

**ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES HINDERING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
NATIONAL POLICY FOR INTEGRATED EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND
DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRE-SCHOOLS IN MOKHOTLONG**

By

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Declaration

I '**Malikoro Aletta Tiela** declare that the dissertation I submitted is my own work. The references that I have used have been indicated and acknowledged. This work has not been previously submitted by me at any university for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

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Abstract

Education is a fundamental human right that is encapsulated in the Constitution of Lesotho. This right can be fully enjoyed if children are given the opportunity to attend school at an age. The challenges that hinder children to enjoy this right at their early years of schooling serve as a barrier that impedes them to realise their full potentials in life. Early childhood education enables children to have a positive attitude towards schooling. The main purpose of this study was to uncover the challenges that hinder the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools in the rural areas of the Mokhotlong district in Lesotho. This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The findings of this study revealed that some of the challenges that hinder the implementation of this policy in the rural areas of the country include shortage of trained teachers, poor infrastructure, lack of parental involvement and lack of supervision. Therefore, it is recommended that the government should ensure that there is adequate funding prior to the implementation of educational policies. Provision of adequate infrastructure should also be taken into consideration to enable smooth implementation of this policy.

Keywords: Early childhood education, challenges, implementation, policy, pre-schools.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The early years of childhood are of paramount importance in the life of every child. This period serves as a basis for learners' future development in their academic life as they continue with their studies. The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (NPIECCD) places more emphasis on a holistic development of a child for the purpose of establishing a firm and wide base for lasting learning and well-being (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17). Akinrotimi and Olowe (2016:1) point out that this period promotes holistic development of learners and prepares them for primary schooling.

The conference for Education for All, which was launched in the early 1990s, involved various international organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank (World Bank, 2000:15). Lesotho signed the World Declaration on Education for All; which was adopted in Thailand in 1990 and set an overall vision which universalises access to education for all (World Bank, 2000:15).

Lesotho is also a signatory to the international conventions and protocols on education (Ntho and Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013:22). Article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 stipulates that the right to education is everyone's right. To this end, the Government of Lesotho shall ensure that learners have access to education at the elementary level (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17). Consequently, the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is consistent with Article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights because it strives to give Basotho children the opportunity to attend school freely at the reception classes that are attached to primary schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:87).

The vision of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is to ensure that Basotho are operationally knowledgeable people with balanced morals and moral principles, technical knowledge, adequate social and scientific skills (Ministry of Education and Training, 2005: 26). The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development goes along with the Country's education for all policy because it stresses that all children should have access to education. The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development can facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by ensuring that all Basotho children have access to education at a very young age. Olowe, Rasheed and Falekulo (2019:2) are of the view that the early childhood period is crucial in the lives of children. The matter of accessing standard early childhood programmes is encapsulated in the 2030 Global Agenda particularly Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which says that by 2030, all the boys and the girls should be able to access early childhood care and development which prepares them to enter primary education (Madeley, 2015:32). The SDGs entails 17 goals and 169 targets (Madeley, 2015:32). The targets were meant to operationalise the set goals and the objectives are used as a leading component to support the execution of the SDGs (Rakolobe, 2017:28).

The main goal of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is to make sure that Basotho children attain the Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD) services that are of high quality and can enable them to have better foundation skills (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:61). In line with this, the policy intends to promote a stabilised growth and learning for each learner in a favourable, empowering and appealing surrounding that shapes and prepare them for primary education schooling (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:86). However, due to the extreme rate of poverty, especially in the highlands, learners end up having a negative attitude towards schooling. They normally dropout of school even before transiting into primary education.

The Education Act 2010 stipulates various types of pre-schools that exist in Lesotho, notably, home-based pre-schools, formally known as early childhood care and development centres, home-based pre-schools assisted by communities and reception

classes for five-year-old children that are connected to primary schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010:167). Education Act 2010, therefore, has opened doors for Basotho children to get exposure to a school environment before they transit to Grade 1.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development was implemented by the Lesotho Government in 2013, yet the quality of pre-school education still declines, especially in the rural areas of the country. Pre-school learners face problems in acquiring foundational skills of literacy and numeracy. Mwaipopo (2017:17) notes that destitute learners from rural areas are more disadvantaged in receiving and accessing quality education than those from urban areas. This has a negative impact on the learners' academic performance as they continue with their learning. Learners who have poor foundational skills tend to have negative attitudes towards schooling. Due to poor academic performance, dropout rates tend to increase in the secondary schools. Some learners might be forced to abandon school at a very young age, even before completing their primary education. This might lead to a situation where learners resort to improper ways of living, such as the head boy phenomenon which is common in Mokhotlong where male learners are hired out to look after livestock or they engage in crimes. Female learners, on the other hand, might resort to early marriages with some becoming domestic workers, thus increasing the rate of dependency.

Ineffective implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development results in a number of problematic outcomes. English and Sesotho are the official languages in Lesotho, and as such, learners who are unable to read and write English and Sesotho properly might encounter problems in their lives. They might fail to be absorbed into the institutions of higher learning as English and Sesotho are core subjects that learners are expected to master before gaining admission to tertiary institutions. In addition, learners may not secure proper jobs to support their families. Likewise, learners who lack numerical skills or basic mathematics would also be hindered to reach their full potential in life because. This is because without proper knowledge of mathematics, it is not easy for learners to do courses that require knowledge of

mathematics such as engineering. In a nutshell, poor implementation of this policy has a negative impact on learners' progress with their learning.

1.3 Research questions

This investigation was guided and informed by the following research questions:

1.3.1 Main research question

- Which challenges hinder the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development pre-schools in the Mokhotlong district?

1.3.2 Sub-questions

In addition to the main question, this investigation is guided by the following subsidiary research questions:

- What are the benefits of Early Childhood Care and Education?
- To what extent is the infrastructure of the pre-schools in rural areas conducive to effective teaching and learning?
- What is the scope of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development?
- How implementable is the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in public pre-schools in Lesotho?
- What recommendations could be made to enhance the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools?

