs.

In September 2000, the MDGs were approved in New York during the Millennium Summit of the United Nations and endorsed by the leaders of 189 countries (United Nations, 2015a). The main aim of the Millennium Summit was to fight extreme poverty globally. In order to achieve this aim, eight international development goals were identified to be achieved by 2015 (United Nations, 2015a). Through the endorsement of these time-bound and measurable goals, the international community committed itself to a wider vision in which human development is perceived as central to promoting sustainable development on both social and economic fronts (Mciza *et al.*, 2015). The focus of the eight MDGs was placed on the eradication of extreme poverty (MDG1), the achievement of universal primary education (MDG2), the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (MDG3), the reduction of the child mortality rate (MDG4), the improvement of maternal health (MDG5), the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG6), the insurance of environmental sustainability (MDG7), and the development of a global partnership for development (MDG8) (United Nations, 2015a). Since the focus of my study is on education, MDG2 with its emphasis on the achievement of universal primary education has particular relevance.

Along with the goal for the achievement of universal primary education, the target of this goal involves the provision of equal opportunities for boys and girls to complete a full course of primary schooling (United Nations, 2015a). By implication, the governments of the

members of the United Nations had to undertake various actions to ensure that all children receive primary education. In Lesotho and in accordance with the government's commitment to achieve the MGDs, various measures were put in place. According to the *Millennium Development Goals Status Report 2013* (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013), free primary education (hereafter FPE) was introduced in 2000, with the aim of promoting access in primary education in order to at least attain a primary level education. The commitment towards the realisation of universal primary education was further strengthened by the enactment of the *Education Act 2010* that added a legal obligation towards free primary education by making it compulsory. The government also introduced a feeding programme in primary schools, and teaching and learning materials were provided for free. Student enrolment increased dramatically following FPE. Lekhetho (2013) confirms that this increase ranged from 69% in 2000 to 84% in 2006. As a result, new and additional classrooms were constructed in existing schools, and grants were given to new and qualified teachers to promote teaching in schools through the financial assistance from the development partners (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013).

Given the measures taken by the government of Lesotho to achieve MDG2, the progress has, however, been slow in terms of realising the set goals (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013). However, the *Millennium Development Goals Status Report of 2015* (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016) stipulates that regardless of the challenges the country faced in working towards the achievement of the set goals, the number of students who graduated from primary schools increased from 61.5% in 2005 to 71.8% in 2014. The literacy rate has increased to 90% since 2005 for both males and females. Despite these improvements, it was clear that Lesotho was unlikely to meet some of the MDGs in 2015 (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2013).

Lesotho was not the only country that struggled to meet the goals and targets of the MGDs. Other countries in Africa also faced challenges that led to a failure in realising the goals and targets. Namibia did not perform well in MDGs 1, 2 and 3, and according to this country's *Millennium Development Goals: Interim Progress Report* (Government of Namibia, 2013; AllAfrica, 2015; Udjo & Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2015), the equitable distribution of income to citizens and subsequent poverty reduction were not achieved. Concerning MDG2, Namibia did not achieve the target of improving the motivation of educators, and the issue of poor physical learning environments remained a challenge. In addition, the country also remained faced with the challenge of poor implementation of legislation, policies and plans that could have helped to achieve the target of MDG3 *Millennium Development Goals: Interim*

*Progress Report* (Government of Namibia, 2013). Similarly, Swaziland experienced slow progress and the report on *Swaziland Millennium Development Goals* (Government of Swaziland, 2010) indicates that youth literacy showed inequality, as the rate of females was higher than that of males. People in that country were also still vulnerable in terms of food security, while the gender gap remained high regarding the occupation of top positions.

As discussed in the above exposition, some countries did not achieve the goals and targets of the MDGs by 2015. This failure led to the deliberation of new goals during a summit held in New York at the United Nations headquarters in 2015. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was adopted in 2015, and the 193 leaders of the member countries agreed to commit themselves to the implementation of 17 newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015a). At the heart of this agenda was the recognition that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests (United Nations, no date).

The focus of these goals is on the notion of sustainability.

My interest to focus on the SDGs was evoked by the challenges that led to the failure to achieve the MDGs, and on the vision of countries to achieve the agreed SDGs with the major focus on SDG 4. Along with the 17 SDGs are 169 targets to be achieved by 2030 (United Nations, 2015b). The United Nations (2015b:5) also indicates that the primary vision in achieving the SDGs is:

We envisage a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive. We envisage a world free of fear and violence. A world with universal literacy. A world with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, to health care and social protection, where physical, mental and social well-being are assured. A world where we reaffirm our commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and where there is improved hygiene; and where food is sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious.

While the various SDGs centre around this primary goal, SGD4 has significance for my study as it relates to inclusive and equitable education, including the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015b; United Nations, 2018).

While the adoption of SDG 4 is an indication of how education is considered as essential in the sustainable development of countries, this essential role is further underscored by the envisaged targets that should be achieved by 2030, namely to

substantially increase the supply of quality teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training, build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. And also to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes (United Nations, 2015b:21).

Consequently, the need for quality education is foregrounded as a requirement for sustainable development. Informed by these targets, it can be assumed that the member countries have set objectives for themselves to not only enable them to achieve these targets, but also to improve the lives of their people and to protect the environment for future generations (cf. Mciza *et al.*, 2015). Different countries have to find the means within their budgets, policies and planning to ensure the incorporation of the SDGs and their associated targets (United Nations, 2015b). The implication for a country like Lesotho is that it had to introduce various measures to build an awareness about the SDGs among various stakeholders. In particular, it became important to sensitise members of the cabinet and senate members in this regard (United Nations Development Programme (hereafter UNDP), 2015). In order to increase access to secondary education, the Lesotho government provided bursaries to some students, rationalised fees in public schools, focused on building good competencies in Mathematics and Science, and increased the diversity of fields and volumes of technical and vocational skills (UNDP, 2015).

Lesotho's commitment to achieve SDG 4 foregrounds the imperative role of education to prepare citizens who could assist in the social and economic development of the country. By implication, the provision of quality education is required, in other words education that meets the needs of the students (Musili, 2015). In essence, quality education is aimed at equipping students with skills and knowledge to face day-to-day challenges, including those that they might encounter after the completion of their school careers. However, as noted by Leonardo (2004; Ogochi, 2014; Ekpo & Igiri, 2015), the availability and provision of resources is important in the achievement of quality education for all students. The assumption is therefore that the sufficient preparation of students for addressing day-to-day challenges require support from appropriate resources. As my study centres on the role of

resources and student achievement, it is my contention that such a role needs to be considered against the backdrop of Lesotho's commitment to frame the sustainable development of the country within the context ensuring inclusive, equitable and quality education for all the Basotho people.

## 2.3 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCES

As indicated in the foregoing exposition, the focus has been placed on the requirement for governments to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all on a global scale (cf. 2.2). This obligation of governments found their gravitas in the MDGs of 2000 and then later the 2015 SDGs (cf. 2.2). In essence, governments are required to provide quality education for all the people in their countries. As I premise my study on the assumption that quality education is dependent on resource availability for good student performance, it is essential at this point to unpack what quality education entails. In broad terms, quality education is required to ensure the development of students' needs on various levels - socially, economically, politically and environmentally (Oluwadare, 2011). In general, quality education is perceived as dynamic in the sense that it continuously changes with time to provide for the social, economic, political and environmental context (Laurie, Nononyama-Tarumi, McKeown & Hopkins, 2016). Quality education is therefore perceived as basic in the attainment of educational objectives. It should assist students to improve their own lives and to be able to contribute towards the development of society (cf. Mciza *et al.*, 2015). In drawing on the SDGs and the envisioned eradication of poverty (cf. 2.2), it can be assumed that governments should put measures in place to achieve quality education. However, quality education should also be linked to notions of equality and sustainability. As noted by Unterhalter (2019), education is addressed in several SDG targets, namely targets 3, 5 and 8. The role of education regarding good health, gender equality and women's empowerment is implied. As such, quality education is linked with equality and features of sustainable development. According to Bendell (2017; Carley & Christie, 2017), sustainable development creates sensitive use of the environment by communities. In essence, sustainable development is about understanding the world and finding ways to save it. Similarly, sustainable development is aimed at addressing the present and future needs of students (Mciza *et al.*, 2015).

Quality education contributes to the development of countries, and in this regard it is interesting to note that education development seems to move faster than economic development (Abijo & Oyekanmi, 2017). Although education remains the primary means of

improving the wealth of people in a country, slow economic development places educational development under pressure in terms of the amount budgeted for resources, for instance. This pressure in turn has negative impacts on the provision of quality education (cf. De Leo, 2012). Various services and resources affect quality education, such as human, non-human and financial resources, including library services, administrative services and academic services (Ashraf, Osman & Ratan, 2016; Dangara, 2016; Lebata, 2014; Mugure, 2012; Okongo, Ngao, Rop & Nyongesa, 2015). The significance of these resources for the delivery of quality education is often considered in terms of student performance (cf. De Leo, 2012; Ekpo & Igiri, 2015). As my research interest centres on resource availability and its perceived link with student performance, in the next sections I will consider resources in general and in relation to the school (cf. 2.3.1), and also in terms of its significance for teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2). It is my contention that the availability of resources stands in direct relation to the role of education to provide quality education, which in turn, contributes towards the reduction of poverty. It is therefore important to describe the various types of resources required for the provision of quality education, and, by implication, the achievement of sustainable development.

### **2.3.1 Resources: a general overview**

As my study is framed within systems theory, my approach to the importance of resources in teaching and learning is based on the understanding that for the school to function well, all the systems should be working collectively (cf. 1.4). As such, I work with the assumption that stakeholders such as parents, school principals, the government and the community at large have to collectively work together to ensure the availability of resources required for the delivery of quality education. Resources ranging from human to physical to financial resources, are necessary for enabling the school to function in an organised manner towards realising its education goals. As an important element in the broader context of the school as a system, the availability of resources depends on the interdependence of different role-players for the delivery of quality education. It is assumed that in the absence of such interconnectedness and the collective functioning of the school as an organisation, students' construction of new knowledge and the ability to innovatively develop the self and the community in a sustainable manner might be hampered.

In this section, I first consider the idea of resources as utilised by organisations in general, before I present specific my understanding of educational resources. Mugure (2012; Atieno, 2014; Bizimana & Orodho, 2014) define resources as all that can be used to improve and

yield acceptable results in an organisation. Wicker and Breuer (2012) refer to resources as different dimensions of the organisational capacity, consisting of human resources, financial resources and resources relating to infrastructure. By implication, resources are utilised by organisations to achieve their particular goals. Human resources, for instance, are employed in organisations to pursue the objectives of the organisation, and to assist managers and directors to know if there is a reduction in organisational problems, if there is organisational success, and to determine the possibilities for the expansion of a company or not (Wicker & Breuer, 2012). In order to realise the benefits of resources, some organisations use enterprise resource planning. Enterprise resource planning involves the infrastructure of information systems to assist the organisation to prosper and to coordinate their resources and other information needed for their success (Nawaz & Channakeshavalu, 2013; Hoque, Albar & Bahssas, 2015). There are also online resources that assist not only researchers and organisations, but also communities and individuals towards the improvement of their livelihood (Batiz-Lazo, 2016). People also use resources available in their environments for various purposes, for instance to satisfy the need for food, shelter and clothing (Mciza *et al.*, 2015).

Based on my research aim, which is to explore teachers' perceptions on the relationship between resource availability and students' performance in Lesotho post-primary schools, I focused on the school as an organisation, which requires resources for its operations and success. Lunenburg (2010; Mania-Singer, 2017) postulate that schools are open social systems in which there are people working towards the attainment of common goals. As schools are established for the purpose of teaching and learning (Sabitu, Babatunde & Oluwole, 2012), they are characterised by the availability of people who work in them, and as a collective with the immediate environment to achieve teaching and learning goals. In deliberations on resources, Mugure (2012; Atieno, 2014; Bizimana & Orodho, 2014) attest that the use of resources is vital for the attainment of goals and objectives, and that student performance is influenced by the sufficient and appropriate utilisation of resources. Educational resources include a variety of resources that range from human to financial to physical and to information resources. As such, educational resources would include textbooks and supplementary teaching and learning materials, well-trained and motivated teachers, and infrastructure such as buildings, furniture, playgrounds, toilet facilities and lighting (cf. Atieno, 2014; Lunenburg, 2010; Dangara, 2016; Lebata, 2014; Okendu, 2012).

The efficient and effective use of resources provides a smooth channel between the teacher and the student in the realisation of teaching and learning objectives (Adaliku & Iorkpilgh, 2013; Nwike & Onyejebu, 2013; Ezenwa, 2018). While educational resources aid teachers in their teaching and educational tasks, the availability of resources is also essential in providing opportunities for students to perform academically, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds (Mugure, 2012; Dangara, 2016). It can therefore be assumed that if resources such as well-trained teachers, teaching and learning material, sufficient infrastructure and human resources are readily available and effectively and efficiently utilised, the outputs in terms of student performance, will improve. Kraft, Yee and Marinell (2016) also note that schools surrounded by a supportive environment will not only retain teachers, but will also increase the teaching and learning performance of both teachers and students. The opposite, however, can also be assumed – in the absence and/or poor utilisation of the mentioned resources, quality education and student performance will be hampered. In this regard, Kochung (2011; Musili, 2015) confirm that some of the major constraints that lead to poor student performance include unqualified teachers, the lack of basic and special facilities (such as laboratories and libraries), poor inspection and lack of monitoring of teaching and learning. To attest that resources such as human resources are important in teaching and learning, Tuimur and Chemwel (2015) indicate that good teaching resources can never replace the teacher as a resource in the school for the achievement of the government's vision on education.

### **2.3.2 Forms of resources in teaching and learning**

While I gave a general overview on resources in the previous section, I will now focus on the different resources required in the teaching and learning context. The resources significant to schools include human resources, financial resources and physical resources. In essence, my focus in this section is on the importance of having these resources in school, and their significance on student performance.

#### **2.3.2.1 Human resources**

According to Lebata (2014; Mugure, 2012; Mciza *et al.*, 2015), human resources include the personnel within institutions, including their abilities to contribute towards the achievement of institutional goals and objectives. Within the school context, human resources can refer to an array of role-players who are responsible for the planning, organising, controlling and coordination of activities in a school with the aim to achieve educational objectives (Dangara, 2016; Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2010). While human resources in the school

context can include the school principal, teachers, support and administrative staff, parents and the community, I will focus only on the school principal and teachers in the subsequent exposition. As my study centres on resource availability and student performance, it was my contention that given this focus, the role of school principals and teachers should be foregrounded.

**a) The school principal**

The school principal is responsible for the provision of leadership and management with the aim to create and support conditions that are conducive for teaching and learning (Harris, Jones, Cheah, Devadason & Adams, 2017). The creation of conducive conditions includes an orderly and caring environment in which the school principal motivates teachers to perform their duties to the best of their ability (Balyer, Karatas & Alci, 2015; Van der Westhuizen, 2013). Under the leadership of the school principal, the operations of the school should be prioritised to such an extent that teachers are optimally supported by the administration of the school, *inter alia* through the availability of sufficient physical resources and a fair workload distribution (Van Der Westhuizen, 2013). While the government allocates resources to schools (Adipo, 2015), it remains the responsibility of the school principal to oversee the provision of the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning. As noted by Dangara (2016), good teacher performance is dependent on the accessibility of school materials. Adalikwu and Iorkpilgh (2013) argue that a qualified teacher, no matter how well trained, would still be unable to put ideas into practice if the school setting is not well equipped, and materials are not available to translate her/his knowledge into reality. It is important that the school principal ensures that teachers are granted the opportunity to attend in-service training to improve and develop their careers. By doing this, recognition is given to the important role of teachers in the provision of quality education. The provision of quality education is further supported by the school principal's responsibility to facilitate communication and learning in relation to curriculum reform, and to build relationships with parents for successful learning (Alleksaht-Snider & Bernier, 2016).

**b) The teachers**

Teachers work in collaboration with one another to develop their competencies toward achieving the educational objective of providing quality education (Demir, 2015; Tengku, Tengku, Bush & Nordin, 2018). As human resources, teachers employ their expertise and skills with the help of other resources in teaching and learning for improved student performance. As noted, good teaching resources can never replace the teacher as a

resource in the school, and therefore it is imperative to first acknowledge the important role of teachers in developing student potential (Ati, Babaii & Lotfi, 2018), before the importance of teaching resources for quality education can be considered.

It is the duty of teachers to provide a conducive environment for students to learn effectively and develop their potential optimally (Altun, 2018; Ati *et al.*, 2018). It can be assumed that a conducive environment would entail teachers, who are also perceived as researchers, using information effectively and efficiently, and being innovative in their classroom practices in order to deliver rich information to students (Tengku *et al.*, 2018; Prenger & Schildkamp, 2018). In a conducive environment, teachers would also use textbooks and other teaching and learning aids such as charts and maps to assist students to realise their goals. In this regard, Atieno (2014) is of the opinion that textbooks can be perceived as a basic teaching aid in class. If there are no textbooks, teachers tend to handle subjects in an abstract manner. In addition to the availability of textbooks, the government also allocates resources to schools in the form of laboratories to assist with the development of students' abilities. As noted, the school principal is responsible for overseeing the provision of the necessary resources for effective teaching and learning (cf. 2.2.2.1a). Teachers as experts not only need to be innovative in their classrooms, but they must be able to utilise teaching and learning aids effectively towards quality teaching and learning. Although the teacher is an indispensable resource in class, the availability of teaching and learning aids can enhance quality teaching, which in turn, could lead to improved student learning and performance.

### **2.3.2.2 Physical resources**

As already indicated, resources are things that are perceived as valuable and important towards the achievement of goals (cf. 2.3.1). Within the school context, resources are considered essential for effective teaching and learning. In addition to human resources, the realisation of educational goals is also dependent on physical resources. Dangara (2016; Lunenburg, 2010) defines physical resources as those tangible resources that contribute to the achievement of goals. Within the school context, such resources would include for example laboratories, libraries, classrooms and health centres. As noted by Bizimana and Orodho (2014), a lack of physical resources in a school can inevitably hamper teaching and learning. This can consequently dampen the passion of students and the spirit of a teacher to deliver quality education for all the students. In circumstances of dilapidated classrooms, or overcrowded classrooms due to a shortage of classrooms, teaching can be less effective and learning can become inhibited (Bantwini, 2017).

George (2017) indicates that Science subjects allow students better educational career choices on completion of high school education. To make those career choices possible, and for students to be well informed, Mugure (2012) states that students learn best when they are able to see and participate in what they are taught. For instance, in a well-equipped laboratory, students can get hands-on experience by doing experiments. Teaching aids such as wall posters and chalk can be supportive of student learning because these aids assist teachers in presenting interesting and memorable lessons. Also, the use of teaching aids such as charts and drawing books could assist both the teachers and students to be more creative, and to evoke prior knowledge on the concepts under discussion. Busljeta (2013; Adipo, 2015) postulate that drawing equipment can help students in acquiring knowledge and profiling various abilities and values. Drawing books can also assist in creating good interaction between the teacher and students as they share ideas on what to create with the resources they have. The use of various teaching aids can therefore be helpful in encouraging students to actively participate in lessons.

Although the availability of textbooks is important (Atieno, 2014), the use of teaching aids such as reference books can be helpful in discouraging rote-learning and making learning more interesting (Mugure, 2012; Tety, 2016). The availability of libraries in schools is considered equally essential for quality teaching and learning. All students can benefit from the library because they can, despite different socio-economic status, borrow or use library books for improved learning. Dangara (2016; Zuze & Reddy, 2014) postulate that school libraries give students the opportunity to improve their literacy skills regarding reading and writing. Similarly, Zuze and Reddy (2014) attest that the availability of library resources has a positive impact on the academic achievement of students across countries. The availability of a school library is important in the support teaching and learning, and Tety (2016) points out that a school with inadequate library resources leads to poor student performance.

The availability of laboratories is also important for teaching and learning. Laboratories give students the liberty to observe, to be engaged in experiments, and to learn concepts with the help of laboratory equipment. In this regard, Lebata (2014) stresses the use of laboratories in helping students to remember and learn new skills. Through experimentation and the use of laboratory apparatus, teachers are aided in the introduction of new concepts, while students can become interested and involved in their own learning. In this manner, students can participate in classroom activities and discover some content on their own.

The availability of resources is crucial for the achievement of educational goals. In order to realise SDG 4 (cf. 2.2), governments are required to take measures to enable quality education for all students. The insinuation is that, the provision of quality teaching would require the availability of the necessary teaching and learning materials in schools. As Lee and Zuze (2011) state, the presence of school resources is beneficial to students in developing countries, especially for those from impoverished families, as they cannot afford to buy them. While student performance improves in situations where there are resources available to assist in teaching and learning, the proper use of resources in the school can have other benefits such as a decrease in student dropout rates, the maintenance of student discipline, the encouragement of students' motivation, and subsequently improved student performance (Mugure, 2012).