1.4 Purpose of the study

The main goal of this investigation is to analyse challenges that hinder the smooth implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the rural areas of Lesotho. Essentially, this study sought to investigate whether the NPIECCD is implementable in public pre-schools, particularly in the high

lands of the country. There are various reasons which precipitated this study to be undertaken and these included the following:

- Resources: This study sought to find out whether there are ample resources in the public pre-schools that would assist learners to learn better. According to Chukwbikem (2013:4), the availability and quality of educational materials would assist for better implementation of educational policies. More so, the implementation of the NPIECCD is not an exception in this case. This implies that to implement this policy successfully, there should be enough resources.
- Funding: In order to ensure a smooth implementation of any policy, there should be enough funding to take care of all activities that need to be attended to. Therefore, this study is meant to find out whether there are funds provided by the Government to ensure that pre-school activities are taken care of.
- Supervision: The researcher was interested in establishing whether supervision of staff in the public pre-schools is effective. To ensure effective implementation of policies there should be effective supervision. Supervision is essential because problems encountered during the implementation of any policy can be identified and mitigation strategies to rectify problems encountered can be explored. Awino (2014:9) is of the view that supervision is essential because it allows time to gather data that would help in the betterment of pre-school education. Supervision ensures that the implementation of a policy is executed efficiently and effectively.

1.5 Objectives of the study

This study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine the challenges which hinder the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the high lands of Lesotho.
- To investigate the benefits of early childhood education.
- To find out whether the physical infrastructure of pre-schools in the high lands is favourable for productive instruction and schooling.

- To evaluate the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development.
- To investigate whether the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is implementable in public pre-schools.
- To suggest recommendations that could be made to enhance the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the reception classes.

1.6 Significance of the study

The main purpose of the research is to come up with the findings that can produce new knowledge that can improve existing knowledge and practices. Therefore, this study is important in many respects to a variety of stakeholders and has the potential to benefit pupils, parents, teachers, and school proprietors as well as the Government of Lesotho by improving the quality of pre-school education in Lesotho.

The researcher believes that the recommendations of this study could influence the Government to build more classrooms for better achievement of educational activities in public pre-schools. To ensure that the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is implemented in such a way that it can produce positive results in rural areas, the Government needs to improve ECCD schools. Building classrooms would enable teaching and learning to take place in a conducive environment and yield better results. Thus, the results of this study have the potential to create a conducive learning environment to motivate learners. The recommendations of this study could encourage the Ministry of Education and Training to provide teaching and learning materials which could enable teaching and learning to take place effectively and arouse learners' interests to attend school daily.

On the other hand, parents could benefit from this study by being shown the importance of taking part in their children's learning. They should be active in supporting schools to ensure that their children learn better. As for teachers, this study may expose the challenges that they face during the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. They could also benefit from this study by being

made aware of the prevailing situation at pre-schools and the academic performance of learners. They would then come up with the mitigation strategies to rectify such problems and remedy the situation.

Finally, this study could be useful to learners because highlighting weaknesses in Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) could lead to improvements in how learners at this level are instructed. This could enhance early childhood education and ensure a solid foundation for the latter stages.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study focuses on the analysis of the challenges that hinder the smooth implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in Lesotho pre-schools. The research site for this study is Mokhotlong. This study collected data from 17 schools that have reception classes. The participants in this study comprised 17 principals, 17 pre-school teachers and 17 parents who had children who had either attended or were attending pre-schools when this study was conducted. All these stakeholders are relevant to this study because they all represent the population in this study.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study include funding constraints and time considerations. These issues are briefly discussed in the sub-sections below.

1.8.1 Funding constrains

This study was not supported by any grant or any other source of funding. The researcher financed the study and bore all the costs associated with this study.

1.8.2 Time considerations

The study was conducted in just 12 months, and this was a constraint as the researcher had to give time to both the demands of her professional work and the time to do this research. The time allocated for this research was very limited and was also affected by the fact that the researcher had other commitments besides work. Therefore, to mitigate this factor, the researcher had to manage her time by drawing a strict time management

schedule that she had to adhere to in order to ensure that everything was done within the specified time.

1.9 Definitions of operational terms

This section defines the operational terms used in this study.

1.9.1 Early childhood

Early childhood refers to a period when a child is born until the age of eight years (Mwaipopo, 2017:21).

1.9.2 Integrated early childhood care and development

Integrated early childhood care and development refers to a period where teachers are expected to provide a child with practices and actions that would enable him/her to face life (Ministry of Education and Education, 2013: 35). It is a critical period in the life of a child because it is where the caregivers should ensure that a child's survival, growth and development are taken care of (Ministry of Education and Education, 2013: 35).

1.9.3 Early childhood development

Early childhood development refers to a stage where teachers and parents assist and mentor children from infancy stage until they reach eight years (Ministry of Education and Education, 2013: 35).

1.9.4 Pre-school

Pre-school refers to the time of schooling that prepares young children for primary education (Awino, 2014:9).

1.10 Organisation of the dissertation

This investigation is organised into the following chapters:

Chapter 1

This chapter focuses on the background to the study with particular emphasis on the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives and significance of the study, delimitations of the study and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2

Chapter Two reviews literature on the challenges that impede the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. It also discusses the theoretical framework and the theories which are applicable in this investigation.

Chapter 3

Chapter three outlines the research methodology, research design, research paradigms and the method of data analysis adopted in this research.

Chapter 4

Chapter four presents and analyses the research findings based on the research questions.

Chapter 5

This chapter discusses the research findings, draws conclusions and proposes recommendations.

1. 11 Chapter summary

This is an introductory chapter which provides the background of pre-school learners from the rural areas and their academic challenges in the context of public pre-schools that are attached to primary schools. It also covers the statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study and definitions of operational terms.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents literature review related to this study globally, regionally and locally. It presents theoretical framework, analytical and child rights-based approach. The analytical framework is used in this study to evaluate whether the action policy strategies are implemented in public preschool particularly those found in the rural areas. This study adopted child rights-based approach because it advocates the importance of early childhood interventions and the rights of children.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This investigation adopted the human capital theory, analytical framework approach and child rights-based approach. The applicability of these theories to this study is dealt with in detail in the sub-sections below.

2.2.1 Definition of theoretical framework

According to Molefe (2014:10), a theoretical framework embraces two important notions, namely theory and framework. Molefe defines a theory as a planned protocol of notions, interpretations and assumptions that present a rational thought of an aspect. Framework is a set of notions that can be used when making decisions (Molefe, 2014:10).

Grant and Osanloo (2014:16) contend that a theoretical framework emanates from functioning theories, previous and current studies that have been verified and approved in scholarly literature. They further affirm that the paramount goal of a theoretical framework is to frame a study and guide researchers in analysing, explaining and interpreting data.

Theoretical framework is also defined as a plan grounded on an existing theory (Adam, Hussein & Joe, 2018:438). There is a correlation between a plan and a theory, and both in the formulation of plans and development of theories, the hypotheses are reflected (Adam & Joe, 2018:438). Adam and Joe (2018:438) also compare a theoretical

framework to a house plan that builders use. They further relate it to a road design that travellers use as a guide when travelling (Adam & Joe, 2018:438).

2.2.2 Human capital theory

The human capital theory has been chosen to underpin the study because it is useful in the enactment of education and advancement of policies (Boateng, 2019:15). The origins of human capital theory can be traced back to Adam Smith, a scholar who was famous in the 18th century and it was developed by Theodore Schultz and Howard Becker in the 20th century (Mwaipopo, 2017:26).

2.2.3 Assumptions of human capital theory

Human capital theory demonstrates that formal instruction serves as an anchor in the lives of human beings at diverse levels of their academic journey (Mamba, 2019:24). The proponents of human capital theory argue that formal instruction is a very fundamental instrument that is essential to improve human beings in all aspects of their lives (Mamba, 2019:24). The supporters of this theory argue that an educated population tends to be productive and efficient (Mamba, 2019:24). Thus, education improves economic development and alleviates poverty (Mamba, 2019:24).

According to Boateng (2019:15), formal instruction is an asset in human capital which promotes economic growth and reduces poverty. Traditional economists maintain that it is important to invest in human skills (Boateng, 2019:15). These economists consider formal instruction as the consumer and asset because it adds value to a user and functions as a supplement in the manufacturing of other commodities and benefits (Boateng, 2019:15). Through education, capital goods and human resources that are vital both for social and economic advancement could be improved and developed (Mamba, 2019:25).

Human capital theory serves as an important weapon to alleviate destitution (Mamba, 2019:25). According to the supporters of this theory, investing in formal education stimulates human capital development which eventually results in economic growth (Mamba, 2019:25). These theorists argue that education enhances economic prosperity which improves material and stock of competencies. These scholars believe that the

country's economic and social development is determined by educated human resources (Boateng, 2019:15). The proponents of human capital theory maintain that education is an investment that gives individuals and groups of people the opportunity to thrive in order to enhance their standards of living (Boateng, 2019:15).

The proponents of human capital theory believe that informal education is a catalyst for economic and social development (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). The skills that people acquire through education serve as an engine that promotes their productivity and improves their standards of living (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). Thus, there is a good correlation between schooling and destitution alleviation (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). In support of this view, Boateng (2019:15) argues that education and training which people acquire serve as means of a developing expertise and fruitful understanding that transforms people to be more beneficial human capital beings.

Gillies (2014:80) notes that Theodore Schultz's and Howard Becker's theory of human capital has dominated our modern-day academic debates in emphasising the importance of human capital development. This argument further states that this philosophy contemplates the influence that human capital has in the development of educational policies (Mamba, 2019:25). This is based on the ideology that human capital theory puts the two on human capital and formal education as the facilitators and operators for commercial advancements and convivial communication (Mamba, 2019:25). This indicates that social and economic advancement would not occur if there were no formal education that enables the dormant natural human ability to be a useful capital, which facilitates the creation of various valuable commodities and benefits (Ball, 2012:43).

2.2.4 Applicability of human capital theory to this study

Human capital theory is used in this study to analyse the challenges that hinder the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in Lesotho pre-schools. This theory offers a scope of the outcomes of such a plan as they relate to education operations and provide a plan on which this investigation was based (Mamba, 2019:24).

Human capital theory is applicable to this study because it assumes that investing in human beings, particularly young people, could yield better results because investment in human beings produces huge returns like any other form of capital (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). Investing in human capital at a very young age yields better results than when it is done at a later stage (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). In terms of this theory, investing in early childhood education is important because at this stage, children have an innate ability to learn anything that they are taught and this could help them to have better results as they continue with their academic journey (Mwaipopo, 2017:27).

Human capital theory stipulates that growth is a continuous activity, which takes place from one stage to another, and investing in early childhood education gives children an opportunity to have a good foundation that enables them to have better results in the future (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). As a result, the theory is relevant to this study which analyses the challenges that hinder the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in Lesotho pre-schools. Mwaipopo (2017:27) further states that learners who are capable at a primitive age are likely to learn extra experiences in the next levels. Therefore, providing young children with quality early childhood education enables them to have a good foundation and succeed in their academic journey in the future (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). Early childhood programmes help learners to have a positive attitude towards schooling (Mwaipopo, 2017:27).

According to the Human Capital Theory, giving young children an opportunity to take part in early childhood programmes promotes equity and an educated society which lowers the cost of providing individuals with proper welfare (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). Previous research shows that investing in the public ECCE programmes has a likelihood of producing economic returns (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). Investing in ECCE programmes is beneficial because it reduces grade repetition and decreases economic inequalities in society (Mwaipopo, 2017:27). Thus, Human capital theory is a relevant framework which underpins the current investigation, as its purpose is to look into the problems which hinder effective learning among pre-school children.

Supporters of Human Capital Theory argue that formal education serves as a weapon that provides individuals with a foundation for their future learning which eventually

reduces poverty at all levels (Omoniyi, 2013:178). Therefore, education is an essential weapon for economic development (Omoniyi, (2013:178). Knowledge of this idea is premised on the assumption that self-recognition is a result of formal education (Mamba, 2019:25). Through education, individuals can make informed decisions and set boundaries of their social and economic welfare (Mamba, 2019:25). Therefore, Human Capital Theory is involved with the education of young people, hence it is relevant to this study.

According to the Human Capital Theory, education is a vital agent for socio-economic development (Omoniyi, 2013:178) because it is a strong weapon which could be used to improve the welfare of individuals and also bring about growth, productivity and social stability. Through early childhood education, individuals are enabled to acquire certain skills which could help them to face future challenges, and reduce human redundancy in their economic participation (Mamba, 2019:25). The rate of dependency is reduced through the acquisition of education because educated individuals stand a chance of getting jobs with good income (Mamba, 2019:25). The Theory of Human Capital is a relevant framework to this study, as its aim is to provide useful insights which could be used to address educational problems in Lesotho.

The proponents of Human Capital Theory believe that education serves as an anchor in uniting societies globally (Mamba, 2019:25). Through education, poor countries can interact with their counterparts from different countries to discuss issues pertaining to trade and engage in developmental activities which are essential for socio-economic improvement (Mamba, 2019:25). Therefore, allowing children to participate in early childhood programmes is important because it gives them an opportunity to take part in global debates where they can share and transfer skills for better economic development (Mamba, 2019:26). Human Capital Theory offers a helpful plan for the research objectives of this study. For example, one of the objectives of this study is to examine the benefits that young children get from participating in ECCE programmes in Lesotho. Mamba (2019:26) maintains that human capital serves as a main operator for commercial conversion and development.