### **2.3.2.3 Financial resources**

The smooth running of a school, including the delivery of quality education, relies on the availability of financial resources. Financial resources are defined as the monetary input available to be spent on the education system (Radzi, Ghani, Sira & Afshari, 2018; Uko, Umosen & Caleb, 2015). Schools could be using different financial policies. In South Africa, for example, the school principal along with the school governing body or the school management team are responsible for the management of the school's budget and finances (Naidoo & Mestry, 2017). In this manner, schools can independently manage their finances for the improvement of the school and the effectiveness of teaching and learning. In some countries, school principals are given the sole responsibility to prepare the school budget and ensure that there is effective use of finances for the achievement of school objectives (Victor, 2017). In Lesotho, school principals are regarded as accounting officers who have to ensure accountability and efficiency in the management of finances for the attainment of school objectives. In this regard, the role of the school principal as the chief accounting officer of the school is refined in Sections 21(b), (c) and (d) of the *Education Act 2010* as being

- (b) responsible to the school board for the control and use for the school funds,
- (c) shall maintain or cause records of income and expenditure of the school to be maintained;
- (d) shall prepare an annual budget for a school and submit it to the school board for its approval.

Consequently, the human resources within the school context – be it the school principal and the school governing body, the school management team or the school board - are given the power to manage the financial resources effectively and economically, presumably based on their sound knowledge and skills in finances. In the preparation of the school budget, care should be taken to account for the provision of those resources necessary to achieve the educational goal of delivering quality education for all students. It could therefore be assumed that good financial management is required to enable quality education, *inter alia* by means of the provisioning of the required teaching and learning resources.

While the management of finances is imperative for school operations to be carried out effectively, the poor management of funds will, by implication, lead to schools' failure to attain their educational objectives (Munge, Kimani & Ngugi 2016). As the availability of adequate resources requires sound financial management, the assumption can be drawn that in cases where a lack of resources results from poor financial management, quality teaching and learning will be hampered. Student performance and success is reliant on the availability of teaching and learning aids (cf. Tety, 2016; Okpechi & Denwique, 2017). Fleisch (2008) attributes student underachievement to a lack of resources in schools.

## **2.4 RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

Against the background of this chapter, I now present three case studies in which I indicate the relationship between resource availability and student performance. I focus on three countries, namely Kenya, Nigeria and Eswatini. My decision to work with these countries was primarily based on the fact that all three of them are, like Lesotho, signatories of the United Nations SDGs. By implication and according to SDG 4, these countries have the target to

substantially increase the supply of quality teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training, build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. And also to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes (United Nations, 2015b:21).

These countries have to achieve quality education for all their learners by 2030.

### 2.4.1 Kenya

The government of Kenya introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in the 1970s, but had to abolish it in 1988 under the *Structural Adjustment Programs*, according to which financial support to the public education system was reduced (Muyanga, Wambugu, Olwande & Mueni, 2010). An increase in student enrolments placed an enormous financial burden on the government. As a result, the government introduced a cost-sharing system where parents had to buy textbooks and other instructional materials, while the government remained responsible for the recruitment of teachers and for paying their salaries. In alignment with the *2001 Children's Act*, the Kenyan government re-introduced FPE in 2003. In particular, this re-introduction was compelled by Section 7(2) of the act, which states that every child shall be entitled to free basic education which shall be compulsory in accordance with Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Concerning secondary schools, the Ministry of Education improved physical facilities and provided learning resources in an attempt to provide quality education for all children (Musyoka, 2018). In Kenya, education is considered as one of the most important aspects contributing to positive economic and social development (Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2017). It was important for the government to ensure the achievement of quality education through the provision of a conducive teaching and learning environment (Livumbaze & Achoka, 2015). This measure was also aligned with SDG 4 that compels the government to provide quality education to all Kenyans.

Measures taken by the government included an improved teacher-student ratio, where the number of students per teacher was decreased due to an increase in teacher numbers, from 65 494 in 2013 to 85 438 in 2015 (Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2017). To retain students, a school bursary scheme was introduced to assist selected secondary school students to meet their education expenses not catered for by FPE (Ogana, 2017; Langat, 2016). However, despite all these measures, overcrowding in school classrooms remains a challenge in Kenya, and this reflects negatively on student performance (Glennister, Kremer, Mbiti & Takavarasha, 2011). In addition, the causes of low student performance can be traced to a shortage of physical and material resources in schools (Glennister *et al.*, 2011).

As noted by Atieno (2014), schools that do not have adequate facilities such as workshops, laboratories, classrooms, and teaching and learning materials are unlikely to produce good

results. In this regard, Musyoka (2018) indicates that the use of teaching resources gives students practical experience that can help them understand learning concepts more clearly. Various scholars (Musyoka, 2018; Mwathwana, Mungai, Gathumbi & George, 2014; Zakharov, Tsheko & Carnoy, 2016) indicate that students provided with adequate teaching and learning materials perform better than those in less equipped schools. The utilisation of educational resources and academic performance seems to be closely related, because the availability and the efficiency of physical facilities and teaching aids have a positive impact on students' academic performance, while a lack of such facilities has a negative impact on academic performance.

### **2.4.2 Nigeria**

According to Njoku (2016), Nigeria introduced the 6-3-3-4 system of education in the early 1980s as a replacement of the former colonial system. This system was aimed at ensuring quality education for all. It entailed 6 years in elementary school, 3 years in junior secondary, 3 years in senior secondary and 4 years in higher institutions, hence the reference to 6-3-3-4. As the 6-3-3-4 system is centred on 21<sup>st</sup> century needs, it was assumed that education in Nigeria would equip students through the inclusion of technology and science, and a vocational curriculum, with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical thinking and creativity (Njoku, 2016).

As a signatory to the United Nations' SDGs, the Nigerian government is also compelled to achieve the targets regarding quality education as espoused in SDG 4 (Oraka, 2018). Given the government's goal to provide education that meets 21<sup>st</sup> century needs, and in order to achieve the SDG 4 targets, the country had to incorporate technology in all aspects of learning (Adegbamini & Adesanmi, 2018). By implication, the government had to provide adequate resources towards educational development and quality education (Aboluwodi & Owolewa, 2018; Njoku, 2016).

Nigeria, however, is faced with the challenge of dilapidated and overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, and a lack of sufficient furniture in public schools. These challenges all serve as factors which may compromise the delivery of quality education and, subsequently, the achievement of SDG 4 (Oraka, 2018; Olanipekun & Aina, 2014). In this regard, Gbenu (2012; Nnokam & Sule, 2017) also indicates that a lack of teachers, teaching materials and a poor school environment affect the implementation of quality education. And in situations where resources are sufficiently available, students get

motivated and perform well compared to those who are taught without the needed instructional materials.

Successful teaching and learning that leads to good student performance depends on the effectiveness and efficiency of teachers and other non-human resources. As noted by Masino and Nino-Zarazua (2016: 54), for developing countries to realise quality education and good student performance, the focus should be placed on “supply-side capability interventions”. Such interventions are primarily aimed at the improvement of infrastructure, the provision of teaching materials and the hiring of extra teachers to raise student achievement. Nigeria is faced with the challenge of a lack of educational resources, and in this regard, Olanipekun and Aina (2014) state that in order to improve the level of education and to realise the vision for improved quality education, teachers, schools and communities must work together.

### **2.4.3 Eswatini**

The Kingdom of Eswatini<sup>1</sup> underwent a name change from Swaziland to Eswatini in April 2018 at a ceremony held in celebration of King Mswati III’s birthday and the 50<sup>th</sup> celebration of independence as a former British colony (Chutel, 2018). The name Eswatini, meaning the land of the Swazis, was officialised in the Gazette of 11 May 2018 (Msimang, 2018). Eswatini is landlocked by the Republic of South Africa and Mozambique in the southern part of Africa, and the government aims to grow its global competitiveness through knowledge and technological drive strategies (Marope, 2010). The focus on the development of knowledge and technology came about in 1999 when the government of Swaziland (GoS) had a vision to improve the lives of Swazis by 2022 (Marope, 2010). In order to develop knowledge and technology usage, the GoS approved the *Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan* (PRSAP) in 2007 to improve the lives of all Swazi people (GoS, 2017). In alignment with PRSAP, GoS put in place the *Education for All* (EFA) declaration in 2000 to deliver education to students in the country (MoET, 2015). On the same note, Dlamini (2017; MoET, 2011) indicate that in Swaziland, education arrangements are focused on the development of education and skills for all, which, in turn, is aligned with SDG 4. It is in alignment with this goal that the GoS introduced *Education for Sustainable Development* (ESD) in April 2016, with the specific aim of developing skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for present and future generations (Hamid, Bisschoff & Botha, 2015; UNESCO, 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> The name Swaziland is used in reference to all documents adopted and decisions made prior to the name change. Eswatini is used in reference to the present-day educational situation.

According to Dlamini (2017), the major focus of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in Swaziland was to provide access to education. Through the increase of access to education, MoET and by implication the GoS, showed their commitment to fairness and efficiency for the sake of high-quality education for all. Also, in the *Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy* (2011), the focus was to get the government involved in the provision of educational resources for quality education (Langwenya-Myeni, 2017; GoS, 2017).

According to MoET (2011; Zakharov *et al.*, 2016), teachers with relevant qualifications, adequate school infrastructure and learning materials are the determinants for the provision of quality education and training in Swaziland. However, Hamid *et al.* (2015) indicate that the challenges that hinder the achievement of quality education in the country are unqualified teachers, a shortage of skilled Mathematics and Science teachers and a shortage of schools. As stated by the World Bank (WB) Group (2013), for the GoS to achieve free and available primary and secondary education for all, there has to be adequate resources in schools. This sentiment is also supported by the *Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy* (GoS, 2011:2), which indicates

to this end, the Ministry of Education and Training continues to subsidize education through the provision of 'free' textbooks to all pupils at primary school level, physical infrastructure, facilities, furniture and equipment, educational grants and subventions and the rolling-out of the Free Primary Education (FPE) programme. ... the Ministry continues to execute programmes aimed at providing infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, student support grants (i.e. Orphaned and Vulnerable Children) and other educational amenities at Secondary/High School Levels.

As a way to avail the resources required for the provision of education, the GoS, through MoET, has constructed schools and other infrastructure, provided teaching and learning materials in schools, and supported the needy and orphans with grants at primary and high school level (Langwenya-Myeni, 2017). Oluwadare (2011) asserts that the quality of education that students receive becomes significant if resources are available in schools to create a conducive teaching and learning environment. The provision and availability of resources subsequently have direct relevance in enabling students to learn in the conditions that permit quality education. The assumption was that education should contribute towards the improvement of the lives of Swazis through, *inter alia*, the provisioning and availability

of resources in schools to overcome challenges that might hinder the achievement of quality education (GoS, 2011).

## **2.5 SUMMARY**

The objective of this chapter was to determine the importance of resource availability for student performance. My emphasis on the connection between education and sustainable development goals provided the backdrop for a general overview on resources required within the school as an organisation. This chapter is concluded by an exposition of how Kenya, Nigeria and Eswatini, three African countries that are all signatories of the United Nations' SDGs, aim to improve education through the provision of resources.

In the next chapter, I undertake an analysis of documents to determine what roles and responsibilities are allocated by the government of Lesotho regarding the provision of resources in high schools.

## **CHAPTER 3: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING RESOURCE PROVISION: A LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In my previous chapter, I considered the importance of resources on student performance. The general discussion of the importance of resources in Chapter 2 serves as a backdrop for a focus on the roles and responsibilities espoused by the Lesotho government regarding the provision of resources to high schools in the country. Based on my understanding of the importance of resources in the delivery of quality education, I generated data through document analysis. It was my contention that a document analysis could be helpful in providing the answer to the question pertaining to the roles and responsibilities for the provision of resources to Lesotho post-primary schools (cf. 1.2.2.). Within the broader context of this study, the document analysis was deemed imperative for addressing the research question pertaining to teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools (cf. 1.2).

The documents that enabled me to achieve my research aim are the *Lesotho Constitution of 1993*, the *Education Act of 2010*, the *Education Sector Plan 2016-2026* and *Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools in Lesotho 2006*. The data generated in this chapter informed the schedules for data generation through semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews (cf. Chapter 4).

### **3.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

As indicated in Chapter 1, document analysis entails the interpretation of documents to give voice and meaning to the issue under research (cf. 1.5.2.2). A document analysis differs from a literature review in that document analysis is perceived as a method of data generation. Informed by systems theory, that serves as my paradigmatic lens for this study (cf. 1.4), my interpretation of the documents was premised on my understanding that the school, as an organisation, consists of interdependent and interacting parts that have to work collectively towards the attainment of set education goals. Within the context of the school, official documents provide guidance for the smooth running of the organisation and the collaboration of the various parts to accomplish such goals. As my research interest

centres on the perceived relationship between resource availability and student performance, I considered it important to analyse certain documents in order to foreground the roles and responsibilities of the various parts of the education sector for the provision of resources. I worked from the assumption that if such roles and responsibilities are not respected, the possibility exists that schools are not provided with the necessary resources, which in turn, might have an influence on student performance. Although various types of documents can be used for document analysis, my research interest compelled me to use official documents related to education in Lesotho. I specifically decided to analyse the *Lesotho Constitution of 1993*, the *Education Act of 2010*, the *Education Sector Plan 2016-2026* and the *Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools in Lesotho 2006*. All of these documents relate to education in Lesotho and have some bearing on the roles and responsibilities regarding the provision of resource in Lesotho post-primary schools. As the government is responsible for the provision of quality education in Lesotho, it is assumed that MoET determines the roles and responsibilities regarding resource availability. Thus, through the analysis of the documents, it was important to highlight how the roles and responsibilities within the education sector cooperate in order to enable quality education, and by implication, good student performance. The implication is that the government, through the realisation of various roles and responsibilities, must enable various role-players to provide quality education towards the attainment of good student performance.

O'Leary (2014) lists steps that the researcher must follow when analysing documents. These steps include the gathering of relevant texts, the assessment of the authenticity of the documents, and analysing the documents to find those that best serve the research objective. In this regard, I gathered documents that I perceived to be relevant for my study. The selected documents are regarded as authentic in the sense that they are all official documents of the government of Lesotho. The analysis of selected documents was imperative in my study for maintaining credibility in terms of the information extracted from the documents regarding the provision of quality education. Given the relevance of the documents with regard to my research aim, I perceived the documents I analysed for this study as most appropriate.

My document analysis required me to read the documents carefully with the aim of highlighting specific roles and responsibilities that relate to the provision of education, and more specifically to the provision of resources that enable education. I perceived document analysis and systems theory as relevant for my study. Systems theory advocates for the

interdependence and interconnectedness of the various stakeholders of the school for the achievement of quality education, MoET and the school remains collectively responsible for the provision of education. My document analysis was subsequently premised on the assumption that in order for the school to operate smoothly in alignment with its set goals, there should be cooperation amongst the different parts or role-players in the organisation.

### **3.2.1 The Lesotho Constitution of 1993**

I decided to start my document analysis with the *Lesotho Constitution* of 1993 because it is regarded as the supreme law of the country. If “any other law is inconsistent with this constitution, that other law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993: Chapter 1, s.2). As such, I worked with the assumption that any other official documents that I include in my analysis, must be aligned with the *Constitution*. My contention was subsequently that official documents concerning education and the provision of quality education and resources, will be in accordance with the rights and values embedded in the *Constitution*.

Chapter 2 of the *Constitution* lists various fundamental human rights and freedoms that are protected by the *Constitution*. These fundamental human rights and freedoms include *inter alia*, the right to life and personal liberty, freedom of movement and residence, freedom from inhuman treatment and discrimination and the right to equality before the law, equal protection of the law, and participation in the government (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993: Chapter 2, ss.4-24). The *Constitution* also acknowledges the right to education and its protection and promotion. In this regard, it is stated that the government undertakes the responsibility to make education available through the adoption of policies that are aimed at ensuring that

education is directed to the full development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993: s.28(a)).

In addition, the right to education is further protected as the *Constitution* guarantees that “primary education is compulsory and available to all” (s.28(b)). Regarding secondary education, it is stated that the “secondary education, including technical and vocational education, is made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education” (s.28(c)). The Lesotho government’s commitment to the provision of education should also be read in terms of Section 26(1) that stipulates equality and justice as principles of state policy:

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.

By implication, education must be available for all Basotho and there should be no form of discrimination. In particular, the *Constitution* strengthens its commitment towards education and non-discrimination by including Section 26(2), that stipulates

the State shall take appropriate measures in order to promote equality of opportunity for the disadvantaged groups in the society to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of public life.

In the light of the *Constitution's* application of the principles of State policy, one could therefore accept that education is also made accessible to vulnerable groups in the country.

In drawing on the *Constitution*, it becomes clear that the Lesotho government has been entrusted with the responsibility of providing education to all. Given the reference to “the full development of the human personality” (s.28(a)), it can be assumed that quality education for the Basotho is required in order to ensure that students reach their cognitive and emotional capabilities to become independent citizens enabled to sufficiently face the challenges of the world they live in (cf. 1.1). Quality education relies *inter alia*, on the availability of educational resources. It can therefore be assumed that the provision of education to bring forth “the full development of the human personality”, implies an education system that provides sufficient support in terms of resources.

Although the *Constitution* is significant regarding the provision of quality education in Lesotho, it also provides the support for the country’s commitment to the *United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (cf. 2.2). Through SDG 4, the country is committed to provide “complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes” (United Nations, 2015b:21). The *Constitution* promotes and protects the provision of education on different levels (cf. s.28(b-c)) and ensures that education is embedded in the principles of equality and justice (cf. s.26(1-2)). By implication, legislation in the form of acts, policies and official regulations, must enable the support of quality education through the provision of the necessary resources. Resources are required to enable quality education through which students can be equipped with the required skills and knowledge for the “development of the human

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

### **3.2.2 Education Act of 2010**

As indicated in the previous section, the *Constitution* is the supreme law that contains the vision for Lesotho, protects basic human rights and lays down the principles for state policy. As noted, the *Constitution* aims to adopt policies to ensure that “education is directed at the full development of the human personality” (s.28(a)) and that “primary education is compulsory and available to all” (s.28(b)). In order to give legislative power to this mandate approved by the *Constitution*, the *Education Act 2010* was passed by parliament in 2010 to *inter alia*, “make provision for free and compulsory education at primary level” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s1(a)). In addition, and in alignment with Section 4 of the *Constitution* on non-discrimination, the *Education Act 2010* “ensures that the learner is free from any form of discrimination in accessing education and is availed all educational opportunities provided” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)(c)).

The *Education Act 2010* lists the responsibilities of different role-players in education in order to ensure the provision of quality education. While the *Constitution* (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:s.28(a)), envisages “the full development of the human personality”, the *Education Act 2010* legislates this vision in that various role-players must

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 (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)(a)).

The *Education Act 2010* subsequently refers to the availability of those facilities required to enable the envisaged full development of the Mosotho child, and stipulates that the provision of opportunities and facilities is, by implication, the responsibility of

[t]he Minister, Principal Secretary, Teaching Service Commission, proprietors of schools, teachers and school boards [who] shall promote the education of the people of Lesotho (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)).

This responsibility is also inclusive of ensuring that “a learner who is physically, mentally or otherwise handicapped is given the special treatment, education and care required by his or her condition” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.2(4)(b)). The alignment between the *Constitution* and the *Education Act 2010* is strengthened in that the latter attunes to the

*Constitution's* stipulation in Section 26(2) about promoting “equality of opportunity for the disadvantaged groups in the society”.

In drawing on Section 4(2) of the *Education Act 2010*, it becomes clear that recognition is given to different role-players in education who have to work as interacting parts of the school as a system. This needs to be done in order to “act in the best interests of the learner and his or her education at all times” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)(d)). As such and in alignment with systems theory (cf. 1.4), various role-players are required to work interdependently towards the achievement of quality education. The roles and responsibilities stipulated in the *Education Act 2010* pertain to that of school supervision (ss.18–19), the management of schools (ss.20–25), educational secretaries (ss.26–27), the education advisory council (ss.28–32), the teaching service (ss.33–40) and the teaching service commission (ss.41–44).

In Section 3(d), the *Education Act 2010* stipulates that it seeks to “clarify roles and responsibilities of persons tasked with the administration of education”. As such, the importance of human resources is acknowledged, and one could assume that such roles and responsibilities need to be clarified in order to ensure that the relationship among the elements of the school as a system, enables effective operation towards the achievement of educational goals (cf. 1.4). In drawing on what the *Constitution* dictates in relation to the provision of quality education for all, numerous role-players are identified in the *Education Act 2010* that should work interdependently to ensure the availability of various resources in schools for the attainment of quality education.

The *Education Act 2010* tasks different human resources with various duties, which all should cohere in ensuring the provision of quality education, and, subsequently, the provisioning of resources for enabling quality education. In Section 7, Sub-Section 3–12, the Minister of Education and Training is tasked with responsibilities regarding the registration and funding of schools. The Minister has to register schools according to different categories, ranging from pre-schools, junior schools, primary schools, basic education schools, secondary schools, high schools, junior colleges to learning centres for people who have left school. By implication, it can be assumed that the registration of these schools will imply the provisioning of the necessary resources to enable quality education in the different categories. Recognition is also given to the registration of special schools that must “provide a specialized curriculum approved by the Minister to accommodate the needs of special

learners” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.12(c)(iii)). This provision aligns with the *Constitution’s* guarantee of no discrimination (cf. 3.3). The inclusion of special schools feeds into the assumption that resources will be made available to accommodate students with special needs. While the principles of equity and justice are foregrounded in the *Constitution* as the guiding principles for state policy (cf. s.25), the *Education Act 2010* provides for financial resources as it states that the Minister of Education, in consultation with the Minister of Finance, will provide for

grants-in-aid to educational institutions, including schools that provide educational services, educational management services and educational supervision services (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.13(1)(a)).

In particular, the Minister “shall determine the nature and level of funding of schools in accordance with the classification” (s.13(2)). The smooth running of a school, including the delivery of quality education, is dependent on financial resources and its sound management (cf. 2.3.2.3). As indicated in the previous chapter, financial resources are required to acquire the materials and resources needed in teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2.3). Given the importance of financial resources, it is crucial to state that poor management could lead to a lack of various resources in schools, while its sound management could lead to improved student performance. The significance of resources is therefore measured in terms of student performance. The tasking of the Minister with the allocation of funding to schools according to their categorisation and associated needs, is important within the broader context of enabling schools to acquire the resources required for the delivery of quality education.

The *Education Act 2010* also includes responsibilities that pertain to the supervision of schools. Although the functions of inspectors are fairly extensive (cf. ss.18-19), it is important to note that inspectors must annually “report trends, achievements and on the general implementation of policies” on schools (s.18(4)(a)), and must also “provide support and advice for schools” (s.18(4)(b)). As such, the inspectorate plays an important role in ensuring that the school as an organisation does not operate in isolation. The inspectorate forms part of the collective group of role-players that need to work interdependently towards the full development of the human personality – in other words via quality education (cf. 1.4). While the inspectorate is assigned to oversee and give advice to schools, the school board is tasked with the responsibility to “manage and administer the school ... [and to] oversee the management and the proper and efficient running of the school” (s.25 (a-b)). The interdependency of various role-players in the education sector also includes human

resources like proprietors and educational secretaries. In the context of Lesotho, a proprietor refers to “any person, community, church, society or corporation by whom or by which a school is established” (s.2). It is the responsibility of a proprietor who has more than twenty schools under his or her authority to establish an educational secretariat that is to be headed by an educational secretary (s.26 (1)). The responsibilities of the educational secretary include, amongst others, to “liaise with the Ministry responsible for education on matters of management of schools” (s.26 (4)(b)). From the above analysis, it is clear that the delivery of quality education in Lesotho schools is depended on various human resources taking up their roles and responsibilities.

As indicated in the previous chapter, the school principal plays an important role in the provision of leadership and management, including creating conducive conditions for effective teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2.1(a)). In this regard, the *Education Act 2010* stipulates in Section 21(a) that a school principal “is responsible for the organisation, management and day-to-day running and leadership of a school”. In addition, the duties of the principal range from budgeting (ss.21(c-d), to ensuring discipline (ss.21(g-h)), to ensuring that “that meaningful teaching and learning takes place at the school” (s.26 (f)). While the school principal is an important role-player in ensuring quality education in his or her school, the principal remains dependant on the school board. Section 23(1) stipulates that “the school shall be governed by a school board”. Teachers are another very important human resource, as they are responsible for the actual teaching and learning in the classroom context. While the teaching service commission is also responsible for the appointment, promotion, demotion, transference and removal of teachers (s.42(1)), the school principal “is responsible for the discipline of teachers under his or her supervision in line with the disciplinary code of conduct” (s.21(g)).

The role of parents is to “provide the learner with the full opportunity and guidance to complete primary education” (s.4 (6)(c)). Parents can nominate three parents as representatives to serve on the school board (s.23 (2)(b); s.24(5)), and they are required, according to Section 4(5), to “be involved in the development of the disciplinary policies of the school”. In accordance with the duties of the education advisory council, the teaching service council, according to Section 36(a), can “register and remove teachers from the register”.

From the analysis of the *Education Act 2010*, it seems that its focus is primarily on roles and responsibilities, especially concerning human resources on various levels. In alignment with systems theory, it is clear from the analysis that all role-players have to work collectively towards the realisation of the envisaged goal for Lesotho education as espoused in the *Constitution*, namely the full development of the human personality. My contention is that quality education will lead to the full development of the human body and human personality. In drawing on my analysis of the *Education Act 2010*, it is assumed that the delivery of quality education is only possible if the different role-players work interdependently and collectively for the betterment of education. Human resources are imperative within the context of education. The *Education Act 2010* also assigns an important task to the education advisory council that relates to physical resources, in that this council shall advise the Minister on “school curriculum and curriculum materials” (s.29 (1)(a)).

### **3.2.3 Education Sector Plan 2016-2026**

While the *Constitution* provides the vision for quality education (cf. 3.3), the *Education Act 2010* gives legislative power to this vision (cf. 3.4). The *Education Sector Plan 2016-2026* (*Sector Plan*) was prepared by MoET to play a pivotal role in the realisation of the strategic goals for Lesotho education, which are guided by

four main pillars, namely access, quality, equity and relevance, and these emanate from the tenets of the Sustainable Development Goals, Africa 2063, SADC Protocol on Education and Lesotho National Strategic Development Plan (2012/13 – 2016/17) (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:2).

As such, the *Sector Plan* is aimed at the achievement of access, quality, equity and relevant education for all Basotho (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b). Thus, it can be assumed that the *Sector Plan* is regarded as instrumental in the achievement of the *Constitution's* vision for the “development of the human personality and sense of dignity and strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:s.28(a)). However, in drawing on the exposition of the roles and responsibilities of various role-players as stipulated in the *Education Act 2010* (cf. 3.4), it can further be assumed that the realisation of access, quality, equity and relevant education relies on the ability of these role-players to work collectively and interdependently (cf. 1.4). The *Sector Plan* should therefore not be considered in isolation from the *Constitution's* mandate for education and the need for human resources as espoused in the *Education Act 2010*.

The *Sector Plan* aims to enhance an education system that will deliver “relevant and inclusive quality education to all Basotho effectively, efficiently and equitably” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:22). In order to realise this aim, physical resources must be provided in the form of infrastructure development and provision. In this regard, the *Section Plan* indicates that while the government has constructed “a fairly high number of lower basic education and secondary schools since 2000”, significant efforts have been made “towards financing education services to improve access, quality and equity” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:16). Infrastructure development became imperative as the introduction of FPE in 2000 led to an increase in student enrolment figures in primary schools (cf. 2.2). The construction of new classrooms was not only the government’s response to increased enrolment, but also aligns with its commitment to SDG 4 to

build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. And also to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes (United Nations, 2015b:21).

Concerning this SDG, the *Sector Plan* also ensures that the Ministry will “promote gender equality and ensure empowerment to disadvantaged groups” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:22). To ensure access for all, the government stated that “additional reception classes will be attached to lower basic education schools especially in hard to reach areas with significant numbers of vulnerable and disadvantaged children” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:23).

While the *Education Act 2010* places the focus on the provision of human resources, the *Sector Plan* foregrounds measures to enable the provision of quality education. However, the provision of quality education is embedded in the

need for a better understanding of learning processes and developing sustainable inclusive and participative strategies to facilitate more effective and teaching and learning in ways that ensure that all children acquire knowledge and skills relevant to self-fulfilment, decent employment and life (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:79).

Therefore, the provision of quality education should not only be aimed at the *Constitution’s* vision for the full development of the human personality, but measures should be taken to enable effective teaching and learning. An understanding of the learning process is therefore

required for the development of sustainable and inclusive education. With the aim at sustainable and inclusive education, the *Sector Plan* foregrounds the

provision of teaching and learning materials, equipping schools, reforming the curriculum, investing in teacher training and development, and conducting the cost-effective and efficient teacher supervision and support (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:14).

Resources are essential for effective teaching and learning, and are imperative for enabling a conducive context in which teachers can assist with the full development of the human personality (cf. 2.3.2.2). Although the government “pays teachers and extends subsidies for learners’ fees, especially with respect to free lower basic education” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:17), it should be noted that

[t]he number of teachers without basic resources such as chalkboards, books and other resources remain notably high. An example is the 47 percent of teachers who did not have a teacher’s guide for Mathematics, 48 percent for English and 50 percent for Sesotho (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:30).

While the *Sector Plan* concedes that there are cases where resources are unavailable in schools, the government, however, assigns responsibilities to different role-players to avail resources for improved teaching and learning. In the *Education Act 2010* Section 29(1) (a), the government ensures that curricula and materials are relevant to the needs of the Basotho. By implication, this relevant curriculum and materials would be necessary and supportive for the full development of the human child. In addition, in drawing on the *Constitution’s* advocacy for the provision of education for human development, the *Sector Plan* focuses on different education levels, as it embarks on education that is inclusive and equal for all. This includes lifelong learning. The *Sector Plan* acknowledges measures should be taken to enable the provision of education that fulfils the criterion of human development for all Basotho. The delivery of quality education is subsequently reliant on the availability of a relevant curriculum and supportive resources.

The *Sector Plan*, however, foregrounds various problems within the Lesotho education sector that relate to resource provisioning. For example, schools often offer their own curriculum, despite the existence of minimum prescriptions regarding the number of subjects that should be taught. In addition, there is “gross disparity in the educational facilities existing in different schools, a factor that accounts for poor performance in many schools” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:49). While the *Sector Plan* acknowledges the relationship between educational facilities and student performance, it also indicates the “great disparity in

districts' performance, with mountain areas recording distressingly low performance. It is also worth noting that performance in Mathematics and Science is poor across all districts" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:51). However, for the government to achieve its vision for education as stated in the *Constitution*, and the achievement of SDG 4, the *Sector Plan* envisages the following:

the overriding objective is to restructure the whole secondary section of the education system, by enrolling all children and reaching universal completion of basic education, be it academic or vocational and technical Plans to include G11 under the junior secondary levels: allocation of infrastructure and schooling inputs such as textbooks, redeployment of teachers, etc. Schools which will offer A Level will be resourced by providing requisite teaching and learning materials (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:52).

Various resources ranging from physical, human to financial resources, are necessary for enabling the school to function in an organised manner towards realising its education goal for the provision of quality education (cf. 2.3.1). As an important element in the broader context of the school as a system, the availability of resources depends on the interdependence of different role-players for the delivery of quality education (cf. 1.4). In this regard, the Lesotho government seems to be committed to fulfil the *Constitution's* vision for education and to realise the United Nations' SDG 4 through improved teaching and learning. As noted, financial resources are required for the delivery of quality education (cf. 2.3.2.3). In alignment with the need for monetary input, the *Sector Plan* indicates that "concerning public financing of education services, the Government of Lesotho continues to make significant efforts towards financing its system" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:17). Monetary input remains an important factor for enabling the Minister of Education and Training, the teaching service and the teaching service commission to provide resources for improved teaching and learning towards the attainment of quality education as stipulated in the *Education Act 2010* (cf. 3.4).

The analysis of the *Sector Plan* reveals challenges faced by Lesotho education regarding the provision of resources that hamper the delivery of quality education. However, in recognition of these challenges, the *Sector Plan* foregrounds the government's commitment to build an education system based on access, quality, equity and relevance. In alignment with the *Constitution's* vision for quality education (cf. 3.3), and the *Education Act 2010's* exposition of the responsibilities for different role-players, the *Sector Plan* constitutes the plan for ensuring

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 (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)(a)).

### **3.2.4 *Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools (2006)***

The intertextuality of documents emerged from the document analysis. This means the relationship between different documents with similar or related content. While the *Constitution* mandates the provision of quality education for all Basotho (cf. 3.3), the *Education Act 2010* describes the role of different human resources for the enactment of quality education (cf. 3.4). The enactment of quality education through the provision of human resources, is strengthened by means of the *Sector Plan's* focus on access, quality, relevance and equality (cf. 3.5). To further strengthen the provision of quality education through resource provisioning, the *Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools (2006)* (hereafter the *Manual for Principals*) proceeds from the premise that “the aim of the school should be to produce well-rounded pupils of good quality academically, who are socially well-adjusted and who have high moral standards (MoET, 2006:s.2.1). In order to enable the latter, the document aims at “providing knowledge of and guidance in school management and administration in a concise and clear form” (MoET, 2006: Introduction). It is also stated that the guidance given in this document “should enable the Principal to see clearly not only his/her role in the conduct and control of school affairs, but also the part to be played by the members of his/her staff” (MoET, 2006:Introduction). The school principal has to work with different role-players in order to enable the provisioning of knowledge and guidance in the school: “[p]rincipal should make use of all members of his/her team: from the School Board ... through the school’s teaching staff ... and to the non-teaching staff” (MoET, 2006:s.2.1).

Given the collective mandate of role-players to enable the school to function in an organised way, and in order to realise the full development of the human personality through the provision of quality education (cf. 1.4), it is important to consider these role-players within the context of the *Manual for Principals*. It is stipulated that a typical secondary/high school has a management hierarchy beginning with the school board (MoET, 2006:s.2.1). Section 25(a-b) of the *Education Act 2010* describes the role of the school board as having to oversee the management and proper running of the school. It will therefore

- (b) be responsible for the management and proper and efficient running of the school;

- (c) recommend to the Educational Secretaries or Supervisor, as the case may be, the appointment, discipline, transfer or removal from office of a Teacher, other than a Teacher whose salary is paid by the Government (MoET, 2006:s.2.2).

The school board is thus entrusted to hire teachers. In realising the goal for the provision of quality education, teachers are considered important and crucial human resources for teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2.1(b)). The *Manual for Principals* should be read in conjunction with the *Education Act 2010*'s indication in Section 23(1) that principals are dependent on the school board for the proper running of the school.

The *Manual for Principals* also refers to the school management team (SMT), which should consist of the principal, deputy, and Heads of Departments (HoDs) (MoET, 2006). The responsibilities of the SMT are to provide “advice, guidance and support to the principal in making decisions that affect the administrative and academic areas of the school, also the interpreting of Ministry Policies regarding finances/budgets” (MoET, 2006:s.2.1). It is imperative that the management of finances in the school is done effectively, as the poor management of available funds will, by implication, lead to schools’ failure to achieve the educational objectives (cf. 2.3.2.3). As noted by MoET (2006:s.10.1.2), “[h]owever properly a school is run, the whole structure of the school will fall apart unless the finances of the institution are operated carefully”. It can therefore be assumed that when school finances are well managed, the SMT can contribute towards the provision of different forms of resources, all of which are required for the delivery of quality education and, by implication, good student performance.

In addition to the role of the mentioned role-players, the *Manual for Principals* specifically focuses on the role and responsibilities of the school principal. It is generally assumed that the school principal should, through his or her leadership and management role, create and support conditions that are conducive for teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2.1(b)). In alignment with this general perception, the *Manual for Principals* foregrounds the role of the principal as one of “a coordinator, a decision-maker, a supervisor, a delegator, a listener and, overall, a leader” (MoET, 2006:s.2.3.1). The role of the school principal is centred on the achievement of the objective to provide quality education. In this regard, “the Principal is responsible for the establishment of the school curriculum in order to ensure that a well-balanced education is provided” (MoET, 2006:s.2.3.2 (vii)). As a well-balanced education requires the provision of various resources, the school principal as leader should facilitate

communication and learning in relation to curriculum delivery, and the building of good relationships with parents for successful learning (cf. 3.4).

While the school principal is responsible for the “overall running and control of the school”, he or she must also “organize and control both the teaching and non-teaching staff” (MoET, 2006:ss.2.3.2(i) and (iv)). By implication, however, as noted in sub-section (ii), the principal must have the ability to “inspire good relations with staff and loyalty to him/her”. Although the SMT provides advice on the interpretation of financial policies, the principal is “immediately responsible for all revenue and expenditure within the school. He/she should have a reasonable comprehension of the school’s accounting and book-keeping procedures” (MoET, 2006:s.2.3.2(v)). In alignment with Sections 21 and 23 of the *Education Act 2010*, the duties of the school principal range from budgeting to ensuring discipline, all of which are required for meaningful teaching and learning. In order to ensure the delivery of quality education and the full development of the human personality, the school principal has

physical, financial and human resources at his/her disposal in managing a school, including those of the Ministry of Education and Training, other ministries and a community (MoET, 2006:s.2.3.1).

With regards to physical resources, the school principal has the responsibility to make provision in the appropriate section for funds for maintenance of buildings and grounds, for the replacement of furniture, and for minor works, for example re-painting of chalk-boards (MoET, 2006:s.11.1).

A lack of physical resources in a school can hinder teaching and learning, and thus, have a negative impact on student performance (cf. Bizimana & Orodho, 2014). While the school principal is responsible for “the good order of all the buildings, including institutional houses allocated to the school” (s.11.1), teachers are responsible for the general condition of their classes, both interior and exterior” (s.11.4). In order for a school to fulfil Lesotho’s vision for the provision of quality education, the principal has to ensure that physical resources enable effective teaching and learning, while at the same time, motivating teachers to take up their “responsibilities regarding care of classroom materials and furniture” (s.11.3).

Considering the responsibilities of the school principal as espoused in the *Manual for Principals*, it is imperative to further postulate that the school principal as leaders must “learn what motivates their staff to perform” (MoET, 2006:s.3.2, Motivation). This imperative is foregrounded based on the fact that teachers’ intrinsic motivation soon fades away and “it

would be catastrophic for principals to rely on intrinsic motivation alone". The school principal is responsible for the extrinsic motivation of the teaching staff. In this regard, the *Manual for Principals* gives guidance by juxtaposing motivators with de-motivators. De-motivators referred to in the document include *inter alia*, "[t]eaching large classes, [l]ack of teaching materials and [l]ack of staff development activities" (MoET, 2006:s.3.2, Motivation). Teachers are important human resources in the school, and de-motivators can hinder the performance of teachers. By taking note of the de-motivators, the school principal can gain an understanding that aspects such as "[d]isciplined pupils, [a]vailability of teaching materials and [s]chool ethos which is adhered to" can serve as extrinsic motivation to perform. Motivation is one of the important management strategies that could lead towards efficient and effective teaching. The benefits of motivated teachers who work towards the attainment of effective teaching could include a decrease in student dropout rates, the maintenance of student discipline, the motivation of students, and by implication, improved student performance (cf. 2.3.2.2).

In the Lesotho context, the achievement of quality education for all Basotho is reliant on the interdependency of various role-players. As already noted, it is important for all parts in the school system to work interdependently for the betterment of education (cf. 1.4). In this regard, the *Manual for Principals* postulates that

the Principal should make use of all members of his/her team: from the School Board, whose contacts in the local community could be very useful; through the school teaching staff, who must be involved in both in and out-of-class activities; and to the non-teaching staff, whose value to the school should not only be counted as the work that they do, but also because of their interaction with the pupils in a more informal way (MoET, 2006:s.2.1).

It is anticipated that

[c]o-operative interaction within the school will carry over into those functions where outsiders are involved and become a way of life which will result in the pupils becoming well-adjusted and respected members of the Basotho community (MoET, 2006:s.2.1).

The interconnectedness of the various role-players is emphasised, and the school principal seems to have an important role in motivating the teaching staff, the non-teaching staff and the community to work collectively towards the attainment of quality education.

Resources, whether physical, or human in nature, are essential in ensuring Lesotho's vision for the development of the full human personality. Throughout the *Manual for Principals*,

reference is made to responsibilities pertaining to human resources, financial resources and physical resources. The document highlights that the school principal must manage the physical, financial and human resources at his/her disposal so as to enable the school to “produce well-rounded pupils of good quality academically, who are socially well-adjusted and who have moral standards” (MoET, 2006:s.2.1). In spelling out the responsibilities of school principals, the *Manual for Principals* enables the principal “to clearly see not only his/her role in the conduct and control of school affairs, but also the part to be played by the members of his/her staff” (MoET, 2006:Introduction). By implication, the role of the school principal relates to the management of resources, and subsequently has the potential to lead to the realisation for the *Constitution’s* vision for the full development of the human personality.