The correlation between Human Capital Theory and ECE depicts the significance of the output and standard of human services that are acquired through formal education and skills advancement which are essential for commercial development (Mamba, 2019:26). Providing individuals with early childhood programmes could assist them to have proper expertise that could enable them to participate efficiently in the corporate world (Mamba, 2019:26).

2.2.5 Limitations of human capital theory

The Human Capital Theory postulates that participating in free early childhood programmes gives individuals from poor family backgrounds an opportunity to attend pre-primary schools prior to proceeding to primary education (Mamba, 2019:26). However, most of the early childhood centres that provide quality education are private and this denies the disadvantaged learners the opportunity to be part of such centres (Mamba, 2019:26). Furthermore, in Lesotho, the reception classes that are attached to primary schools are free, however, the quality of education offered in reception classes is declining. For this reason, reception class learners receive poor education. In terms of offering quality early childhood programmes, Human Capital Theory increases the gaps in social inequality (Mwaipopo, 2017:27).

Sweetland (2020:17) advances a considerable insight into the criticisms of human capital theory. According to Sweetland (2020:17), human capital theory assumes that formal education helps individuals to acquire skills which improve the capacity of the workers to be productive. However, this assumption is criticised on the ground that on-the-job training logically contributes more to workers' productivity than formal education.

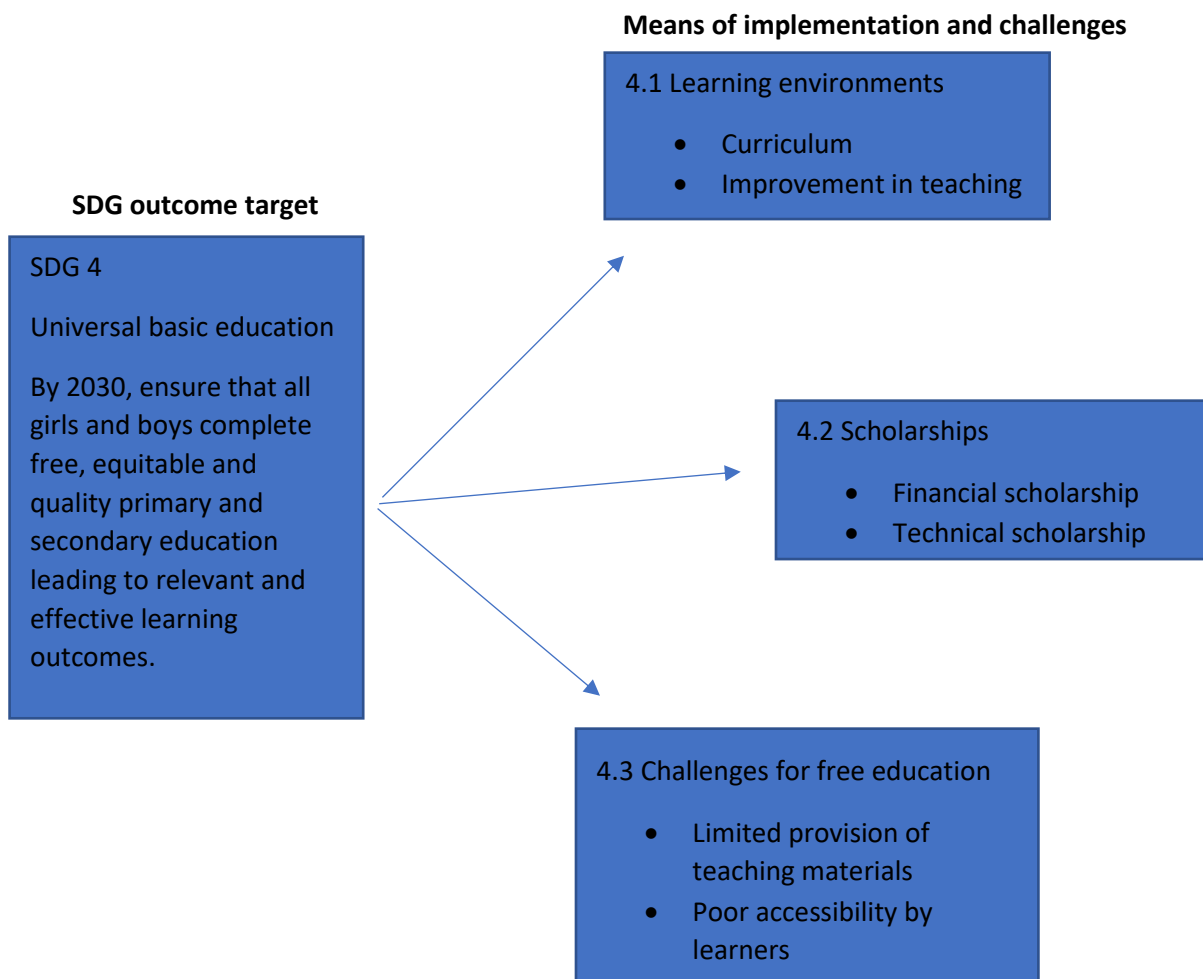
2.3 Analytical framework

Analytical framework is an approach that is designed to structure a researcher's thinking which aids rational meditation in a structured fashion (Fray, 2019:1). Analytical framework is a pattern that strives to lead and expedite sense-making and comprehension (Fray, 2019:1). It involves a careful systematic method of doing something (Fray, 2019:1). Analytical framework is an approach that aims to direct and expedite sense-making and understanding (Mamba, 2019:27).

2.3.1 Assumptions of analytical framework

This study adopted the analytical framework approach which was developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). This approach is illustrated in Figure 2.1 and establishes the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and the steps which must be followed in order to achieve it (Mamba, 2019:27). This framework shows the measures that should be taken into consideration in providing basic education in a free education context (Mamba, 2019:27). The analytical framework is useful in empirical studies and provides a foundation for the study objectives, questions and the whole policy evaluation plan (Mamba, 2019:27). For this particular investigation, analytical framework was useful because it enabled the researcher to analyse or evaluate whether challenges such as lack of qualified staff, poor infrastructure and lack of teaching-learning materials hinder a smooth implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in Lesotho pre-schools.

Figure 2.1: Structure of analytical framework



Source: Mamba (2019:28).