### **3.3 INTERTEXTUAL POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR RESOURCE PROVISIONING**

According to Shannan (2016; Bazerman, 2004), intertextuality refers to the relationship between texts. My analysis of the *Lesotho Constitution* (1993), *Education Act 2010*, the *Education Sector Plan 2016-2026* and the *Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools* (2006), was informed by my understanding of intertextuality. As these documents attest to roles and responsibilities of various role-players in the provision of resources, they should not be read in isolation from one another. The rationale for connecting the documents in this manner was to first indicate how the *Lesotho Constitution* (1993) as the supreme law of the country forms the basis for the provision of quality education, and by implication, the provision of resources for enabling quality education. Based on this foundation, various official documents allude to the roles and responsibilities regarding the provision of human resources, financial resources and physical resources in different ways. In the visual summary below (see Table 3.1), I indicate each document’s core focus regarding education. In drawing on the document analysis, I note the relevance of each document for quality education, its role regarding resource provisioning towards quality education and subsequent student performance, and the significance of each for this study. Informed by systems theory as my paradigmatic orientation, I situate this framework within the necessity for various role-players to work collectively towards the attainment of the full human personality.

Table 3.1: Policy framework for the provision of resources

Documents	Core focus regarding education	Relevance for quality education	Resource provisioning towards quality education	Relevance for this study
<i>The Lesotho Constitution</i> (1993)	<i>The Lesotho Constitution</i> guarantees the adoption of policies aimed at ensuring that “education is directed to the full development of the human personality” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:s.28(a)).	This document lists various rights, <i>inter alia</i> the right to education and the protection and promotion thereof (cf. 3.2.1). The right to education should be read along with the vision for the full development of the human personality	As the supreme law, the <i>Constitution</i> lays the foundation for legislation in the form of policies to ensure the enactment of quality education through <i>inter alia</i> , the provision of resources.	As the right to quality education is guaranteed in the <i>Constitution</i> , the government and subsequently MoET, are legally compelled to provide resources towards the delivery of quality education.
<i>Education Act 2010</i>	The <i>Education Act 2010</i> lists responsibilities regarding the supervision and management of schools, and spells out the roles and responsibilities of educational secretaries, the education advisory council, the teaching service and the teaching service commission (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:ss.18-44).	Different role-players in education should work together to ensure that the 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” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)(a)).	To achieve the provision of quality education, different role-players are assigned responsibilities regarding the provision of human, physical, and financial resources, all of which are required to enable the envisaged full development of the human personality.	This document envisages the availability of different human resources, including financial and physical resources, to “act in the best interests of the learner and his or her education at all times” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)(d)).  By implication, the <i>Education Act 2010</i> aims, through various role-players, to realise the <i>Constitution’s</i> vision for quality education and the subsequent “full development of the human personality”.
<i>Education Sector Plan 2016-2026</i> (2016)	The <i>Education Sector Plan 2016-2026</i> plays an important role in the realisation of the strategic goals for Lesotho education, which are aimed “at the achievement of access, quality, and equity, and relevant education for all Basotho” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:21).	This document alludes to a better understanding of the learning processes and inclusive strategies for participation to ensure students receive quality education (cf. 3.2.3).	In order to realise the aim of achieving access, quality, equity and relevant education for all, the government has taken measures to provide various resources such as teaching and learning materials, school equipment, curriculum, human resources and the development of infrastructure.	This document is relevant as it lists the government’s measures to provide the needed resources to realise quality education. The <i>Education Sector Plan 2016-2026</i> focuses on the attainment of access, quality and equity regarding education for all Basotho.

<p><i>Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools</i> (2006)</p>	<p>The <i>Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools</i> aims at “providing knowledge of and guidance in school management and administration in a concise and clear form” (MoET, 2006:Introduction).</p>	<p>The leadership and managerial role of the principal focuses on the responsibilities of different human resources such as the school board, the principal, and teaching and non-teaching staff. Responsibilities also range from the provision and care of resources to the utilisation of finances and physical resources (cf. 3.2.4).</p>	<p>This document lists various human resources in working towards the attainment of quality education. Reference is made to good management of finances, the establishment of a school curriculum, and the development of human and physical resources.</p>	<p>This document envisages how the achievement of quality education is reliant on the good management of human, financial and physical resources.</p>
<p>The intertextual policy framework depicts how the documents are interconnected, as they all focus on ensuring the delivery of quality education. Quality education is only possible through the provision of various resources that range from human and financial resources to physical resources. The school is an organisation in which various role-players are required to work interdependently towards the achievement of quality education (cf. 1.4). Thus, a strong relationship among the elements of the school such as MoET, the school board, the principal, teaching and non-teaching staff is necessary for the effective operation of the school. In the broader context of the school as a system, the availability of resources depends on the interdependence of different role-players for the delivery of quality education. By implication, the availability of the latter will feed into good student performance. Framed within the Lesotho context, the achievement of quality education for all Basotho as advocated in the <i>Constitution</i>, is subsequently reliant on the interdependency of various role-players as espoused in <i>Education Act 2010</i>, the <i>Sector Plan</i> and the <i>Manual for Principals</i> to provide the resources required for quality teaching and learning, and subsequent good student performance.</p>				

### 3.4 SUMMARY

The objective of this chapter was to analyse relevant documents in order to bring to the fore the different roles and responsibilities of various role-players regarding the provisioning of resources in Lesotho post-primary schools. The findings of my document analysis reveal that in alignment with the *Constitution's* vision for education, various documents highlight the roles and responsibilities of an array of role-players towards the realisation of this vision. In particular, the *Education Act 2010* espouses the numerous human resources and their roles in the provisioning of resources such as human, physical and financial resources. The *Sector Plan* highlights the measures, which the government has taken to ensure quality education through MoET's responsibility for providing resources in schools. The *Manual for Principals* foregrounds the connection between different human resources such as the school board, the school management team, and teaching and non-teaching staff under the leadership and management of the school principal. A careful consideration of the findings of the analysis indicates how roles and responsibilities relate to different resources, ranging from human and financial to physical resources. From the basis of systems theory (cf. 14), it is accepted that all role-players must work collectively towards the attainment of quality education. Quality education is, however, dependent on the provision of resources, while in turn, the availability of resources enables good student performance.

In the next chapter, I embark on the objective to explore teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools.

# **CHAPTER 4: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESOURCE AVAILABILITY AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

## **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, I presented the findings of my document analysis with specific reference to the provision of quality education and the required resources for Basotho students. The findings of the document analysis revealed that the Lesotho government recognises numerous resources for enabling efficient teaching and learning. While the previous chapter foregrounded the roles and responsibilities regarding resource provisioning, the objective of this chapter is to explore how teachers perceive the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance (cf. 1.3.3).

In this chapter, I present the findings derived from the analysis of data generated by means of semi-structured and focus group interviews. However, before I present and discuss the findings, I provide a brief exposition of the research methodology that constituted the approach to the study, the participants that were selected for participation in the study, the steps I used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, and the data generation strategies and analysis I used in this study.

## **4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A research methodology can be understood as the basis on which a researcher forms his or her explanations regarding the research aim (Jamshed, 2014). In order to realise the research aim, I followed various steps. My study was embedded in a qualitative methodology as I was interested in gaining an understanding of how the research participants make sense of the relationship between resource availability and student performance (cf. 4.2.1). In order to gain such an understanding, participants were chosen based on the assumption that they are best positioned to provide me with rich data (cf. 4.2.1.1). To ensure the integrity of this study, I undertook certain steps related to ethical requirements (cf. 4.2.2.1) and trustworthiness (cf. 4.2.2.2). To generate data for this study, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted (cf.4.3.2). The generated data was analysed and interpreted (cf. 4.3.2.1). In the subsequent sections, I give more detail on the various aspects mentioned.

### **4.2.1 Qualitative approach**

This qualitative study was premised on the assumption that the research participants construct their own understanding of the relationship between resource availability and student performance (cf. 1.5.1). The exploratory nature of a qualitative methodology enabled me to explore the participants' perceptions that they freely expressed during the semi-structured and focus group interviews. As the participants worked in different schools, I was able to explore how they make sense of their own individual experiences. In addition, I was also able to gain an understanding of how their perceptions are influenced by the different settings in which they work. This characteristic of a qualitative research methodology, namely to generate information from the natural setting of the researched, influenced my choice of the two research methods. As interviews and focus group interviews are typically associated with naturalistic inquiry, these methods enabled me to generate rich data. A qualitative approach and the associated research methods enabled me to not only conduct face-to-face sessions with the participants, but to also elaborate on the questions asked and to probe for deeper meaning and explanations.

#### **4.2.1.1 Selection of participants**

My research participants were purposely and conveniently selected (cf. 1.5.3). Although the decision of which two schools to select in the Berea district was mine, the school principals of the two schools assisted in identifying five teachers per school according to their teaching responsibilities regarding specific subjects that typically require certain resources for quality teaching and learning. The selected teachers teach Mathematics, Sciences, Religious Studies and Business Education. I also interviewed the two principals from the two schools, as they have certain responsibilities in their leadership capacity that relate to the management of resources. These two schools were selected based on economic factors and are both church schools; albeit from two different denominations. For the sake of distinction, I refer to Denomination A (DA) school and Denomination B (DB) school. DA is perceived as well-resourced as it has a library, a science laboratory and a computer laboratory. The under-resourced school, DB, lacks resources such as *inter alia* a science laboratory and a computer laboratory. Whilst the

majority of schools (Lower Basic Education and Secondary) in the country are owned by different churches almost all education personnel fall under Government employment through the Ministry of Education and Training fees (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:17)

Although the respective churches serve as the proprietors of the schools, the government remains responsible for paying the salaries of the teachers, who in turn, are obliged to follow the rules and regulations of the government.

The total number of participants selected for this study was 12 - five teachers from a well-resourced school, five teachers from an under-resourced school, and the two principals from the respective schools. While the teachers engaged in focus group discussions, the two principals were interviewed. The decision to work with only five teachers from the well-resourced school and five teachers from the under-resourced school, together with the two principals, was premised on the contention that in qualitative research, it is not about the number of participants but about the depth of the data. According to Dworkin (2012; Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2015), a qualitative study focuses on maintaining a close relationship between the researcher and participants, which allows more in-depth data to be generated. As such, the choice to conduct a focus group interview of approximately two hours at each school enabled me to develop a close relationship with my participants, which in turn, allowed for an open exchange of data. The focus group interviews also enabled data generation in a more controlled setting where everyone was given the opportunity to view their opinion. Furthermore, as all my participants are involved in teaching and require the use of resources for the delivery of quality education, it was not necessary to select more participants. Too many participants might have yielded large data sets that would become too repetitive (cf. Mason, 2010).

The choice for working with the two schools was based on convenience, as they are in close vicinity to where I reside. It was therefore easy for me to travel to the schools, which saved me time to interact with the participants and generate data. I also easily managed to keep up with the time schedules for the semi-structured and focus group interviews. In the table below, I give an exposition of the research participants in terms of their gender, position, their teaching experience, the subject they teach, and their position at the school. Since I did not use the names of the participants, I made a distinction between the participants in terms of the particular school where they teach. I referred to the participants as RS (resourced school) and URS (under-resourced school).

Table 4.1: Personal details (Biography)

Participant	Gender	Position	Teaching experience	Subject
Resourced school (RS) (DA)				
RSP	Female	Principal	23 years	N/A
RS1	Male	Junior teacher <sup>2</sup>	1 year	Mathematics, Biology, Science and Technology
RS2	Male	Junior teacher	6 months	Sciences (Physics, Chemistry and Life Skills)
RS3	Male	Senior teacher	3 years	Sciences (Physics and Science and Technology)
RS4	Male	Junior teacher	2 years	Religious Studies and English Language
RS5	Male	Senior teacher	4 years	Business Education and Accounting
Under-resourced school (URS) (DB)				
URSP	Female	Principal	22 years	N/A
URS1	Male	Senior teacher	5 years	Mathematics
URS2	Male	Senior teacher	7 years	Sciences (Biology, Science and Technology)
URS3	Male	Junior teacher	13 years	Sciences (Chemistry and Physics)
URS4	Male	Senior teacher	9 years	Religious Studies and Development Studies
URS5	Male	Senior teacher	10 months	Business Education, Arts and Entrepreneurship

## 4.2.2 Integrity of the study

Research integrity is defined by Yin (2011) as the element of a qualitative approach that points out that the researcher has gone to great lengths to conduct the research accurately and fairly. In order to ensure integrity, I kept certain ethical considerations in mind (cf. 4.2.2.1) and took certain steps to ensure trustworthiness (cf. 4.2.2.2).

### 4.2.2.1 Ethical considerations

I took certain steps to ensure that the rights of my participants were respected. The participants for the study were selected by the two respective school principals, based on my request to work with teachers who teach Mathematics, Sciences, Religious Studies and

<sup>2</sup> The status difference between junior and senior teacher is based on qualifications: senior teachers are degree holders, while junior teachers have a teacher's diploma.

Business Studies. However, before the focus group interviews, I explained to the participants that their participation is voluntary. I allowed them to read the informed consent form, and they had the opportunity to ask questions before they gave their consent in writing. Although the school principals selected the participants, it was important to ensure that they did not feel forced to participate due to the involvement of the school principals in the selection process. I asked the participants if they would allow me to audio record the focus group discussions. Although I ensured them that the recordings and transcriptions would be treated as confidential, they indicated their discomfort with the recording of the discussions. I therefore had to take notes during the discussions. The participants understood the time-consuming task of taking notes, and indicated that they were not pressured for time.

After reading the informed consent form, one participant enquired how my study would be of benefit to them as participants. I explained that the value of this study to help MoET to consider the teachers' perceptions with regard to resource availability and student performance in the provisioning of education in post primary schools. The participant felt comfortable and signed the informed consent form.

I ensured that the participants' dignity was respected during the interviews and the focus group interviews. The participants were also comfortable knowing that their identities and that of their schools would not be revealed. I assured anonymity in the research report as I used pseudonyms instead of their real names.

I further applied and received permission to undertake my study from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State Faculty of Education, and my Ethical Clearance number is UFS-HSD2019/0443/2806 (cf. Appendix A). In addition, I was granted permission to conduct the study by the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho (cf. Appendix B), and by the principals of the selected schools (cf. Appendix C).

#### **4.2.2.2 Trustworthiness of the study**

According to Samuel (2017), research trustworthiness proposes that the researcher's words can be trusted as representing truthful statements. On the same note, Yin (2011) indicates that research truthfulness is of vital importance in qualitative research, as people want to know that the researcher has gone to great lengths to conduct the research with precision. In my study, I ensured trustworthiness by taking certain steps in ensuring the *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability* of the study.

**(a) Credibility**

To ensure *credibility* in my study, I involved the participants in semi-structured and focus group interviews. As the participants preferred that I transcribe their responses instead of audio recording it, I checked and rechecked my notes taken during the data gathering process. The participants ensured me that if I needed to contact them later for clarification, they would be more than willing to assist. I had the opportunity to spend more time with my participants, which assisted us in developing a relationship that allowed them to open up to provide in-depth information. During the semi-structured and focus group interviews, I recorded the participants' gestures that accompanied their verbal responses. The face-to-face sessions allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of their responses. In order to strengthen credibility, I requested the participants to recheck the transcriptions of the focus group discussions for accuracy, verification and confirmation (cf. Kumar, 2011). I followed the above-mentioned steps to ensure that my study presents the actual and true results of my findings.

**(b) Transferability**

*Transferability* demonstrates that the research could be applied to other contexts (Kumar, 2011). In my study, I ensured transferability through the process of generating data through document analysis, semi-structured, and focus group interviews. It was my contention that data generated through these qualitative methods could form the basis for other researchers in the field of teaching and learning, to use in similar situations.

**(c) Dependability**

*Dependability* refers to the extent to which a study can be repeated by other researchers and yield the same results (Merriam, 2009). In order to enable the possibility of repeating the study, I provided detailed information on the research design, the data generation methods and the data analysis method. I also provided particulars about the criteria for participant selection. It was my contention that a detailed description of the entire research process would be helpful to other researchers who would like to undertake a similar study.

**(d) Confirmability**

According to Koolin (2014), *confirmability* deals with the question of whether the research findings could be repeated with the same participants to confirm neutrality and to avoid bias. In addition to providing detailed information about the research process, I also had to ensure that the participants had access to my interview and discussion transcriptions. It was

important to get confirmation from them that the transcriptions were a true reflection of the information they provided. I also kept an audit trail by taking notes on all my observations during data generation, to compliment my participants' responses.

### **4.2.3 Data generation strategies**

As I followed a qualitative approach for this study (cf. 1.5.1 & 4.2.1), data was generated through semi-structured interviews of about 60 minutes with the resourced school principal and 90 minutes with the principal of the under-resourced school. The focus group discussions lasted approximately two hours and 45 minutes at the under-resourced school, and two hours at the resourced school.

For the semi-structured interviews I compiled a list of questions (cf. Appendix E), which related to specific themes applicable to my study: *general teaching experience and feelings regarding the livelihood of the school* (cf. questions 1(a) and (b)-2), *perceptions on what resources are required for functional schooling* (cf. questions 3-4), *responsibility for resource provisioning* (cf. questions 5-6), *the relationship between resource availability and student performance* (cf. question 8(a) and (b)), and *suggestions for the improvement of resource availability* (cf. question 9). In addition to these questions, I probed the principals at times for more in-depth responses. I also included some related questions as the need arose and encouraged the principals to ask questions.

For the two focus group interviews, the teachers from the two schools were grouped together in one room. Although I prepared an interview schedule (cf. Appendix E), I asked follow-up questions and granted the participants the opportunity to deliberate on their responses. I compiled questions which I regarded as relevant for yielding information relating to the relationship between resource availability and student performance (cf. 1.3.1). The questions encapsulated the following themes: *general experience of teaching* (cf. questions 1-3); *understanding of resources in the school context and in relation to teaching* (cf. questions 4-8), *resource provisioning* (cf. questions 9-10); *relationship between resource availability and student performance* (cf. questions 12-13).

Whereas the semi-structured interviews assisted me with the principals' perceptions regarding the availability of resources and student performance, the focus group interviews provided insight into teachers' perceptions, as they experienced this on a different level than that of the principals. As the school principals have specific responsibilities regarding the

management of resources (cf. 3.2.4), their perceptions were differently informed than that of the teachers who work with resources in order to provide and attain quality teaching and learning in their classroom spaces.

#### **4.2.3.1 Data analysis and interpretation**

In terms of data analysis, I first looked closely and critically at my field notes. I read the transcriptions of the participants' responses several times and then colour-coded similar responses to see what themes emerged from the data. The organisation of the coded data into themes simplified my analysis and assisted me to organise my research findings (cf. Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017; Creswell, 2012). The use of thematic analysis was helpful to highlight similarities and differences in the participants' responses within the various themes. The steps that I followed assisted me to make sense of the data and to analyse it concerning the participants' perceptions on resources availability and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools.

In order to interpret the findings from the data generation and analysis, I drew on the literature review in Chapter 2 and the document analysis in Chapter 3. In Chapter 2, I undertook a literature review with the objective to determine the role and importance of resources for the provisioning of quality education, and for subsequent good student performance (cf. 2.1). My understanding of various resources required for effective teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2), and the relationship between resource availability and student performance (cf. 2.4), enabled me to interpret the data in relation to the main research question. In other words, in reading the data from the literature review, I was able to make sense of how the participants perceive the relationship between resource availability and student performance. In a similar manner, the document analysis in Chapter 3 assisted me to interpret the findings through an understanding of the roles and responsibilities regarding the provision of resources in Lesotho post-primary schools (cf. 3.1). In particular, my understanding of the policy framework for resource provisioning (cf. Table 3.1) informed my interpretation of the participants' views on the responsible parties for resources and, indirectly, the extent to which the different role-players can be held accountable for the availability of resources. My study was embedded in systems theory, as the overarching research paradigm (cf. 1.4). I subsequently managed the data through my understanding of the school as an organisation with interconnected stakeholders for the attainment of quality education. My interpretation of the data was therefore informed by the extent to which the

participants' perceptions foregrounded an interconnectedness regarding the provision of resources and the subsequent enabling of student performance.

### 4.3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, I present the findings that emerged from the data analysis. Four themes emerged from the thematic analysis, namely perceptions regarding *resources within the school context*, *resource provisioning*, *the relationship between resource availability and student performance* and *suggestions for the provision of resources*. I will present the findings regarding each theme, followed by a discussion. It is my contention that the immediate discussion of the findings does not create a distance that is often found in cases where all the findings are first presented and then discussed. I consolidate the findings and discussion in a brief summary at the end of this chapter. For the sake of clarity, the verbatim quotes from the participants in the well-resourced school (RS) are presented in **blue**, while quotes from the participants from the under-resourced school (URS) are in **green**. The use of different colours assisted in highlighting similar and differing opinions and experiences from the participants, but also that of participants from different schools. The responses from the school principals are also infused in the findings and are not presented separately. In the subsequent sections, I present the findings of this study according to the following four themes mentioned at the start of this section, namely *resources within the school context*, *resource provisioning*, *the relationship between resource availability and student performance* and *responsible role-players and suggestions for the provision of resources*.

#### 4.3.1 Resources within the school context

It was my contention to first gain insight into the participants' general understanding of resources in the broader school context, and then to foreground their understanding in relation to their specific teaching realities. Various resources, ranging from human to physical to financial in nature, are required in the school context for the achievement of the educational goal of quality education (cf. 2.2.3.1; 2.3.2). In addition, the literature indicates that the availability of resources plays a major role in improved student performance (cf.2.3).

Although various resources are required in the school context, it was interesting to note that the majority of the participants' understanding of resources centred on what is required to facilitate teaching and learning. Participants for the well-resourced school indicated how the availability of resources enables teaching: Participant RS1 highlighted that "**when teaching materials are there my teaching would be easy and learning will be smooth**". In a

similar manner, participant RS2 referred to resources as **“anything that can be used by a teacher to help him or her to deliver the content to the learners. It simplifies teaching and learning”**. The participants from the under-resourced school were of a similar opinion, although they referred to examples of what they perceive as the resources necessary for enabling teaching and learning in classroom spaces:

**... any tangible and non-tangible objects that can be used by both the teacher and the learner for teaching and learning to be effective** - URS2

**... tool or instrument in a form of material/human helping to make the job done. It can be people, books chalk etc.** - URS3

Due to specific subjects that the participants teach, they have different teaching realities that require different resources for effective teaching and learning. In accordance with their teaching realities, the participants refined their understanding of resources in relation to their immediate teaching realities. The two participants from the two schools who teach Mathematics have subject-specific needs such as **“mathematics kits, graph books and set of mathematics instruments”** (RS1) and **“infrastructure which include computer laboratory to facilitate teaching and learning, Wi-Fi should be connected in the school for access to internet”** (URS1). Participant RS2, who teaches Physics and Chemistry, highlighted the need for **“laboratory equipment to retain longer learning for learners to use to explore hard activities rather than theoretically listening”**. In the context of the teaching of Business Education, participant RS5 indicated **“projectors, internet and textbooks are needed in teaching and learning in the present times”**, while participant URS3 highlighted the need for **“computers, paints and textbooks”**. Participant URS5 stated **“I want to agree with my colleagues that textbooks, cell phones, computers and Wi-Fi are needed for effective teaching and learning”**.

As an important human resource in the school context, teachers are best positioned to employ their expertise and skills, along with teaching resources, to deliver quality teaching towards improved learning (cf. 2.3.2.1(b)). Given the imperative to create a conducive environment for student learning, it is understandable that the participants, who are teachers, related their perceptions and understanding of resources to the teaching and learning context. The findings reveal that while the participants, in their capacity as teachers, place the emphasis on the availability of teaching resources to **“make teaching and learning easier for both the teacher and the learner”** (RS3), they also have subject-specific perceptions regarding resources within the school context.

The interviewed principals had a different opinion of resources in the broader school context. The perception of resources of the principal from the well-resourced school (RSP) relates to human resources, physical resources, financial resources and teaching resources (“**teachers, enough buildings, finances, teaching aids**”). In a similar manner, the principal from the under-resourced school (URSP) indicated that the necessary resources required in the school context for enabling quality education are “**qualified teachers, a well-equipped library, science laboratory and finances**”. Within the school context, the school principal, through his or her leadership and management role, is responsible, to create and support an orderly and conducive environment in which quality education can be delivered (cf. 2.3.2.1(a)). In light of this responsibility, the two school principals' understanding of resources goes beyond a mere focus on teaching and learning resources, as is the case with the teachers who participated in the focus group interviews. The school principals' broader conception of resources seems to allude to their responsibility, as espoused in the *Manual for Principals*, to work with “physical, financial and human resources at his/her disposal in managing a school” (MoET, 2006:s.2.3.1).

In addition to the participants' general perception of resources required within the school context, I was interested to gain an understanding of how the participants perceive the role of resources for sufficient teaching. During the focus group interviews, I posed the question: *Do you think sufficient teaching can take place in the absence of resources?* This question evoked a discussion by the participants from both schools. With the exception of one participant, all the participants from the two schools were of the opinion that sufficient teaching and learning require the availability of teaching resources:

RS1 - **No, I don't think it can take place. Because teaching is coupled with resources.**

RS2 - **Yes, I think it can take place. I disagree with my colleagues because we can use analogy out of the non-existing materials; we can compare them with available resources. For example, if I teach solar system, I can use the ideas of the things they [the learners] know. That can help my teaching to be effective. By comparing the available resources with the unavailable.**

RS 5 - **No, because learning is a process. It requires supporting materials to have effective teaching.**

In a similar vein, the participants from the under-resourced school were convinced that sufficient teaching requires resources:

URS4 - ... **resources are essential in helping me to guide the learners into the right direction and also achieve set objectives.**

URS5 - **Inadequate resources ... does not make it easy for teaching and learning.**

The analysis of the data subsequently reveals that the participants regard teaching resources as tangible in nature and as essential for sufficient teaching and learning (“**resources are needed in teaching and learning to help those learners who learn using different styles**” – URS3). In general, the participants implied that inadequate resources would hamper smooth teaching and learning. The participants' perceived link between resource availability and student performance aligns, with experiences in the three case studies. Kenya traces low student performance to a shortage of physical and material resources in schools (cf. 2.4.1), in Nigeria quality education is hampered by a lack of teachers, teaching materials and a poor school environment (cf. 2.4.2), and in Eswatini, poor student performance is related to unqualified teachers and a shortage of skilled Mathematics and Science teachers (cf. 2.4.3). In addition to the participants' perception being supported by the case studies, the general understanding in literature also foreground that the realisation of educational goals is, *inter alia*, dependant on physical resources such as textbooks, laboratories, internet services and libraries (cf. 2.3.2.2).

From the findings, it seems that the two school principals have a broader perception of the different forms of resources required for the realisation of education. The other participants, who are all involved in classroom teaching, have a more limited perception of the resources required for sufficient education. The perceptions of the participants seem to align with the different roles they assume within the school context. While school principals are important role-players in ensuring quality education in the school, teachers are responsible for the actual teaching and learning in the classroom context (cf. 3.2.2).

#### **4.3.2 Resource provisioning**

The delivery of quality education towards equality and sustainable development requires various service and resources, ranging from human to physical to financial resources (cf. 2.3). As a signatory to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, the Lesotho government has committed itself to provide education that contributes to the social and economic development of the country (cf. 2.2). By implication, it remains the government's responsibility to ensure that the necessary resources are available to enable education that

is “directed to the full development of the human personality” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:s.28(a)). In drawing on systems theory, the availability of resources requires different role-players in the education sector to work collectively and interdependently towards the enabling of quality education through *inter alia*, the provision of resources (cf. 1.4). It was against this background that I was interested to gain an understanding of the participants' experiences with the availability of resources in their respective school environments (cf. 4.3.2.2), and their perceptions of who they consider responsible for its provision (cf. 4.3.2.3). However, since the two schools are perceived differently in terms of their economic status (cf. 1.5.3), I regarded it necessary to first gain an understanding of how the two school principals considered the livelihood of their respective schools (cf. 4.3.2.1).

#### **4.3.2.1 School principals' perceptions of the sustainability of their schools**

Organisations such as schools utilise various resources to achieve their goals. For Lesotho schools to pursue their educational objectives of teaching and learning towards the full development of the human personality, the school environment must be conducive (cf. 2.3.1). The principal from the well-resourced school felt very positive about the livelihood of her school. She mentioned that the **“population of students is steady and we have good support from the community”**. Despite the fact that there are many schools in the vicinity, she attributed the steady student enrolment to **“the results we produce and the infrastructure we have”**. In addition, the success of the school is also attributed to parental involvement. Whilst parents would often **“come to report misbehaving students outside the school”**, they also **“pay school fees on time which shows their interest to see the school grow”**.

Although both schools are church schools, albeit with different denominations as the respective proprietors (cf. 4.2.1.1), the school principal from the under-resourced school shared specific frustrations about her school. In particular, she indicated the lack of an interdependent working relationship between the school and its proprietor:

**there is no connection or working relation. That brings conflicts regarding the running of the school. The church wants to get too much involved in the running of the school, though they have no managerial skills.**

The proprietor is responsible for the provision of opportunities and facilities towards the full development of the Mosotho child (cf. 3.2.2). According to the *Manual for Principals*, the school principal has to assume the role of “a coordinator, a decision maker, a supervisor, a

delegator, a listener and, overall, a leader" (MoET, 2006:s.2.3.1; cf. 3.2.4). Therefore, a sound relationship between the proprietor and the school principal is required for the promotion of quality education. The findings reveal that the school principal does not experience such a sound relationship. On the one hand, she attributes the poor relationship to the fact that she does not belong to DB (**they politicise my position as a member of a different church denomination**). On the other hand, the poor relationship seems to emanate from the proprietor overstepping on the school principal's terrain as the manager of the school by wanting to "**get too much involved in the running of the school**". She expresses the concern that

**the church as the proprietor is expected to show support in terms of ensuring the growth of the school, but on the contrary, the church comes in only when they want to scrutinise my leadership.**

This principal also expressed concern for poor growth in student enrolment. It seems as if a lack of cooperation between the different role-players in the school context has an influence on student enrolment. In this regard, the principal mentioned: "**as for the growth in terms of numbers of students, I think we lack community support and they remove their children from the school mostly at Junior Certificate level**". In addition to insufficient support, she also said, "**I have to admit that our results are also not good at that level and that could be another reason for the dropout**".

The findings reveal that the two school principals experience different forms of support, which, in turn, hold certain implications for the management of the respective schools. The well-resourced school enjoys a sound interdependent relationship between various role-players, from which the school as an organisation benefits. The school does not function in isolation, as parents are involved by contributing towards the financial resources of the school. The school principal is, according to the *Education Act 2010*, "responsible to the school board for the control and use of school funds" (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.21(b)). By implication, a steady income of school fees paid by the parents enables the principal to not only prepare an annual budget, but to use the monetary income towards the improvement of the school and the effectiveness of teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2.3). It appears from the findings that student attainment at the well-resourced school can be contributed to good support, good infrastructure and good results. Although the school principal did not make any reference to the role of the proprietor, it can be assumed that the school principal is allowed to take up her managerial role without the proprietor encroaching upon the general management of the school.

The school principal of the under-resourced school does not enjoy a sound interdependent relationship with its proprietor and the community. The management of the school seems to be hampered by the proprietor infringing on the managerial terrain of the school principal. Whilst systems theory highlights that the school cannot operate in isolation (cf. 1.4), this principal does not experience the necessary support from the proprietor and the community to enhance and obtain educational objectives. Rather, it could be assumed that the poor cooperation might be a contributing factor towards poor student performance and the high dropout on the Junior Certificate level.

#### **4.3.2.2 Teachers' experiences with resource availability**

Against the principals' perceptions of the sustainability of their respective schools (cf. 4.3.2.1), the teachers also foregrounded their experiences regarding the conditions in which they have to teach on a daily basis. Teachers are perceived as important resources in the development of student potential, and good teaching resources can never replace the imperative role of the teacher (cf. 2.3.2.1(b)). Although teachers can be resourceful in their creation of a conducive teaching environment, such an environment can be enhanced by the availability of other resources such as textbooks, laboratories, and subject-specific teaching aids. In this section, I present the findings regarding the participants' experiences with the availability of resources in their daily teaching context, and the innovative plans they make in cases where there is a lack of resources.

As indicated, the participants were selected based on the different subjects they teach, which in turn, requires subject-specific resources for conducive classroom teaching and learning (cf. 4.2.1.1; Table 4.1). The two participants who teach Mathematics referred to specific resources they consider necessary for assisting them in teaching the subject. Participant RS1, who is a junior teacher with only one year of teaching experience, was of the opinion that he requires “**mathematics kits, graph books, set of mathematics instruments**”, while participant URS1, who has five years of teaching experience, felt that “**the infrastructure should include a computer laboratory to facilitate teaching and learning. Wi-Fi should be connected in the school for access to internet**”. Although the school principal of the well-resourced school indicated that the school produces good results (cf. 4.3.2), participant RS1 is not convinced that the resources are sufficient for the delivery of quality teaching. In particular, the participant felt that he does not “**get enough equipment that can help me to achieve my objectives**”; rather, although he “**improvise[s] to serve the teaching purpose**”, he thinks “**I could do better if the equipment I need are**

**available**". The Mathematics teacher from the under-resourced school expressed frustration due to the few rented books that are available at the school. As noted by participant URS1, **"if a learner has not paid for them [textbook], they [sic] don't get them"**. In alignment with the frustrations and challenges expressed by the school principal of the under-resourced school (cf. 4.3.2), this participant mentioned: **"the parents don't pay school fees and the school does not provide things like chalk and red pens."** Whilst the participant from the well-resourced school refers to a need for more sophisticated teaching aids such as graph books and mathematical instruments, the participant from the under-resourced school experiences shortages of basic teaching aids such as textbooks, chalk and pens. Both participants improvise in their classrooms to make up for the shortage of resources. Participant RS1, who also teaches Biology and Science and Technology, noted that **"I improvise to make teaching and learning continue ... In some cases in experiments improvising doesn't work, so we discuss them [the cases] theoretically"**. Participant URS1 also improvises, **"or give learners the chance to find out things by themselves"**.

Four of the participants, two from each school, are involved in the teaching of natural sciences, which could *inter alia* be Physics, Chemistry, Biology or Technology. Participant RS2, who is a beginner teacher at the school, indicated that **"as science teachers we need laboratory equipment to allow learners to use them to explore hard activities rather than learn theoretically"**. During the six months of his teaching experience, this participant came to realise that some learners **"love practical work, others theory - so we must have resources that cater for both learners"**. Participant RS3, a senior teacher who has been teaching Physics, Science and Technology for five years, indicated a lack of **"Internet and Science kits"**, and specifically referred to the need for **"finances to buy resources that are needed in schools"**. The participants from the under-resourced school also experience frustration with a lack of resources. Participant URS2, an experienced senior teacher with seven years of teaching experience, indicated that **"there is a shortage of resources such as textbooks, computers, Wi-Fi, to mention a few to help in the delivery of content to students"**. In particular, this participant highlighted that **"there has to be a laboratory full of relevant equipment"** to deliver some content in Science. In a similar manner, participant URS3, who has been teaching Chemistry and Physics for 13 years, referred to the fact that at his school, **"computers are not available, which in my case could assist me to show learners some of the apparatus we use in experiments"**. The findings subsequently reveal that all the participants experience some sort of shortage regarding the resources

that they consider important to assist them in their daily teaching tasks. However, despite the indicated shortages, all participants are resourceful:

**RS2 - I improvise, I can construct teaching materials out of the ordinary materials or apparatus. I use the available resources to make the needed resources.**

**URS2 - Divide the learners in groups to share the few resources available.**

The participants also often have to rely on their learners to assist with resources. In the well-resourced school, participant RS3 indicated that he has to **“ask learners also to bring the resources which we think will help us to achieve our goal. I even ask them to bring their cell phones to use internet when need arises”**. In the other school where a number of challenges are experienced, participant URS3 often **“ask[s] learners to pay money to make copies needed for the topic we want to do”**.

Although the participants who teach Religious Studies and Business Education have different resource requirements than those who teach science-related subjects, they seem to have similar frustrations regarding the availability of resources. In the well-resourced school, the lack of internet access seems to be a problem. Although the school is in a position to provide hard copies, unlike the case of the under-resourced school, participant RS4, a junior teacher that teaches Religious Studies, feels that they **“need computers to access information. The hard copies are less interesting to learners”**. Participant RS5, who has been teaching Business Education for four years, is concerned about the fact that he and his colleagues have **“to rely on the use of old textbooks which sometimes don't correspond with our local syllabus”**. In this regard, the participant agrees with his colleagues that computers and internet connection are necessary **“as a means to increase learners' interest in the learning process”**. In the under-resourced school, the participants are equally frustrated by a lack of resources. Participant URS4, who has been teaching Religious Studies for nine years, indicated that they have a lack of resources at the school **“to facilitate teaching and learning. I can give an example of bibles we read in the classroom, many students do not have”**. A shortage of textbooks remain a major concern in the school, as noted by participant URS5, who is a beginner teacher responsible for the teaching of Business Education. Although this participant refers to the shortage of a **“computer laboratory to assist students to do research”**, he refers to lack of human resources at the school. In particular, the participant is concerned about **“some students [who] come from families that do don't support them in their school work. Such**

**learners end up performing badly because of lack of motivation**". He feels that human resources such as counsellors are necessary to assist the learners ("**human resources such as counsellors as some students come from families that do don't support them**"). As with the other participants, these participants are also innovative and are prepared to improvise in cases where resources are lacking. While participant RS4 "**use[s] available materials to suit the situation ... teaching and learning have to go on regardless of whether resources are available or not**", participant URS4 "**sometimes talk[s] to other teachers in my department to assist, especially with methods to use in cases where there is a need to use the books for effective teaching**". Participant URS5 divides the learners into "**groups and ask them to share books and other materials that we may be using at the time**".

The findings reveal that all the participants, irrespective of the school where they teach, experience different kinds of resource shortage. The resource shortage is specifically associated with the subjects that the participants teach. In the previous section (cf. 4.3.1), it also came to the fore that the participants' perceptions of resources in the broader school context remain somewhat limited to their subject-specific needs. DA school is perceived as a well-resourced school, which, according to the principal, enjoys "**good support from the community**" and the learner enrolment is steady "**because of the results we produce and the infrastructure**" (RSP). The principal's positive perception of the school seems to allude to the broader school context regarding support, infrastructure and learner performance. However, when asked if she thinks the school has the necessary resources for effective teaching, she answered "**not really. They are not enough. We don't have well-qualified teachers, we don't have enough funds**". While this response refers to classroom teaching, it also aligns with the participants' opinion that they do not have the necessary resources for effective teaching. The resource challenges range from a shortage of textbooks to no computers or internet access. The experiences of the participants at DB school, which is perceived as an under-resourced school, seem to align with the school principal's indication that "**we don't have qualified teachers, a library, a science laboratory and finances, so teaching and learning are not effective**" (URSP). For the participants, their frustrations allude to the absence of a science laboratory, no computers or internet connection, and to shortage of textbooks.

The experiences of the participants are disconcerting when read along with the Lesotho government's commitment to SDG 4, namely to "increase the supply of quality teachers ...

ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes” (United Nations, 2015b:21; cf. 2.2). In drawing on Section 28(a) of the *Constitution*, one can assume that education that leads “to relevant and effective learning outcomes” implies education directed to the full development of the human personality. Both school principals indicated that they do not have well-qualified teachers at their respective schools. Teachers are an important human resource that use their expertise and skills to deliver quality teaching for effective learning (cf. 2.3.2.1(b)). A well-qualified teacher would use teaching aids such as textbooks and computers to enhance good teaching towards improved student performance. An under-qualified teacher, however, could be very dependent on resources for effective teaching, and in light of the shortage of resources as indicated by the participants, the realisation of SDG 4 comes under treat. Good teaching resources can never replace teachers, and in the absence of qualified teachers, relevant and effective learning outcomes might not be sufficiently achieved.

All the participants indicated that they improvise in various ways to overcome the dilemma of a shortage of resources. As participant RS4 indicated, “**teaching and learning have to go on regardless of whether resources are available or not**”. Textbooks and reference books are, along with a library, important resources for quality teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2.2). The literature also makes a connection between the availability of a library, which can also include the availability of textbooks, and student performance. The non-availability of textbooks, including updated textbooks, seems to be a major frustration for participants in both schools. However, they do not allow the lack of textbooks to interfere with teaching and learning; rather, “**sometimes I may use groups to help learners share the few available resources**” (RS2). Teachers collaborate with one another (“**I sometimes talk to other teachers in my department ... in cases where there is a need to use the books for effective teaching**” – URS4), and in the absence of laboratory equipment, teachers improvise and often have to resort to “**discuss them [scientific experiments] theoretically**” (RS1). Participant RS4’s comment, that “**we are still living in a digital age**”, seems to echo the participants’ frustration with the lack of computers and internet connection at school. There seems to be a need to enable learners to search for additional information (“**I even ask them to bring their cell phones to use internet when need arises**” – RS3). The findings reveal that all the participants, with the exception of participant RS2, are of the opinion that sufficient teaching is hampered in the absence of resources (cf. 4.3.1). The school principals and the participants indicated that there are not enough

resources in the two schools, and by implication, quality teaching and learning come under threat. Although the participants are prepared to improvise for continued teaching and learning, the availability of physical resources and teaching aids remain a frustration in the attempt to deliver “education directed to the full development of the human personality” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:s.28(a)). It is against this background that the question arises about who is responsible for the provision of the necessary resources for the delivery of quality teaching and learning.