The relationship between SDG 4 and the steps that must be followed to achieve it (Mamba, 2019:27) are dealt with in detail in the forthcoming sub-sections.

2.3.2 Analytical framework and action strategy 4 of National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development

The main reason for adopting analytical framework in this study is to evaluate whether action policy strategies of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development are effectively implemented in pre-schools in Lesotho. This evaluation is done in relation to the four dimensions of Sustainable Development Goal 4, namely learning environments, scholarships, teachers and challenges for free education (Mamba, 2019:28). For ease of reference pertaining to these dimensions, readers are referred to Figure 2.1.

According to the Ministry of Education and Training (2013:18-20), the following are the action policy strategies of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development with regard to the Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD) activities and services in pre-schools, which are applicable to Mokhotlong as well:

- Develop Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Centres and facilities by giving children aged 0-3 prior opportunity to attend pre-schools.
- Providing vulnerable children with developmental delays and disabilities access to early childhood intervention services.
- Improvement and expansion of pre-school services (including centre-based, home-based and reception year services) for children aged 3 to 5, and improving alteration from home and pre-school to primary school.

- Children’s rights and protection should be taken into consideration particularly for vulnerable children living in harsh conditions.
- Expansion and improvement of the training of both pre-service and in-service training for all IECCD services.

According to the information captured in Figure 2.1, Millennium Development Goal (SDG) 4 can be implemented through means such as effective learning environments, scholarships, teachers and challenges for free education (Mamba, 2019:28). That is, analytical framework indicates the measures that should be taken into consideration in rating and evaluating development of a free pre-school education (Mamba, 2019:28). A detailed evaluation of how these dimensions can promote or hinder development of free pre-school education is done in the sections that follow.

2.3.3 Effective learning environments

As already indicated in section 2.3.2, the main reason for adopting analytical framework in this study is to evaluate whether action policy strategies of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development are effectively implemented in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. In this section, the evaluation is made in relation to one of the four dimensions of SDG 4, namely effective learning environments. These issues are summarised below.

2.3.4 Curriculum

Action policy strategy 3 of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development focuses on the introduction of Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services that would assist households who have destitute and vulnerable children and those having disabilities and developmental delays (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:19). It requires a cross-cutting collaboration to create and execute ECI services in phases, including community outreach for the identification and referral of children and the establishment of ECI policies and processes, qualities, vetting, evaluations, individual plans and the provision of home-based services appropriate for each child and the family’s needs (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:19). It requires ECI service collaboration, pre- and in-service training and monitoring and assessment (Ministry of

Education and Training, 2013:19). On the contrary, curriculum of the pre-schools in Lesotho is not inclusive in nature. It does not cater for children with developmental delays and disabilities. Thus, the curriculum of pre-school education in Lesotho contradicts Mamba's view of a good curriculum (Mamba, 2019:29). Mamba (2019:29) points out that from the context of comprehensive instruction, quality syllabus should give children an opportunity to unfold their full potentials which are necessary for the development of foundation skills, which is grounded on SDG 4. Mamba (2019:29) observes that syllabus improvement should be suited regarding the advancement of a more comprehensive and interactive atmosphere among children in pre-school level.

2.3.5 Improvement in teaching

One of the action policy strategies of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development stresses the importance of investing in day care services and providing quality teachers that would improve the standard of education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:42). Unfortunately, this is not the case in Mokhotlong pre-schools as the quality of teaching is not satisfactory. According to the personal observations of the researcher, the majority of the teachers in pre-schools in Mokhotlong are not qualified. It is highly unlikely that improvement in teaching can be attained under these circumstances. According to Mamba (2019:31), improvement in teaching is a crucial factor for effective learning of a child. Quality teaching promotes an inclusive education system which serves a critical part in the teaching-learning path (Mamba, 2019:31). Teaching includes a lot of approaches that should be devoted to the guidance and encouragement of a child (Mamba, 2019:31). Mamba (2019:32) also notes that a collaborative approach which gives a learner privilege plays a significant part in the life of a child in general. Teaching methods must provide a more comprehensive and broad approach aimed at framing the child's ability for a nurtured futurity and thriving learning competency (Mamba, 2019:32).

2.3.6 Learning materials

In applying analytical framework to evaluate whether the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is effectively implemented in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong, it appears that this policy is not effectively implemented. A shortage of

learning materials is one of the stumbling blocks which impede its implementation. According to my own observations, there is an acute shortage of instructional resources in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. Being a teacher in a primary school where one of the pre-schools is attached, my personal experience shows that the scarcity of teaching and learning material is a big problem which makes teaching and learning difficult in pre-schools in the district. According to Mamba (2019:33), instructional materials are essential since they help teachers and children to avoid overemphasis on recitation and rote learning which can easily dominate a lesson. Learning materials help children to acquire applicable knowledge which assists them to unfold their full potentials, and concepts which allow them to do things differently (Mamba, 2019:33). In the process of teaching and learning, materials are crucial because they promote children's academic achievement (Mamba, 2019:33). For instance, the instructional components of lesson planning in teaching depend on the selection of relevant teaching materials (Mamba, 2019:33). Teaching materials support children's learning and enhance learners' success (Mamba, 2019:33). While teaching materials come in various angles, they all portray one thing in common which is the ability to support children's learning (Mamba, 2019:33).

2.3.7 Infrastructure development

An analytical evaluation of the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development shows that it is not effectively implemented in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. However, this assertion will either be validated or falsified by the analysis of data presented in Chapter 4 of this study. This evaluation is made with regard to infrastructure development in these schools. From my experience and observation as a teacher in the district, the infrastructure in pre-schools in Mokhotlong is very poor. Accessibility of improved infrastructure is important for an efficient implementation of educational policies. Mugambi (2017:96) notes that development of infrastructure is more important in developing young learners to become better citizens. Providing learners with proper infrastructure assists them to establish experiences that can enable them to participate in a competitive world with confidence (Mamba, 2019:33). Therefore, policymakers should grasp the aspect of infrastructure improvement into consideration as it serves as an anchor that assures that schools are accommodating and favourable for

effective teaching and learning (Mamba, 2019:33). Investing in infrastructure development is very important because it can increase enrolments in pre-school, thus increasing the rate of literate citizens (Mamba, 2019:33).