### **4.3.3 Relationship between resource availability and student performance**

Quality education is considered imperative for the development of a country, and the literature reveals that various services and resources affect such quality, and, by implication, student performance (cf. 2.3). In particular, the effective use of resources can serve as a bridge between the teacher and the learner in the realisation of teaching and learning objectives. By implication, there seems to be a relationship between the availability of resources, quality education and student performance. Thus, premised on the assumption that resources are necessary for effective teaching and learning, Lesotho’s educational goal of “the full development of the human personality” can be attained if the necessary resources are available for quality education. The relationship between quality education, student performance and resources is also indirectly acknowledged in the aim of Lesotho’s *Sector Plan*. Its aim is to bring about sustainable and inclusive education through the “provision of teaching and learning materials, equipping schools, reforming the curriculum, investing in teacher training and development” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2016b:14). Within the Lesotho context, it can be assumed that good student performance will be the outcome of “equipping learners with knowledge, attitude and skills to enable them to respond to socio-economic and technological changes” (MoET, 2009:16; cf. also 1.2). Central to good student performance is the availability of *inter alia*, human, physical, and financial resources. As noted, the findings reveal that the participants consider resources, in particular teaching resources, as essential for effective teaching and learning (cf. 4.3.1). It is against this background that I explored the participants’ perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance.

During the individual interviews, both school principals indicated that they believe there is a relationship between the availability of resources and student performance. While participant RSP, the school principal from the DA school, was of the opinion that

“**performance would not be good because of insufficient resources**”, participant URSP immediately related the relationship to the situation at her own school: “**we have poor performance because of lack of resources**”. Drawing on her experience of lack of support from the proprietor and the community (cf. 4.3.2), the principal linked the poor performance at her school, especially in Science and Mathematics, to a lack of resources (“**we don’t have the ... science laboratory and finances, so teaching and learning are not effective**” – URSP). The indication from the two school principals was that the availability of resources makes it easier for teachers to deliver content, while the students attain a better understanding of such content. As noted by participant RSP: “**if students don’t have resources it would not be easy for them to study**”.

In a similar vein, all the participants indicated that there is a relationship between the availability of resources and student performance during the focus group interviews.

RS4 - **The less resources, the poorer the learning. This is because learning becomes slow with lack of resources.**

RS1 - **yes and I agree with my colleague that there is [a relationship between resource availability and student performance]. As we teach different learners who have different intellectuality, some learners understand when taught with exploring or activities that are practical...**”

In drawing from their respective years of teaching experience, the participants cited different examples to indicate how the availability of resources impact on student performance. The acknowledgement of learners' different learning styles came to the fore, and in this regard the participants were of the opinion that resources are helpful to address the differentiated needs of learners (“**As we teacher learners with different learning styles, some learners learn best when they do things practically while others like theory**” – RS2). On a more practical note, participant RS3 indicated “**when there is shortage of resources, the learners’ performance becomes bad. In cases where learners have to share books for instance, some rely on others and that hinders proper assessment**”. For clarification, participant RS4 indicated that “**when books are not enough, and they [the learners] have to share the information, the learning process is slowed down**”.

Although DA school is considered by the school principal in a positive light in terms of “**the results we produce and the infrastructure we have**”, the participants who teach at this particular school expressed frustration because of a lack resources for effective teaching

(cf. 4.3.2). In particular, the participants were able to indicate how the lack of resources impact not only on their daily teaching experience, but also on student learning, and subsequently, on student performance. As noted by participant RS3, the sharing of books often imply the sharing of answers, which in turn, makes it difficult for him to do proper assessment. Participant RS4 who also teaches English, indicated how **“cell phones help learners to improve their English language which is used in asking the questions, so availability attributes to good results while the lack of leads to poor performance.”** The non-availability of internet access was one of the challenges indicated by some participants from DA school (**“I even ask them to bring their cell phones to use internet when need arises”** – RS3).

Participants from the DB school also deliberated during the focus group interview on their perceptions regarding the relationship between resource availability and student performance. They voiced their frustration about the lack of resources, and they also made the connection with poor student performance. The participants responsible for the teaching of Sciences at the school indicated how the lack of resources to do practical experiments are detrimental to student performance. Participant URS1 noted that **“resources play a major role in student performance as they help them do experiments and activities that help them to do well in school and outside”**. In agreement with this observation, participant URS2 mentioned that: **“In science as a subject, learners need equipment to help them see things and they do not do well when there is lack of laboratory”**. During the focus group interview, the participants continued the discussion by providing practical examples related to their own teaching experience and classroom practices.

URS3 - **Yes. Resources play major roles in student performance so lack of hinders learning.**

URS4 - **For instance, in grade 8 they have to do vocational subjects but in the absence of resources relevant they don't do well and therefore the end product will be bad.**

To further illustrate the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance, participant URS5 highlighted how the lack of resources would hinder the delivery of content and the achievement of the educational objective:

**..., lack of would not permit me to deliver content in a manner that I may have prepared so that students could perform well. Also some students prefer reading a concept over and over, so lack of textbooks and even internet does to make them perform well.**

In agreement with his fellow teachers, participant URS4 voiced:

**I agree with my colleagues that there is a relationship in the sense that when the learners do not have resources, it's not easy to give even classwork. Talk less of homework.**

The findings reveal that the participants in this study are in agreement that there is a close relationship between resource availability and student performance. In addition, there seems to be an alignment between the participants' perceptions of the role and importance of resources in the school context, their experiences with the availability of resources, and how they perceive the relationship between the availability resources and student performance. The findings from both the well-resourced and under-resourced school are similar. The two school principals work in two different contexts, which implies different experiences in terms of support and student performance (cf. 4.3.2). While the principal RSP from the DA school indicated a good working relationship with other role-players in the school, she showed some concerns regarding the shortage of qualified teachers and finances, which in turn could have a negative impact on student performance. URSP, the school principal from the DB school, mentioned a huge concern about poor student performance at her school, especially with regards to Sciences and Mathematics. She attributed poor performance to the unavailability of a science laboratory, a state of affairs that was corroborated by the participants involved in teaching these subjects (cf. 4.3.1 & 4.3.2). However, it should be noted that all participants are in consensus that poor student performance results from a lack of adequate resources. This perception is based on the participants' teaching experience, and aligns with research that has established the significance of resources in the school context. According to the literature, resources can provide motivation for and improve the skills of teachers and students, for the attainment of quality education (cf. 2.3.2). Effective teaching and learning is, to a certain extent, dependent on teachers using relevant resources towards the smooth delivery of content, which in turn could contribute towards good student performance (cf. 2.3.2.1 & 2.3.2.2). Within the Lesotho context, quality education is perceived as education directed to the full development of the human personality. Although teachers as an important human resource in the school context cannot be substituted (cf. 2.3.2.1(b)), a variety of other resources are also required for the provisioning and attainment of education that prepares students cognitively and physically (cf. 1.1 & 3.2.2). The participants' concerns about how the lack of resources impacts on their ability to account for different learning styles in their classrooms,

and hampers them in effective assessment procedures, bring to the fore questions regarding who is responsible for the provisioning of resources within the school context.

#### **4.3.4 Responsible role-players and suggestions for resource provisioning**

The document analysis foregrounded a policy framework for the provision of resources (cf. Table 3.1). This framework depicts how MoET is legally compelled to provide resources towards the delivery of quality education, while various official documents indicate the responsibilities of different role-players. Against the *Constitution's* emphasis on the right to education (cf. 3.2.1), the *Education Act 2010* lists the responsible human resources for the attainment of education (cf. 3.2.2), while the *Manual for Principals* gives an exposition of the role the school principal and other human resources to ensure the provision of resources in schools (cf. 3.2.4). Within the context of these responsibilities, the *Education Sector Plan 2016-2026* places the focus on the achievement of quality education through the principles of access, quality and equity for all Basotho (cf. 3.2.3). The interdependence of the various role-players for the provisioning of quality education alludes to the systems theory's advocacy for the conception of the school as an organisation that remains dependant on the connectedness of various role-players for the attainment of educational goals (cf. 1.4).

The findings reveal that, on the one hand, the participants do not think sufficient teaching can take place if the necessary resources are not available (cf. 4.3.1). On the other hand, they all feel that they are not provided with the necessary resources for sufficient teaching and learning (cf. 4.3.2.2). As various role-players have to work collectively towards the provisioning of resources, I was curious to enquire about the participants' perceptions about whose responsibility this is. It was my contention that such an understanding would shed some light on the broader functioning of the school as an organisation, and could also inform the participants' suggestions for improved resource provisioning.

##### **4.3.4.1 Perceptions regarding responsibility for resource provisioning**

In the Lesotho context, the *Education Act 2010* is legislation to support the *Constitution's* (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993:s.28(a)) vision for education aimed at "the full development of the human personality". As a consequence, the *Education Act 2010* legislates the assurance

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 (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)(a)).

The availability of opportunities and facilities are, by implication, the responsibility of [t]he Minister, Principal Secretary, Teaching Service Commission, proprietors of schools, teachers and school boards [who] shall promote the education of the people of Lesotho (Kingdom of Lesotho, 2010:s.4(2)).

In alignment with the imperative of different role-players to enable quality education through, *inter alia*, the provisioning of resources, both school principals referred to different role-players as responsible entities. Participant RSP perceives the government as the main responsible entity, as she indicated that **“we need government support”**. The use of the word ‘need’ might be indicative that she regards the current level of support to be insufficient. She is however, aware of the responsibility of other role-players, and in particular, she mentioned parental support: **“parents’ support to pay school fees on time to enable purchasing of food for instance as we have a feeding programme in the school”**. While the school principal indicated that parents **“pay school fees on time”** at her school, the school seems to have a good relationship with the parents: **“when we need help for that [the maintenance of resources] we go to the parent for help”**. According to the *Manual for Principals*, the school principal is responsible for the “overall running and control of the school” (MoET, 2006:s.2.3.2 (i)). In this regard, participant RSP seems to seek assistance as required from different role-players: **“We sometimes go to the government. To face-lift the hall, businessmen helped. For tilling and library books, the NGOs assisted”**. The principals also highlighted an example of how the community is supportive in reporting **“misbehaving students outside the school”**. The findings reveal that the principal at the well-resourced school frames the availability and sustaining of resources within a bigger context as the immediate school environment. By drawing on the support of various role-players, the principal seems to understand how the school remains dependant on support from the government, the community, parents, and other sources such as the business sector and NGOs.

While participant RSP enjoys parental and community support, participant URSP has to function in a less supportive environment in her attempt to take up her responsibility for “the overall running and control of the school”. Although she indicated that **“the principal and government, through the Ministry of Education and Training”** are responsible for the provision of resources, her own role seems to be hampered and limited by the proprietor

who **“brings conflict regarding the running of the school”**. Based on her experience of **“no connection or working relations”** at her school, the principal resorted to suggestions of what could be beneficial to her school regarding resource provisioning. She indicated that **“if teachers are dedicated, they can be involved in fund raising for instance”**. The use of the word “if” implies that she might not perceive the teachers at her school to necessarily be dedicated. This seems to align with her observation that at her school, **“we don’t have qualified teachers”**. The school has limited physical resources as she indicated: **“no library, science laboratory and finances”**. With regards to the few resources that they do have at the school, she also stated that **“teachers and the learners should maintain and use the available resources to retain them”**. Due to the need for resources and the passion to produce good results, participant URSP regarded “time” as an important resource for the attainment of educational goals: **“there has to be use of time effectively to achieve the set goals”**. By implication, the school principal is aware of how quality education remains dependent on the cooperation of different role-players.

It can be deduced from the findings that the two school principals are aware of different role-players that must interdependently and collectively ensure that the necessary resources are available for improved teaching and learning. The two principals have different backgrounds in terms of the availability of resources in their schools. Despite this there seems to be an understanding by both that the school as an organisation can only thrive in the context of sufficient support. In this regard, the *Manual for Principals* compels school principals to

make use of all members of his/her team: from the School Board, whose contacts in the local community could be very useful; through the school teaching staff, who must be involved in both in and out-of-class activities; and to the non-teaching staff, whose value to the school should not only be counted as the work that they do, but also because of their interaction with the pupils in a more informal way (MoET, 2006:s.2.1).

Cooperation is imperative, because the findings reveal that both school principals understand the need for support in the provisioning of resources for sufficient teaching and learning. In addition, the findings also reveal that both school principals have an understanding of their own role as the managers of the schools. The *Manual for Principals* states that it is the responsibility of the school principal to “make provision in the appropriate section for funds for maintenance of buildings and grounds, for the replacement of furniture, and for minor works, for example re-painting of chalk-boards” (MoET, 2006:s.11.1). The principal of the DA school takes responsibility for the management of her school by drawing

on support from various sectors, such as parents, the government, the business sector and NGOs. The principal of the DB school often uses **“school funds from the school fees to make them [resources] available. No help from outside. No fund raising. Government only helps with payments of teachers no other funds”**. Participant URSP wants to ensure that the education provided at her school is of good quality, however, she struggles in the absence of support from the proprietor (**“the church as the proprietor is expected to show support in terms of ensuring the growth of the school, but on the contrary, the church comes in only when they want to scrutinise my leadership”**). The findings reveal that while the well-resourced school enjoys support and delivers education that leads to good student performance, the under-resourced school struggles in the absence of support to deliver quality education and subsequent good results (**“I have to admit that our results are also not good at that level and that could be another reason for the dropout”**). From the findings, it seems that a lack of support in the delivery of resources for quality education has a major impact on the functioning of the two schools. Regarding systems theory, the findings reveal that poor interconnectedness and cooperation between stakeholders, as in the case of the DB school, can have a negative impact on the functioning of the school, and by implication, on student performance (cf. 1.4; Table 3.1).

All the participants in this study depend on resources for the delivery of quality education in their respective schools. Within the broader school context, the school principals are reliant on resources, ranging from human to physical to financial resources. The teachers who participated in this study were more focused on physical sources and teaching aids for enabling their daily teaching activities. Although all the participants were of the opinion that they do not have enough resources for the effective teaching and learning of their subjects (cf. 4.3.2.2), they also had a particular understanding of who is responsible for the provisioning of resources. The participants' opinion in this regard includes various entities.

It seems from the findings that the participants felt in general that the government has a major role to play in the provisioning of resources. During the focus group interview at the DA school, some participants shared the opinion that **“because the government design curriculum they must accompany it with resources”** (RS4) and **“government should assist since they are the ones who design curriculum they should accompany the curriculum with the resources”** (RS5). In drawing on the policy framework for resource provisioning, the government, especially in the form of MoET, is arguably legally compelled to provide resources towards the delivery of quality education. However, the participants

from both schools indicate the SMT and/or school administration as an important entity in the provision of resources. Participant URS1 perceived the duty of the school management team on two accounts, by firstly referring to the **“school management team as they have goals for the school. They should make initiatives to avail resources.”** He further indicated that SMTs have a duty **“...to ask the resourced schools how they manage to have resources they have.”** The participant concluded by indicating that he realised that in his school the SMT is threatened by the teachers, and does not approach teachers on matters that could improve the availability of resources. As such, he indicated that the **“SMT should stop feeling threatened by teachers when they give advice”**. Participants from the DA school also indicated that **“the school administration has to help to make them [resources] available because it is not easy to deal with learners who have different learning styles as my colleagues have indicate in the absence of resources”** (RS3). The opinion of the participants seem to align with the stipulated role of the SMT, namely to provide “advice, guidance and support to the principal in making decisions that affect the administrative and academic areas of the school also the interpreting Ministry Policies regarding finances/budgets” (MoET, 2006:s.2.1). However, the participants did not limit the responsibility to the government (MoET) and the SMT. The findings reveal that the participants have an broader sense how the functioning of the school remains dependant on the interconnectedness and collective role of various role-players:

URS3 - ... **teachers, parents, school management team. They should make it their point to avail resources. The principal also plays a major role as a chief accounting officer”**.

RS4 - **Government, school administration, parents and teachers [are responsible for the provisioning of resources]**

Although the SMT provides advice on the interpretation of policies on finances, the school principal remains “immediately responsible for all revenue and expenditure within the school” (MoET, 2006:s.2.3.2(v); cf. 3.2.4). In this regard, URS3 indicated that the **“[p]rincipal also plays a major role as a chief accounting officer. She has to use finances effectively”**. Finances seem to be a concern for many participants, as they understand that funding is necessary for the provision of resources: **“The community should have a love for education. That is there should be funds coming from the community”** (URS5).

Although the findings reveal that all the participants have some idea of how the broader context of interconnected role-players have to work together to provide resources towards

quality education, they are all of the opinion that their current resources are not sufficient. By implication, the participants do not regard the resource provisioning at their respective schools as sufficient. As a consequence, the participants made various suggestions on how the issue of a lack of resources can be addressed.

#### **4.3.4.2 Suggestions for the improvement of resource provisioning**

The participants realise that if there could be interconnection and cooperation between the different parts in the school as an organisation, resources would be available for the attainment of quality education. As advocated in the *Manual for Principals*, the principal as part of the school administration, plays an important role to work in connection with other staff members on issues that lead to good student performance through the acquisition of quality education (cf. 3.2.4). In alignment with their understanding of the importance of resources for quality education and subsequent good student performance, the participants made several suggestions of how various role-players can work together to provide educational resources.

As has been indicated, financial resources are essential in school context, (cf. 2.3.2.3), but it remains a concern for many participants. Participant RS3 suggested that “[t]here can be projects that could generate money for the school. The school management can also ask for help from NGOs to provide other resources needed in the school”. During the focus group interview, participant RS3 latched on to this suggestion and mentioned the importance of the community in fund raising:

**Community contribution in fund raising by giving the learners money to take part in fund raising. During sports activities the community also pay for entering the gate to watch a game.**

Although participants from both schools indicated a lack of resources, the participants from the DB school seem to be more in need of resources. For participant URS5, the payment of school fees is imperative: “the school management could encourage the community around the school to be fully involved in paying school fees”. The same participant suggested concrete ideas such as establishing “income generating projects such as building a hall and rent it to the community when they have events”. The participant’s comment subsequently highlights that the school does not have a hall, which could be rented out. While the building of a hall is a bit over-optimistic in terms of short-term goals, other participants referred to more practical solutions such as to “seek support from NGOs and the government, as well as individuals” (UR3). In a similar vein, participant RS5

indicated that **“the school has to raise funds and NGOs can be encouraged to provide such as World Vision that built laboratories and Vodacom Lesotho as it supplies with computers to schools for example”**.

The findings reveal how the suggestions of the participants draw on various role-players. While participant URS5 feels that **“parents should have the responsibility to provide the needed resources”**, RS1 brought in the role of the school supply unit (SSU), which is responsible for the supply of resources. While participant RS1 indicated that **“[t]here has to be a follow-up after making the order from the SSU ... [the principals] will know if there is shortage or not”**, participant RS2 said: **“I agree with my colleague that there has to be follow-up after making the order from SSU”**.

The findings reveal that the participants are of the opinion that different measures can be taken to supplement the lack of resources at their respective schools. It seems that the participants are mainly focused on how funds can be generated for financial gain to acquire resources. The literature reveals that the availability of financial resources in a school leads to the availability of resources (cf. 2.3.2.3). The participants suggested various possibilities, which included variety of role-players such as the government, teachers, school management, parents and NGOs. By implication, the participants allude to the fact that the school cannot function in isolation. Rather, by highlighting various sources of assistance, the participants indirectly brought attention to the importance of interdependence and interconnectedness of different role-players for the realisation of educational goals (cf. 1.4). Arguably, the foregrounding of the importance of the various role-players was done against the participants' experience of a lack of resources (cf. 4.3.2), which could be attributed to their personal experience of a lack of interconnectedness by role-players. As such, the participants' suggestions should be considered against their experience with insufficient resources to enable them to do their duty effectively and efficiently, and to, by implication, increase the performance of their students.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

As stated, data for this study was generated from two church schools from different denominations in the Berea district, namely DA school and DB school (cf. 4.2.1.1). The two schools were selected based on a perceived understanding of the DA school as a well-resourced school and the DB school as under resourced. From the findings, it became clear that the two principals function under different circumstances, despite the fact that both

schools fall under the same rules and regulations of the government. Arguably, both schools are entitled to be provided with resources to enable the delivery of quality education by means of the full development of the human personality. In addition, the schools are entitled to the support that is legislated in the *Education Act 2010*, and the measures spelt out in the *Education Sector Plan 2016-2026* for the realisation of quality education and good management of human, financial and physical resources (cf. Table 3.1). However, while the school principal from the DA school enjoys support from the community and parents, the principal of the DB school experiences a lack of community support and seemingly problematic interference and no support from the proprietor (cf. 4.3.2.1). The findings reveal that both principals are of the opinion that their respective schools do not have sufficient resources to provide quality education. It seems that the support which the DA school enjoys, contributes towards good student results. Parents pay school fees on time, which in turn enables the school to purchase resources if necessary. The teachers also perceive that the resources are insufficient, and take on various initiatives to supplement this insufficiency (cf. 4.3.2.2). The lack of support for the DB school seems to filter through to the teaching and learning environment, and by implication the student performance. The lack of resources at the school ranges from no basic aids such as red pens and chalk, to a lack of physical resources such as a laboratory and a library. Teachers in the DB school also use their own initiative to address the need for resources, but as admitted by the school principal, the results of the students remain poor.