Most importantly, the quality of learning materials together with proper infrastructure fosters positive results in the learning process (Cohen & Bhatt, 2012:118). For this reason, infrastructure does not include physical buildings only, but also serves as a proper establishment that nurtures learners to unfold their potentials through effective teaching and learning (Cohen & Bhatt, 2012:188). Okongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa (2015:134) attest that educational infrastructure includes all important elements which ensure that effective educational systems are developed. This would assist in the improvement of curriculum plan, quality and competence of teachers, the way content is delivered and the way the subjects are taught. The notion of developing educational infrastructure helps in developing children holistically during the educational process (Mamba, 2019:33). Infrastructure development should be taken as a major priority before the implementation of any educational policy as this can enhance quality and effective education facilities that can equip children to become better citizens (Mamba, 2019:33).

2.3.8 Scholarship to facilitate free pre-school education

Evaluation of the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools in Mokhotlong is highlighted in this section. Analytical framework is adopted for that purpose. In this instance, the evaluation is made in relation to one of the four dimensions of the SDG 4, namely scholarship to facilitate free pre-school education. This dimension covers issues such as financial scholarship, technical scholarship and technological development (Mamba, 2019:33). Each of these issues is summarised below.

2.3.9 Financial scholarship

Financial scholarship is a key factor for the effective implementation of educational policies. It seems that failure to implement the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong is a result of a lack of financial scholarship. Through casual discussions with some of the pre-school teachers

in Mokhotlong, they stated that poor working conditions in their schools were a problem driven by a lack of financial assistance from donors. The availability of financial scholarships is important for the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. For example, Mamba (2019:33) notes that financial scholarship facilitates the promotion of free preschool education from the perspectives of both the teachers and children. The provision of combined financial grants for teachers and children enables a conducive climate for effective teaching-learning (Mamba, 2019:33). The availability of financial scholarships enhances the enrolment of children in the preschool system as they equip them for their entrance into the primary school system (Mamba, 2019:34).

2.3.10 Technical scholarship

The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development stipulates that its aim is to upgrade and enlarge preschool facilities including centre-based, home-based and reception year services for children aged 3 to 5 and improve the transition from home and pre-school to primary schools (MOET, 2013:19). The technical scholarship can play a pivotal role in this regard. For instance, Mamba (2019:34) argues that technical scholarship develops teachers' skills. It helps them to develop and acquire relevant insight and come up with contemporary advancements in the teaching fraternity and other educational sectors (Mamba, 2019:34).

2.3.11 Technological development

One of the stumbling blocks that hampers the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is a lack of technological development which is crucial for innovative teaching-learning. Mamba (2019:35) illustrates that the provision of technological development enhances teachers' and learners' skills. The availability of technological development is central to the realisation of SDG 4.1 because it unveils employment possibilities for children, and helps them to endure schooling (Mamba, 2019:34).

2.3.12 Development of pre-school teachers

Another action strategy of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is to expand and improve the system for pre-service and in-service training for all IECCD services (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:20). The application of an analytical framework shows that this policy strategy is successfully implemented. For example, the MOET collaborated with the United Nations Children's Fund as a way of assisting caregivers who provide in-service training and providing care, encouragement and pre-school programmes to children (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:37). As a result of the influence of the NPIECDD, out of 3,000 caregivers, more than 100 were in-service trained annually (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:37). Furthermore, this policy led to the following achievements which would eventually contribute to the quality of education in the pre-schools in Lesotho:

- The Lesotho College of Education introduced a Certificate in Early Childhood Education (CECE) (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:37).
- CECE graduates from Lesotho College of Education have been absorbed by MOET in the teaching service. This has not only contributed to quality education in the preschools but it also contributed to job creation and women empowerment in ECCD.

Mugambi (2017:102) notes that providing free pre-school education is likely to reach its maximum position of achievement through training of teachers. In every nation, teachers play a crucial position in the attainment of an effective education system because they do not only act as facilitators of learning but also as a powerful driving force which assures that issues pertaining to content are given to learners appropriately (Mugambi, 2017:102). Teachers are the major pillars of any successful education system and their development, reservation, and well-being and constantly developing them professionally could improve the quality of education (Mugambi, 2017:102). Mamba (2019:36) postulates that training teachers is fundamental and fulfils the requirements of syllabus delivery in formal instruction. The capacity of teachers is enhanced when they are valued (Mamba, 2019:36). Proper training and empowerment of teachers enable them to use appropriate methods and strategies for teaching and learning (Mamba, 2019:36).

2.3.13 Challenges for preparedness of free pre-school education

In this section, an analytical framework is adopted to evaluate the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. In this case, the evaluation is made in relation to the last dimension of Sustainable Development Goal 4, namely the challenges for preparedness of free pre-school education. This dimension covers issues such as scarcity of instructional resources, restricted space for learning, poor attainability of schools and a shortage of qualified teachers. Each of these issues is summarised below.

2.3.14 Limited provision of instructional resources

In my view, failure to implement the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development effectively in preschools in Mokhotlong may be the result of limited provision of teaching and learning materials in these schools. Mamba (2019:37) supports the assertion that a shortage or limited provision of teaching-learning materials leads to failure to successfully implement free pre-school education programmes and education policies. Mamba (2019:37) notes that this problem is rife in countries such as Eswatini, Zambia and Lesotho, and that a lack of funds significantly affects the monetary distributions for upgrading of a free pre-school schooling system.

2.3.15 Limited learning space

It is difficult to implement the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. A shortage of financial resources to establish the infrastructure for pre-schools might be one of the factors which contribute to this problem. A large number of pre-schools are attached to primary schools, which means that a space for pre-school children is limited. In a nutshell, there is no appropriate infrastructure for these children (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17). It is most unlikely that the NPIECCD can be effectively implemented when there is no infrastructure.

2.3.16 Poor accessibility of school by children

While the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development stipulates that the Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD) services shall be

easy to access, comprehensive, culturally appropriate and high in quality (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17), in contrast, the opposite prevails. In Mokhotlong, most pre-schools are not easily accessible to children. Thus, inaccessibility denies the majority of pre-school children the opportunity to attend school. Therefore, poor accessibility of schools is one of the problems which impedes effective implementation of the NPIECCD in pre-schools in Mokhotlong.

2.3.17 Shortage of qualified teachers

The availability of qualified teachers plays a crucial role in implementing educational policies. However, in most less developed countries, a shortage of qualified teachers has been a huge challenge, and most teachers do not have appropriate qualifications (Mamba, 2019:39). This challenge jeopardises the implementation of key educational policies. In this regard, the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is not an exemption because the majority of teachers are not qualified to teach in pre-schools.