The findings indicate that while the school principals had a broader perception of the required resources for the effective functioning of the school, the participants who are involved in teaching, were more focused on the need for teaching resources (cf. 4.3.3). Although all the participants, with the exception of one, were of the opinion that quality education cannot take place in the absence on sufficient resources, they deliberated during the focus group interviews on what they perceived as the close relationship between resource availability and student performance. The participants provided examples of the resources they should have, but are lacking, for the effective teaching of their respective subjects. On the one hand, the literature indicates that good resources can never replace a good teacher, while on the other hand, teaching and learning aids can enhance student learning, and subsequently student performance (cf. 2.3.2.1(b)). From the findings of the study, it can be assumed that the participants perceive the availability of various resources as necessity for sufficient teaching in their classroom contexts, and by implication for the enabling of good student performance. This finding seems to be aligned with the literature

that attests to the fact that the use of resources is vital for the attainment of goals and objectives, and that student performance is influenced by the effective and appropriate utilisation of resources (cf. 2.3.1).

Teachers are an important human resource in the school context as they are responsible for the delivery of quality education in their classroom contexts. However, the functioning of the school towards the realisation of the educational goal of quality education, remains reliant on the enabling of a variety of resources, namely human resources, financial resources and physical resources (cf. 2.3.2). In the Lesotho context, the findings from the document analysis reveal that various pieces of legislation and measurements have been put in place regarding the provisioning of human resources, financial resources and physical resources (cf. 2.3.2). The findings reveal that the participants have an understanding that the provision of resources involves different role-players (cf. 4.3.4). By indicating the involvement of different role-players, the participants are indirectly alluding to the interconnectedness and interdependence of the various role-players for the realisation of education goals via the provision of resources. However, the findings reveal, by implication, that this interconnectedness is poor as the schools are not provided with sufficient resources to deliver quality education. Lesotho has committed herself to achieve “free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes” by 2030 (United Nations, 2015b:21; cf. 2.2). Lack of support to schools in terms of the provision of resources, foregrounds the perception that despite the measures put in place to assist schools in the delivery of quality education, various role-players are not responsive to the needs of schools. The findings reveal that the participants' perception of the relationship between the availability of resources and good student performance compels them, on the one hand, to improvise in the case of no or insufficient resources to ensure that teaching and learning continue. On the other hand, and in order for teaching and learning to continue, the participants make several suggestions of what can be done to generate money to acquire resources (cf. 4.3.4.2). Suggestions range from community involvement to encouraging parents to pay school fees, to approaching NGOs and the business sector for support.

From the findings it can be concluded that the participants consider resources imperative for effective teaching and learning, and for good student performance. For the participants, there is a perceived relationship between the availability of resources and good student performance. In addition, it can indirectly be inferred that this relationship is considered so

important by the participants, that they are willing to use various initiatives to supplement resources in order to enable and enhance quality teaching towards good student performance.

#### **4.5 SUMMARY**

The aim of this chapter was to present and discuss the findings pertaining to the participants' perception of the relationship between resource availability and student performance. As a background for the presentation and discussion of the findings, I first provided information on the research methodology that guided this study, and some information on the research design. Embedded in a qualitative approach, data was generated by means of individual interviews with the principals of two schools, and by focus group interviews conducted with five teachers from each school. Stemming from the data analysis, I presented and discussed the findings in relation to four themes, namely *resources within the school context, resource provisioning, the relationship between resource availability and student performance and responsible role-players and suggestions for the provision of resources*.

In the next chapter, which constitutes the final chapter of this dissertation, I comment on this study as the impetus for suggestions regarding the perceived relationship between resource availability and student performance.

# CHAPTER 5: COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS AND REFLECTION

## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance in Lesotho high school (cf. 1.3.). In order to realise this aim, I structured my research undertaking according to various sub-questions, which in turn, constituted the different chapters of this dissertation. The different sub-questions were posed and answered in order to guide my study towards this final chapter in which I comment on the study and make suggestions regarding the strengthening of resource availability towards student performance. By implication, my study unfolded as follows:

- In Chapter 1, I provided an orientation to this study, which included the overall conceptualisation of the study in terms of the research paradigm, methodology and research methods. This chapter served as a guide which I followed in the undertaking of the study.
- In Chapter 2, I undertook a literature review to provide me with a conceptual understanding of what is perceived as resources in the school context, and the extent to which the literature foreground the importance of resources for student performance. In order to broaden my understanding in relation to the state of affairs in other countries, I explored resource availability and student performance in Kenya, Nigeria and Eswatini. These countries, just as Lesotho, are signatories of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. I framed my understanding of the relationship between resource availability and student performance against the expectations pertaining to SDG4, to which Lesotho has committed herself.
- While the literature review in Chapter 2 provided me with a broad and conceptual understanding of the said relationship, I focused in Chapter 3 on the Lesotho context. My contention was that before I can explore teachers' perceptions of this relationship, I first need to understand the policy framework that regulates the provision of resources for the delivery of quality education. In order to construct the policy framework, I undertook a document analysis of the *Lesotho Constitution* (1993), *Education Act 2010*, *Education Sector Plan 2016-2026* (2015) and the *Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools* (2006). The document analysis enabled me to gain an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of different role-players for enabling the realisation of the Constitution's vision for education "directed to the

full development of the human personality” (Kingdom of Lesotho, 1993: s. 28(a)). Imperative in the enabling of quality education, are responsibilities for the provision of human resources, financial resources and physical resources.

- In Chapter 4, I presented and discussed the findings of the data I generated through individual interviews and focus group interviews. For the interpretation of the findings of the study, I read the data from a systems theory perspective, which served as my research paradigm (cf. 1.4), my understanding of the importance of resources as espoused in the literature review (cf. Chapter 2), and the policy framework for resource provisioning in Lesotho (cf. Chapter 3).

The exposition of the chapters included in this study provides the path that led me to this final chapter in which I comment on the findings by making suggestions. By implication, the suggestions made are derived from the findings of the study. In addition, I also include a reflection on my experience with the undertaking of this study. I highlight the strengths of the study, but also indicate the challenges I met during the research endeavour. Given the scope of a Master’s study, I give an indication of the limitations of the study, but draw on the limitations to indicate what further research can be undertaken. I conclude my reflection by considering my own growth, both on a personal and a scholarly level. This chapter is concluded by a summary of the study with specific reference to the main research question that functioned as the focus of the study.

## **5.2 COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

In drawing of the findings of this study, I comment on them in this section by making suggestions for addressing the lack of resources, in order to ensure that quality education can be delivered. In this regard I make three suggestions, namely the re-conceptualisation of teacher and school principal associations, the strengthening of the school’s relationship with various role-players, and ideas for fundraising to supplement financial resources at the school.

### ***5.2.1 Re-conceptualisation of associations***

In this section I suggest how existing associations can be re-conceptualised as spaces where teachers and principals can work collectively in addressing issues pertaining to a lack of resources.

### 5.2.1.1 Teachers

The findings reveal that teachers consider resources as important for the facilitation of teaching and learning in their classroom contexts (cf. 4.3.1). Although various resources are required for the smooth functioning of the school in general, the participants remained focused on those resources that they require for teaching their specific subjects. As a means to show the importance of resources in the school setting, the participants indicated that they do use various measures to ensure that teaching and learning continue in the absence of sufficient teaching resources (cf. 4.3.2.2 & 4.3.3). Whilst participants mention that they improvise when resources are inadequate, they explicitly indicate that their experience vary depending on the subjects they teach (cf. 4.3.2.2). Their articulation is based on the perception that the availability of various resources leads to good student performance, while a lack of resources results in poor student performance.

The perceptions of the participants align with the literature, which foregrounds the fact that various resources are regarded as essential for the provision of quality education (cf. 1.1; 1.2 & 2.3.2). However, in their deliberations, the participants indicated that they are faced with the challenge of insufficient teaching and learning resources (cf. 4.3.1). Similarly, the *Sector Plan* emphasises the need for the government to take measures to ensure the provision of resources in schools for the achievement of access, quality, equity and relevant education for all (cf. 3.2.3). This perception is also shared in the *Manual for Principals*, which indicates that all human resources, both academic and non-academic, should be involved in the full development of human being (cf. 3.2.4).

In drawing on the literature review and the participants' perceptions of the close relationship between resource availability and student performance, it is suggested that the existing teacher associations in Lesotho should be re-conceptualised as a functional space where teachers can collectively explore possibilities to address the issue of insufficient resources. In Lesotho, each district has a teacher association, but there are also associations for individual subjects. The associations, however, do not meet on a regular basis. It is known that most of the associations meet quarterly or even less frequently to deal with schemes of work. In general, such meetings would usually take place before the start of the academic year, or at the beginning of the academic year, since this would be the most appropriate time to deal with schemes of work. Teachers also meet when they set mid-year and end-of-year examinations. In general, it is accepted that teacher association meetings are aimed at addressing activities pertaining to schemes of work and examinations. By implication,

there is often not enough time for teachers to deliberate on other challenges that they face in teaching their various subjects. It is in this regard that I would like to advocate for the re-conceptualisation of existing teacher associations to become more functional in terms of being a support system for teachers.

As the associations are already grouped according to specific subjects, it can be assumed that teachers already have a shared understanding of the pedagogy and the resource requirements for teaching and learning in that subject. Deliberations on challenges experienced by teachers will require more regular meetings. Teachers have different experiences regarding the availability of resources. The findings reveal that the lack of resources can include *inter alia*, no pens or stationery, no laboratories, no textbooks, not enough textbooks, no recent textbooks and no access to research material in the absence of a school library and/or internet access (cf. 4.3.2.2, 4.3.3 & 4.3.4.1). By using the associations as spaces where teachers can share the challenges they encounter in the delivery of quality education, relationships of support can be kindled. Teachers are innovative (cf. 4.3.2.2) and through sharing they can collectively generate ideas to assist each other in terms of ideas and resources for adhering to teaching specifics required by the respective subjects. As mentioned, one of the objectives of the teacher associations is to finalise the schemes of work for the academic year. In this regard, I suggest that the associations meet on a more regular basis to discuss aspects and challenges relating to the successful execution of the schemes of work. Schemes of work are aligned with syllabi requirements for specific grades, which in turn, require certain resources for the delivery of quality education. It could be useful if a meeting could be scheduled prior to the beginning of each school quarter, during which teachers could discuss and share their anticipated challenges. The quarterly scheme of work meeting could be used by teachers to discuss the required resources for the term, and how they will be able to assist one another in cases where resources are lacking. Deliberations would be subject-specific, but through a collective sharing of experiences and ideas, the associations could become a shared space for teachers across the districts in Lesotho to support one another towards the delivery of quality education. Worksheets and innovative ideas for addressing resource shortages can for example be discussed. As the findings reveal that teachers are willing to devise plans in order to ensure that teaching continues, I am, by implication, advocating for teacher associations to capitalise on existing teacher agency.

However, finances could be a challenge for teachers to attend more regular meetings. Although it would be ideal for schools to support teachers in this regard, schools might already be hampered by insufficient financial resources. It would therefore be important for school principals to include financial support for teachers to attend meetings on a more regular basis in the school budget. In the long run, schools can benefit from the support teachers generate at these meetings. When teachers begin to share ideas and resources, the quality of teaching and learning can be enhanced, and student performance can be improved. Teacher associations can also explore other means of support if finances persist as a problem. An email account can be created for each association, and by means of Google drive (or other cloud-based solutions such as Dropbox), files can be stored and shared across various devices such as laptops and cell phones. By implication, if regular meetings are not financially viable, there might be alternative electronic platforms to complement the teacher associations. Teacher agency seems to be an important attribute of Lesotho teachers, and the re-conceptualisation of teachers associations to become a more supportive platform would appeal to this attribute. The extending of teachers associations to move beyond meetings on schemes of work and examinations can contribute towards teachers becoming less intimidated by the lack of resources, and more supported by colleagues and shared experiences.

#### **5.2.1.2 Principals**

The findings reveal that school principals share a similar perception with teachers, namely that quality education depends on the availability of resources, which in turn, will lead to good student performance (cf. 4.3.3). Given the managerial role of school principals, the two principal participants' understanding of resources included more than mere physical teaching resources. The school principals were more attuned to the interconnection of various role-players for the provision of human, financial and physical resources (cf. 4.3.2.1). Although the teachers focused on the resources required for sufficient teaching, this focus is indirectly linked to financial resources. Finances are required for the purchasing of teaching and learning resources. However, from the findings it can be concluded that the school principals' experiences with resources availability differs from that of teachers - while school principals are responsible for the overall managing of the school (cf. 2.3.2.1(a) & 3.2.4), teachers have to deliver quality education within their classroom spaces (cf. 2.3.2.1(b)).

The document analysis foregrounded the role of the school principal as the accounting officer who is entrusted to use the school finances towards enabling the delivery of quality education (cf. 3.2.4). In addition, it has been noted in the document analysis that the primary role performed by the school boards, of which the school principal is the secretary, is to ensure the proper running of the school. The proper running of the school implies, *inter alia*, the provision of sufficient educational resources for efficient teaching and learning. The literature also places the principal at the centre for the creation of a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning (cf. 2.3.2.1(a)).

While school principals are responsible for the smooth running of their schools, they also experience daily frustrations in this regard. As depicted by the findings, principals are often hampered by a lack of resources and support in fulfilling their tasks. Similar to teacher associations, school principals belong to an association on district or cluster level. The aim of these associations is to provide a space for principals to discuss matters that affect their daily duties. I suggest that this space is also utilised for principals to not only share their challenges, but to draw on one another's experiences to address and overcome such challenges. I subsequently advocate for strong deliberation during meetings to generate ideas and collective action towards the delivery of quality education. Neighbouring schools can for example, devise plans to assist one another, in a similar manner as mentioned in Section 5.2.1.1. Lesotho has recently embarked on a new curriculum, which implies various challenges for school in terms of curriculum delivery. These associations can be the ideal places where resource personnel from the National Curriculum Development Centre could be informed about schools' challenges and where ideas can be shared. Associations where principals can collectively devise plans and ways of action to support one another can become a strong force of motivation. Empowered and motivated school principals who support one another, can in turn, motivate their staff to not be discouraged by the lack of resources for sufficient teaching and learning. Rather, an individual school itself can become a powerful shared space, where the school principal and teachers, including non-academic staff, can draw on ideas generated during meetings of the principal and teacher associations.

### **5.2.2 Strengthening ties with different role-players**

According to systems theory, the school can be considered an organisation in which different role-players work interdependently towards the realisation of educational goals (cf. 3.2.3 & 3.2.4). The policy framework which I derived from the document analysis gives a

broader picture of how the Lesotho government envisions different roles and responsibilities towards the provisioning of quality education for all Basotho (cf. Table 3.1). In particular, the *Sector Plan* and the *Manual for Principals* afford principals with the role of being the accountable officers to ensure the smooth running of the school (cf. 3.2.3 & 3.2.4). In order to provide quality education, various resources are required, including human, financial and physical resources. In this regard, the policy framework emphasises how the provisioning of these resources are facilitated according to assigned roles and responsibilities. In essence, the document analysis anticipates the smooth running of the school in an official manner. However, the findings that emerged from the interviews paint a different picture. All of the participants articulated some discontent regarding the adherence to their tasks by some of the role-players. On average, there seems to be frustration due to the lack of resources for sufficient teaching and learning. The school principals referred to a lack of human resources (qualified teachers), financial resources (school fees not paid on a regular basis) and physical resources (no laboratory or teaching aids) (cf. 4.3.2.2 & 4.3.3). The teachers who participated in the study were more focused on their own teaching realities, and indicated a lack of the resources they require for effective teaching and learning. These included *inter alia*, a shortage of textbooks, outdated textbooks, no laboratory, and no supplies to use the laboratory (cf. 4.3.2.2, 4.3.3 & 4.3.4.1). From the findings it became clear that despite roles and responsibilities being outlined in official documents, the smooth running of the school, and in particular the delivery of quality education, is hampered by a breach in the interdependent relationship between role-players. Although schools remain dependent on MoET for the delivery of resources to a great extent, I want to suggest that schools deliberate on ways in which they can strengthen their relationship with parents, the broader community and organisations like NGOs. As a school cannot operate in isolation, a strong relationship between role-players is a prerequisite for the attainment of educational goals.

Given the dire economic status of many Basotho, parents and guardians are often not in a position to pay school fees, but they could, for example, become involved in the maintenance of the school property. Schools can invite parents, guardians and community leaders to meetings on how the school could be assisted in ways other than purely financially. Role-players need to gain an understanding of the needs of the school and to deliberate on ways in which they can assist to contribute towards the sustainability of the school, and by implication, towards the delivery of quality education. By strengthening the relationship between the school, parents and the community, role-players can use their skills

to ensure that proper teaching takes place. Skills related to plumbing and construction, for example, could be utilised in the maintenance of school property. On the one hand, the school can benefit from such skills, and on the other hand, parents and guardians who are not able to contribute financially, can develop a sense of self-worth as their skills are considered as important.

Schools could also start to strengthen their ties with one another. Neighbouring schools could start to share resources where possible. Sports grounds, and also coaches, can be shared using a timetable, to the advantage of all the schools involved. Activities such as debates and fairs, managed by more than one school, can assist students to improve their comprehension of the English language. In addition, it might be easier to gain sponsorships from NGOs and the business sector for collectively generated plans. Furthermore, the principals could forge partnerships with NGOs in order to be in a position to request donations for computers, for example. This will address one of the needs mentioned by the teachers, namely access to computers for themselves as well as for students (cf. 4.3.1).

I do not wish to advocate specific suggestions, but rather to advocate for schools to create their own platforms where they can involve role-players to deliberate on needs and means of assistance. The government provides the necessary support on paper, but in reality schools need to become assertive and innovative, and draw on other possibilities to address resource shortages. It is imperative for schools to have good relationships with neighbouring schools, with parents and guardians, with community members and NGOs and the business sector. While systems theory encourages the different parts of the school to work interdependently, it remains the school's responsibility to strengthen ties with role-players in order to address instances where such interdependence is hampered or violated. For quality teaching and learning to continue, schools therefore have to think innovatively about how they could capitalise on the wealth of resources that are available in their immediate surroundings. Principals, with the help of the teachers, could also tap into alumni to encourage them to donate any resources they have in order to improve teaching and learning.

### **5.2.3 Fundraising**

The findings revealed that insufficient finances hinder the provision of resources in schools (cf. 4.3.2.2). The regular payment of school fees by parents and guardians can contribute towards the financial stability of the school and can enable the school principal and the

school board to budget for resources that are not provided through the official MoET canal (cf. 4.3.2.1). The literature emphasises the importance of financial resources in the school as an organisation (cf. 2.3. & 2.3.2.3). Finances are crucial for purchasing physical resources, and for remunerating human resources such as teachers and administrative personnel. It was seen from the document analysis that the role-players responsible for the provision of resources in schools (the school principal and the school board), should make it their priority to utilise financial resources towards the sufficient running and management of the school, and by implication, towards the delivery of quality education (cf. 3.2.2 & 3.2.4).

The participants made various suggestions towards fundraising (cf. 4.3.4.1 & 4.3.4.2). As noted, an important finding that emerged from the study is teacher agency. Teachers understand the necessity that education must continue, even in the absence of sufficient sources (cf. 4.3.2.2). On the one hand, they are prepared to generate ideas and plans to remediate the lack of resources. On the other hand, they seem to have a sound understanding that financial resources are required to fill the gap where resources, especially teaching resources, are absent (cf. 4.3.2.2, 4.3.4.1 & 4.3.4.2). It is in this regard that I want to suggest that teachers become involved in the financial planning in the school. The document analysis indicated the particular role of the school principal and the school board regarding budgeting (cf. 3.2.4). However, a transparent approach to financial planning could be beneficial in two ways. On the one hand, teachers can be enlightened about the realities and challenges experienced by the school management regarding finances. On the other hand, the principal and school board can become informed about the daily challenges and frustrations experienced by teachers in their quest to deliver quality education. As such, a mutual understanding can be built, and through strong leadership, all school staff can become involved in generating plans and ideas to raise funds to address shortages regarding resources. It should, however, be noted that the school is a non-profit organisation and the only formal way of generating money is through school fees. In September 2011, Education Minister 'Mamphono Khaketla announced the rationalisation of school fees in all public secondary and high schools from January 2012 (*Lesotho Times*, 29 September 2011). While the reduction in school fees has had a major impact on many schools who are struggling to make ends meet, many parents are not in a financial position to pay school fees. In this regard, Daemane and Sekantsi (2018) attest to the high unemployment rate in Lesotho, which has led to a high and widespread prevalence of poverty. By implication, schools have to generate ideas and take action to supplement their budgets towards the

achievement of sustainable education aimed at the full development of the human personality.

On a practical level, one could think of involving teachers and students from different subjects. For example, a class projects could be undertaken by Business Studies and Accounting students to generate ideas towards fundraising with the aim to purchase specific resources. When students become involved in fundraising, it is important that they know what the generated funds will be used for. To understand how they will benefit for example from the purchasing of Mathematics kits, graphs, charts and apparatus, will serve as an important form of motivation for them.

In the previous section (cf. 5.2.2), I referred to the necessity to strengthen ties with the broader community. The community can become involved in long-term projects for raising funds. For example, the rearing and selling of pigs and broilers can be a long-term project from which both the school and the community can benefit. The rationale could be for the school to buy from the community and to sell to the community at lower rates. In this manner, the community can benefit and the profits from sales could be used to purchase and maintain resources for the school. However, a strong relationship between the school and the broader community is imperative, and should be premised on the assumption that both the school and the community remain interdependent of each other in order to attain educational goals. Another example to raise funds is the operation of a tuckshop on the school premises. Many schools do have tuckshops, but through good leadership, a tuckshop can be run in a way that is beneficial to the school. A tuckshop can be run by a specific class for a year. Parents or guardians from the students can become involved, and students can undertake a study to determine what the general needs of the students are regarding the tuckshop. In other words, they will have to determine if there is a need to stock stationery at the tuckshop so that students do not have to go elsewhere for purchasing such items. If the students become involved they can gain skills in financial management at the same time. If the running of the tuckshop is rotated on an annual basis, this skills development can be extended to many students.

Although many examples can be cited of how funds can be raised by schools, my argument remains that the staff, students and the broader community should all become involved in generating plans for fundraising. It is therefore not about ideas generated by the school administration, but about involving all role-players to take ownership of the school in the

delivery of quality education. Transparent and participatory leadership in a school can go a long way in motivating role-players to become involved in the generation and activation of plans to supplement financial resources, with the aim to address those resource shortages that stand in the way of sufficient teaching and learning.

## 5.3 IN REFLECTION

As my study stretched over a period of three years, I became involved in my study in both a personal and scholarly capacity. On the one hand, I spent a lot of time working on my study, while, on the other hand, I had to obtain new skills and acquire knowledge on the actual process of undertaking research. This section serves as a reflection on my study, and I reflect on the strengths and challenges of the study, the limitations of the study and opportunities for new research, and on my personal and academic growth.

### 5.3.1 *Strengths and challenges*

As a signatory to the United Nations' *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* goals, the Lesotho government and by name the MoET, is compelled to provide "equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes" (United Nations, 2015b:21). This objective is earmarked to be realised in 2030. The strength of the study subsequently lies with the findings, which give a snapshot of teachers' experiences with resource availability and the delivery of quality education towards good student performance. Equitable and quality education is dependent on various role-players taking up their respective responsibilities (cf. Table 3.1). In light of 2030 as the goalpost, MoET should take note of teachers' experiences with insufficient resources, and how such unavailability hampers equitable and quality education, which in turn, can lead to ineffective learning outcomes. By implication, this study sheds light in general on the extent that the Lesotho government contributes towards the realisation of the country's vision as articulated in Section 28 of its *Constitution* (1998) for an education system "directed to the full development of the human personality". In particular, the study foregrounds the extent to which the MoET is able to fulfil its responsibilities as laid out in policy documents.

In my undertaking of this qualitative study, I encountered several challenges. The first challenge concerned the availability of the documents that I wanted to analyse. For instance, the *Manual for Principals* is not available online. My school principal provided me with a hard copy which I had to copy and give to my supervisor at the UFS for smooth communication. Another challenge was setting appointments with the school principals and participants at

both schools. It was very difficult to get hold of the school principal of the DB school, and in the end I contacted her through a teacher at the school. That teacher had to act as a go-between, as my attempts at direct contact failed many times. Eventually I did manage to set up an appointment for a meeting. On the scheduled day for the interview and focus group interviews, however, I was told to reschedule as the principal was temporarily out of the country. When arriving at the school for the rescheduled meeting, the school secretary informed me that the principal had just for town to attend to a personal issue. I waited for her, and after her return we conducted the interview. During the focus group interview at this school, I was placed in a difficult position as the participants used the session to express their dislike of the manner in which the school principal runs the school. I had to redirect and refocus the interview so that they did not use the session as an opportunity to air their frustration. I reminded the participants of the aim of the study and of the value of their contribution. At the DA school, I also had difficulty in finalising a date for the individual interview with the school principal, as well as the focus group interview with the other five participants. I had to call several times before I could visit the school for the interviews. In the end, I just travelled to the school to request a meeting with the principal. The principal only informed the other participants about the focus group interview on that day, so I had to wait for them. This was despite the fact that I had set up an appointment with the principal for the focus group interview. As a consequence, the participants were pressured for time to finish the interview, as they still had other duties to attend to.

Due to time pressure and insufficient data, I had to return to both schools to expand my data. To be accommodated in their daily schedules became a huge challenge, as the students were busy with their final examinations at that time. However, I managed to arrange for a day and time with the school principals to revisit the schools and the same teachers with whom I conducted the focus group interviews. The participants were still willing to participate and were very open during the sessions.

I experienced another challenge when none of the participants agreed to be audio recorded. This was despite the fact all of them completed and signed the informed consent forms, indicating that recordings would be part of the process. The participants told me that they were wary of the way that social media could be used, so even I had assured them of confidentiality, they still insisted that I rather transcribe their responses. This caused the focus group interviews to become very long, although the participants were very patient with me.

### **5.3.2 *Limitations and opportunities***

This study was a qualitative study, which enables the researcher to generate rich data. In this study I only worked with two schools in one of the ten districts in Lesotho. Although my intention was not to generalise my research findings to all teachers in Lesotho schools, I could have yielded more data if I included more schools. In particular, a mixed-method approach could have been helpful to generate data from more teachers, which in turn could have assisted me to determine trends in teachers' thinking. Such data could have served as a baseline for semi-structured interviews. Another limitation was that I only conducted two focus group interviews. Although the focus group interviews provided an opportunity for the participants to co-construct their experiences, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the participants could have assisted in first generating data regarding their subjective experiences, which could then have been complemented with data generated through the focus group interviews.

In this study I only explored teachers' perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance. In drawing on the limitations of this study, further research could include a mixed method approach to investigate the consequences of insufficient resources on student performance. While a mixed method approach can have a wider reach, quantitative data can be complemented with qualitative data. Further research can also include participants from more schools and could perhaps specifically focus on the availability of teaching aids. In addition, a study that involves only school principals could contribute in highlighting the influence of resource availability on the management of the school. This reflection does not imply that my study has little value, but rather, the limitations of the study bring to the fore the many opportunities for further studies around this topic.

### **5.3.3 *Personal and scholarly growth***

On a personal level, I have come to realise that the delivery of equitable education entails the involvement of various role-players. In particular, the policy framework assisted me to gain a broader understanding of how legislation envisions the provision of quality education in Lesotho. I have further discovered that teachers' working conditions are unequal, especially when it comes to teaching resources. The availability of resources has an influence on student performance, and schools are often judged in terms of student performance. I realised that to simply judge a school by its students' performance is unfair, as there might be several reasons for a differentiated outcome, one of which might be insufficient resource availability. Although I was initially curious to explore teachers'

perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance, I soon realised that many teachers have to teach in the absence of sufficient resources. My own perception of what I perceived as a well-resourced school was soon deflated when the participants of the assumed well-resourced school, recalled examples of teaching aids they have to make do without. I realised that as teachers, we have certain common experiences, which could be used to strengthen solidarity in order to generate ideas to assist one another in pursuit of the delivery of quality education.

On a rather more personal note, I discovered that I can work within a specified time frame, as I was also able to meet most of my deadlines. Academic writing was a huge challenge to me when I started, but I kept on reading in order to gain an understanding of the expectations of academic writing. I have to admit that in the beginning it was not easy, and I even considered withdrawing from the study. But once I gained momentum, I surprised myself and the more I read and wrote, the more I gained self-confidence to work towards the completion of this study. With time, I became more organised to juggle my time between work-related responsibilities, my studies and my family.

As a scholar, I gained an understanding of how the research process works and how it can unfold once one has established the main research question and the subsidiary questions that would lead one towards answering the questions. In this regard, I realised the important role of the research design of a study. Initially, having to choose the research instruments was a challenge for me as I realised that for every choice I made, I had to provide a reason of its appropriateness for this study. I also came to understand how a research paradigm can play a guiding role in the research undertaking. In particular, once I understood what systems theory entails, I could start to “read” my data through the paradigm. By doing this, I discovered how it assisted me to make sense of the data. However, I can attest that at the end of this study I have gained a lot of experience regarding how crucial it is for a scholar to be disciplined, to learn good time management skills and to be prepared to read and read and read.

## **5.4 CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

The objective of this chapter was to comment on teachers’ perceptions of the relationship between the availability of resources and student performance, and to make suggestions based on the findings that emerged from the study. The three suggestions made in the study are couched within my understanding of the school as an organisation that remains

dependent on the collective and interdependent roles of various role-players for the attainment of *inter alia*, quality education. By reading the generated data through the lens of systems theory, I was able to gain an understanding of how the participants perceive the relationship between resource availability and student performance. In addition, I was also able to understand that the experiences of teachers reflect a picture in which the assumed smooth running of the school, including effective teaching and learning, is hampered by some discontent between role-players taking up their responsibilities. The literature review (cf. Chapter 2) indicated the importance of resources for the attainment of educational goals. This was confirmed by the document analysis (cf. Chapter 3), which foregrounded the different roles and responsibilities towards the smooth running of Lesotho schools and the delivery of quality education. In alignment with these perceptions, the participants confirmed their understanding of the important relationship between the availability of resources, the delivery of quality education, and student performance (cf. Chapter 4). The experiences of the participants, however, revealed that the anticipated roles and responsibilities remain words on paper, and that they are frustrated by the lack of sufficient resources. In drawing on the various chapters of this dissertation, I suggest that teacher and principal associations are reconceptualised as platforms of support where ideas can be generated to assist one another to address resource insufficiency (cf. 5.2.1). As the school remains dependent on various role-players for its smooth running, I advocate for the strengthening of ties between the school and role-players such as parents, guardians, the community and non-governmental organisations (cf. 5.2.2). As financial resources seem to be a major problem at schools, I also suggest that the various role-players be involved in the generation of ideas and its execution to raise funds to complement school fees, which serve as the only income of the school (cf. 5.2.3).

I concluded this chapter by reflecting on the study, and in particular on my experience of the undertaking of the study. As such, I indicated what I considered to be both strengths and challenges of the study. In reflection, I considered the ways in which I tried to address the challenges I experienced and also commented on the limitations of the study. I do not perceive limitations as a negative, but rather as opportunities for further and related research topics. In drawing on the extent to which this study led to the realisation of my initially stated research aim, I deemed it important to also reflect on my scholarly and personal growth during the undertaking of the study. Of importance, however, is that the government of Lesotho should take cognisance of teachers' perceptions and experiences of how the lack of resources hamper the delivery of quality education, and its impact, by implication, not

only on student performance, but on the realisation of the *Constitution's* vision to education towards the full development of the human personality.

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# APPENDIX A: ETHICAL APPROVAL – UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE



## GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

28-Jun-2019

Dear Mrs Makhate, Maseeiso MG

### Application Approved

Research Project Title:

**Exploring teachers' perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance in Lesotho high schools**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2019/0443/2806**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Prof Derek Litthauer**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

Digitally signed  
by Derek

Litthauer

Date: 2019.06.30

21:21:31 +02'00'

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[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)



## **APPENDIX B: PERMISSION – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**



**LESOTHO**

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & TRAINING**

**P.O. BOX 561, Teyateyaneng 200 Berea**

**08/05/2019 Tel: 22500235**

**Ethics Committee**

**University of the Free State**

**Bloemfontein**

**The communique serves to confirm that MS Maseeiso Gracie Makhate 2013085101 has been granted permission by the Ministry of Education and Training to undertake research in the selected schools in the Berea District. The understanding is that her findings will inform the Ministry on the relationship between allocation of resources and the student performance /output.**

**PROJECT TITLE: EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESOURCES AVAILABILITY AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN LESOTHO POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

**Please accord her the necessary support**

**Thanking you**

**Mopei Selikane**

**District Education Manager**

**DEM-BEREA - 58855708**

## APPENDIX C: PERMISSION REQUEST FROM SCHOOLS

P.O. Box 1095  
Maputsoe 350  
Lesotho

.....

The Principal

.....

.....

Lesotho

Dear sir/madam

Re: Permission request to conduct research at your school

My name is Maseeiso G. Makhate, I am a Masters student at the University of the Free State. The aim of my study is to explore teachers' perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools. In order to pursue my study I need to conduct a semi-structured interview with you and a focus group interview with five of your teachers. The rationale for selecting you as the school principal is based on your experience and knowledge regarding the availability of resources in the school. I believe your input can be valuable for my study. I would like to conduct a focus group interview with teachers in your school who teach Mathematics, Business Education, Sciences and Religious Knowledge. As these subjects require particular resources for quality teaching, my contention is that these teachers will be able to contribute important information towards my study.

Although the semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews cannot be anonymous, I guarantee that the information provided during the semi-structured interview and the focus group interviews will be treated as confidential. In addition, the identities of the participants and that of the schools will not be revealed in the research report, as I will use pseudonyms. Please see the attached consent forms that the participants will be required to complete prior to participation.

I have sought and received ethical clearance from the UFS Ethics Committee (see attached ethical clearance letter) and permission from MoET (see attached permission letter) to conduct the study. In light of the above information, I humbly request your permission to conduct the study at your school. I plan on visiting your school during August to September 2019, but will confirm a date which suits all participants. The interview should last 30 – 45 minutes and the focus group interviews approximately 60 minutes. The intention is not to have any impact on teaching activities, so arrangements will be made to conduct the interviews outside of normal teaching times.

I thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours faithfully  
Maseeiso G. Makhate

## APPENDIX D: INFORMED WRITTEN CONSENT FORMS

### Informed Written Consent form: School principal

**Title of the research:** Exploring teachers' perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools

**Supervisor:** Dr Adré le Roux

**Student:** Ms Maseeiso G Makhate

**Contact details:** +266 58703535 and email litsitsogracek@gmail.com

### Declaration by the participant

I, the participant and undersigned .....  
address..... hereby confirm that I was invited by Maseeiso G. Makhate, a Masters student at the University of the Free State, to participate in a research study titled ***Exploring teachers' perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools***. The researcher explained to me that the study is aimed at gaining an understanding of how teachers perceive the relationship between resource availability and student performance. It was also indicated that my contribution to this study has the potential to assist in foregrounding the teaching and learning realities on school level in which teachers have to teach and students have to learn with or without the assistance of resources.

My participation in the study will involve a semi-structured interview that could last for approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interview will take place after school hours as arranged at my convenience. It is anticipated that the interview will be conducted, at prior arrangement, any time from August to September 2019. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any stage without disclosing reasons. My participation or withdrawal will not have any present or future effects on my job as a principal and there are no financial costs or benefits to be accrued to me due to my participation in or withdrawal from this research.

My identity and that of my school will remain confidential in the proceedings of the semi-structured interview. I am free to raise questions and views without any intimidation during the semi-structured interview. My humanity will be respected throughout my participation. I understand that recordings and transcripts will be made during the semi-structured interview and my identity will not be revealed at any point. The researcher explained to me all the information concerning the study in the language best understood by me and no pressure was exerted on me by the researcher to participate in this study.

I hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the semi-structured interview for the purpose of this study.

Signed at .....on the .....2019

Signature of participant .....

### Declaration by the researcher

I, Maseeiso G. Makhate declare that I explained the information above to the participant in the language best understood to him or her. He or she was given enough time to ask questions and freely decided whether or not to participate.

.....

.....

MG Makhate

Date

**Informed Written Consent form: Teachers**

**Title of the research:** Exploring teachers’ perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools  
**Supervisor:** Dr Adré le Roux  
**Student:** Ms Maseeiso G Makhate  
**Contact details:** +266 58703535 and email: litsitsogracek@gmail.com

**Declaration by the participant**

I, the participant and undersigned ..... address ..... hereby confirm that I was invited by Maseeiso G. Makhate, a Masters student at the University of the Free State, to participate in a focus group interview as part of my study titled ***Exploring teachers’ perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance in Lesotho post-primary schools***. The researcher explained to me that the study is aimed at gaining an understanding of how teachers perceive the relationship between resource availability and student performance. It was also indicated that my contribution to this study has the potential to assist in foregrounding the teaching and learning realities on school level in which teachers have to teach and students have to learn with or without the assistance of resources.

My participation in the study will involve a focus group interview that could last for approximately 60 minutes. The focus group interview will take place after school hours as arranged at the convenience of all the participants. It is anticipated that the focus group interviews will be conducted, at prior arrangement, any time from August to September 2019. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any stage without disclosing any reasons. My participation or withdrawal will not have any present or future effects on my job as a teacher and there are no financial costs or benefits to be accrued to me due to my participation in or withdrawal from this study.

My identity and that of my school will remain confidential in the proceedings of the focus group interviews. I am free to raise questions and views without any intimidation during the focus group interviews. My humanity will be respected throughout my participation. I understand that recordings and transcripts will be made during the focus group interviews and my identity will not be revealed at any point. The researcher explained to me all the information concerning the study and no pressure was exerted by the researcher to participate in this study.

I hereby voluntarily consent to participate in the focus group interviews of this study.

Signed at ..... On the ..... 2019  
 Signature of participant.....

**Declaration by the researcher**

I, Maseeiso G. Makhate declare that I explained the information above to the participant in the language best understood to him or her. He or she was given enough time to ask questions and freely decided whether or not to participate.

.....  
 M. Makhate

.....  
 Date

---

## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

### **Semi-structured interview questions: school principals**

- 1.(a) How long have you been working in this school?
- 1.(b) Is this the position you held when you first came here? If not what was your previous position?
2. What are your feelings regarding the livelihood of this school?
3. In general, what would you say are typical resources that are required to make your school functional?
4. What resources do think are required for the provision of quality education?
5. Who is responsible for the provision of resources?
6. What are your responsibilities as the school principal regarding the provision of resources?
7. Would you say the available resources at your school are sufficient for quality education? Explain.
- 8.(a) Do you think there is a relationship between the availability of resources and student performance? Explain.
- 8.(b) In the context of your school, what do you think is the impact of resources on student performance? Explain.
9. What do you suggest should be done to improve the availability of resources at your school?

### **Focus group interview questions: teachers**

1. How long have you been working in this school?
2. What are your feelings regarding the experiences you have since you joined this school?
3. What subject[s] do you teach?
4. What is your understanding of resources in the broader school context?
5. What resources would you say are required to assist you in your teaching task?
6. Do you think you have enough resources to support you in the teaching of your subject(s)? Explain.
7. What other resources than teaching aids would you say are necessary for effective teaching? Explain.
8. Do you think sufficient teaching can take place in the absence of resources?
9. What do you do in cases where you find that your resources are insufficient?

10. Who do you think should be responsible for the provision of resources? Why?
11. What do you think the school management should do to provide sufficient resources?
12. Do you think poor results can be attributed to lack of resources? Explain
13. Do you think there is a relationship between student performance and the availability of resources? Explain.

---

## APPENDIX F: LANGUAGE EDITING LETTER

To whom it may concern

This is to state that the Master's thesis by 'Maseeiso Gracie Makhate titled **Exploring teachers' perceptions of the relationship between resource availability and student performance in Lesotho high schools** has been language edited by me, according to the tenets of academic discourse.



Annamarie du Preez

B.Bibl.; B.A. Hons. (English)

11-12-2019