2.3.18 Applicability of analytical framework to this study

The analytical framework was adopted for use in this study. The aim of using this framework was to evaluate whether the action policy strategies of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development are implemented in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). The SDG 4 is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that make up the 2030 Global Agenda. The second target of SDG 4 (target 2) specifically talks about early childhood care and development education. The target states that by 2030 both girls and boys shall be in a position to access standard ECCD programmes which would prepare them for primary schooling (Olowe, Rasheed & Falekulo, 2019:6). Based on the above quotation, the steps that would enable the implementation of early childhood education are briefly discussed.

2.3.19 Limitations of analytical framework

Analytical framework is time-consuming and requires a lot of commitment from researchers. This approach requires experienced researchers (Gale, Heath & Cameron, 2013:4).

2.4 Child rights-based approach

Child rights-based approach is a theory which affirms that education is a human right (Mwaipopo, 2017:28). This theory emphasises that children have rights including the right to education and that they should be involved in making decisions about what happens in their lives (Montag, 2020:11).

2.4.1 Assumptions of child rights-based approach

Child rights-based approach has a number of assumptions which are highlighted in this section. According to Mwaipopo (2017:28), child rights-based approach is based on a developmental framework which identifies, supports and evaluates children's needs and aspirations through reference to their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The proponents of the child rights-based approach (CRBA) argue that children are human beings and subjects of their own rights (Mwaipopo, 2017:28). The CRBA urges and empowers children to demand their human rights (Mwaipopo, 2017:28). The CRBA emphasises that children, as rights holders, are entitled to have access to basic services such as education and health and also that they must actively participate in the decisions that affect their own lives (Mwaipopo, 2017:29). This approach stresses that Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) lays a solid foundation for development of a child's personality, talents, and mental and physical ability (Mwaipopo, 2017:29).

As stated above, child rights-based approach adopts the principles of the UNCRC (Mwaipopo, 2017:29). The following are the guiding principles of the UNCRC:

- **Non-discrimination and equal opportunities:** All children have a right to access all human rights irrespective of their origin, age, sex, social status, mental or physical health and ethnicity or religious affiliation (Montag, 2020:4). In this regard, non-discrimination refers both to equality before the law and equality of access to essential social services such as education and health care, social security and resources such as water and information (Montag, 2020:4).
- **The child's best interest:** In everything that is done, the child's best interest should be taken into consideration. For instance, at school teachers should

ensure they take the learners' best interest as a priority, and everything that is taught and done should benefit a child holistically (Mwaipopo, 2017:28).

- **The right to life, survival and development:** It is the responsibility of governments to ensure that children's rights to life are protected and promoted (Mwaipopo, 2017:28). Governments should ensure that children live in healthy environments that are free from any harm (Mwaipopo, 2017:28).
- **Respect for the views of the child:** Children have the right to communicate their views, and their opinions should be highly considered (Mwaipopo, 2017:28).

2.4.2 Applicability of child rights-based approach to the study

This study uses the child rights-based approach to analyse the challenges that hinder the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in Lesotho pre-schools. This approach is applicable in this study. For example, CRBA stresses that ECCE should lay a solid foundation for advancement of a child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities (Mwaipopo, 2017:29). The main goal of this research is to examine the problems which hinder provision of ECCE in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong, hence the relevance of the CRBA to this investigation.

Another important point which makes the CRBA to be applicable in this study is the issue of education which is regarded as a human right of every child (Mwaipopo, 2017:29; Montag, 2020:4). This approach emphasises that children have a right to education and even those from less privileged families still have the right to access early childhood programmes (Mwaipopo, 2017:29). Education is a crucial weapon that could be used to empower young children, especially those who come from less privileged families to achieve economically and socially so that they could participate in all activities that take place in their communities (Mwaipopo, 2017:29). This approach considers ECCE intervention as not something that is meant to model children but rather something that helps them to be responsible and informed citizens (Mwaipopo, 2017:29). Therefore, this approach is applicable to this study because its purpose is to investigate the challenges that hinder the implementation of the NPIECCD in Lesotho pre-schools so that children's access to basic education is promoted.

2.4.3 Limitations of child rights-based approach

The child rights-based approach has a number of shortcomings. According to Mwaipopo (2017:29), this approach mistakenly assumes that children's rights are upheld everywhere in the world while in reality, about 60% of the world's children are denied their fundamental basic rights to social services such as education and health. Mwaipopo (2017:29) reports that the majority of children are denied their right to early childhood care and development. Furthermore, this approach does not take cultural differences that exist in Western and African countries into account (Mwaipopo, 2017:29). For instance, in the western communities, child rearing practices are geared towards autonomy and self-determination (Mwaipopo, 2017:29). In the African countries, on the other hand, child rearing practices focus more on social networks and kinship than individualism (Mwaipopo, 2017:29).

2.5 The scope literature review

In this study, the literature review focuses on the following subtopics:

- Challenges hindering implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools.
- Benefits of Early Childhood Care and Development programmes
- Physical infrastructure of the schools in the rural areas.
- The coverage of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development.
- Implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in public pre-schools.
- Recommendations that could be made to enhance the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in reception classes.

2.6 Challenges hindering the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools

This part of the investigation deals with the stumbling blocks which impede the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools.

2.6.1 Imposition of policies

There are different views about the challenges that hinder policy implementation. According to Imurana, Haruna and Kofi (2014:201), one of these challenges is the imposition of the policies by a government on the target group without prior involvement of the concerned people. Ggoobi (2016:18) adds that failure to involve the target group during the implementation of policies is a barrier that hinders implementation of policies. Ajulor (2018:4) also supports this view and argues that when the target group is not given an opportunity to contribute in policy formulation, such a policy will face problems during its implementation. The researcher concurs with these authors for a number of reasons. Firstly, stakeholders are reluctant to implement the policies which are imposed on them. Secondly, when the target group is not given ample time to learn more about the policies, they fail to implement them appropriately. Therefore, it is essential to sensitise the target group prior to the implementation of policies. For example, there are many policies in Lesotho which were imposed on the people. They include the Free Primary Policy and Curriculum and Assessment Policy. The Free Primary Education was imposed on the target group and it faced many challenges during implementation. These challenges include massive enrolments without enough resources and infrastructure. This problem led to a situation in which the quality of education is compromised. Other challenges which were brought about by free primary education are high teacher-pupil ratio and shortage of qualified teachers. The quality of education declined because the Government was bound to employ unqualified teachers due to the influx of learners who were showing up at schools (Khechane, 2016:3).

As already indicated in the above paragraph, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CPA) was also imposed on the target group and it also faced numerous challenges during implementation. The implementers were complaining daily because they were not given enough training hence they failed to implement it appropriately. Raselimo and Mahao (2015:10) indicate that the challenges that were brought about by this policy include large class sizes and heavy workloads on teachers and that as a result, it is difficult to monitor each learner's progress. Another challenge which made this policy to face an implementation problem is lack of teaching materials such as computers and textbooks. Lack of proper infrastructure for practical subjects such as Home Economics and Science and Technology is another challenge that made the CPA fail to be implemented properly.

2.6.2 Ambitious policies

The other challenge which impedes the implementation of public policies is excessively ambitious policies. Such policies are likely not to succeed because they require a lot of funding (Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka, 2013:64). Over-ambitious policies are those that are expected to achieve too much (Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka, 2013:64). Nnajiolor, Ifeakor and Mgbemema (2013:233) support this view by indicating that most people do not support policies formulated by a government because governments always formulate policies which raise people's expectations yet those policies end up not materialising. The government always disapprove policies and they cannot wait to see them materialise especially if they were formulated by the previous government Nnajiolor et al., (2013:233). Nnajiolor et al. (2013:233) further indicate that some of the government policies are unreliable due to their intricate nature. Iyanda and Bello (2016:63) attest that most of the government policies are unsuccessful and, in most cases, fail because they require a lot of funding to be fully implemented.

The overambitious nature of some of the policies is the other barrier that hinders implementation of policies. Okoro (2020:708) indicates that overambitious policies are not borne out of a good heart to bring growth and economic development, rather they are formulated to boost the ego of political leaders. He goes further to indicate that political leaders formulate policies that are in line with what the people require, but fail to make

thorough preparations for those policies to materialise. For instance, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy is a very good policy that could help learners to actualise their full potentials. However, it fails to attain its set objectives because it was implemented without thorough preparations. A lot of funding is required to implement this kind of policy, otherwise it could fail. It is true that overambitious policies are likely to fail because those who formulate them are probably not even interested to see those policies thriving. The suspicion is that they formulate them to gain political score and boost their ego. For instance, the implementation of the Free Primary Education in Lesotho is facing challenges because it requires a lot of funding to succeed. Its failure is seen by the rate at which new private schools are emerging. This shows that people have lost confidence in public primary schools.

2.6.3 Abrogation of policies

The other challenge that impedes policy implementation is abrogation of policies by government officials. Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2013:63) indicate that new political leaders always want to have their own policies. Normally, they do not pursue the policies that they did not formulate (Ikechukwu & Chukwuemeka (2013:63). This view is supported by Imurana, Haruna and Kofi (2014:200) who point out that new governments that come into office fail to take over the policies that were started by a previous government. They further argue that in rare cases the best they could do is to change the name of the policy or enlarge it (Imurana, et al.,2014:200). Okoro (2020:709) also supports this view. He argues that new political leadership is concerned with making its own policies (Okoro, 2020:709), and goes further to indicate that the existing policies which are already effectively implemented are normally shelved by the succeeding government administration. The researcher supports this view by stating that some of government policies are normally shelved when the new government comes to power.

2.6.4 Lack of political will

Lack of political will is the other challenge that hinders policy implementation. Nnajiolor, Ifeakor and Mgbemema (2013:230) point out that lack of commitment of the policy formulators affects policy implementation. Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2013:63) support this view and argue that policies that are formulated for the purpose of attracting

public recognition and attention are likely not to succeed. They continue to posit that these type of policies are not formulated to address the needs of the people, rather they are formulated out of selfish and egoistic interests of political leaders (Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka, 2013:63). Diakole, Ukah and Maduagwuna (2017:25) concur and state that public policies are formulated by top government officials and politicians while members of the public are not involved. They further show that when implementers lack will power towards any policy, they will not implement it appropriately (Diakole et. al., 2017:25). Okoro (2020:709) also indicates that the passion with which political leaders and government officials implement policies depends on whether the policy meets their personal interests and aspirations. Ogunode, Jegede and Ajape (2021:5) aver that lack of political will to implement policies is a great challenge that affects policy implementation. They continue to point out that the incompetence of political leaders to sign bills into law affects implementation of early childhood programmes (Ogunode et. al., 2021, 5).

The researcher supports the above-mentioned authors because there are many policies that were not implemented effectively because those who were supposed to implement them were not willing to do so, or perhaps were failing to follow proper implementation procedures. For instance, the School Feeding Policy that was formulated to help destitute learners at primary school level to attend school daily and to increase enrolment in schools is a typical example. The Government of Lesotho is failing to implement this policy accordingly because regularly schools run out of food commodities for a long period of time. This problem affects the learners who leave their homes with empty stomachs hoping to get something to eat at school. Learners who were motivated to go to school because of getting food often decide to drop out when there is no food. My school and other surrounding schools often experience this problem and, in my observation, the failure of policy implementation accounts for problems related to the School Feeding Policy.

2.6.5 Inadequate financial resources

Another constraining challenge to effective policy implementation is lack of adequate financial resources. Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2013:64) indicate that inadequate

financial resources are a barrier to policy implementation. Mwaipopo (2019:20) supports this view and shows that in the less developed countries, financial support is not considered as an important issue. Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka further point out that in the less developed countries, public financial support allocated to pre-schools is only 1% of their national education budget. This becomes an obstacle which inhibits proper execution of pre-school activities. Okoro (2020:708) also supports this view and argues that the government does not allocate enough funds for the implementation of policies. He further indicates that to implement policies, adequate funding is required in order to achieve the desired goals. Ogunode, Jegede and Ajape (2021:4) support Okoro by reiterating that inadequate funding is one of the major challenges that hinder the implementation of education policies. They further indicate that the budget allocated for implementation of policies is not enough and does not allow implementation to take place properly (Ogunode et. al., 2021). The researcher supports this view because many government policies fail to achieve the desired objectives due to lack of financial assistance.

2.6.6 Unqualified teachers

Another critical challenge that impedes policy implementation is lack of qualified teachers. In most of the pre-schools, the people who teach are unqualified teachers. Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2013:64) indicate that the lack of qualified teachers, especially relating to expertise and skilled manpower, leads to failure of effective policy implementation. Chukwbikem (2013:164) supports this view by indicating that children are special and deserve to be taught by people who are more knowledgeable and have sufficient skills in guiding them. He further argues that teachers should be in a position to identify children who are shy and help the extroverts to listen to them (Chukwbikem, 2013:164). Furthermore, qualified teachers are extremely important for effective early childhood education.

In support of Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2013:64) and Chukwbikem (2013:164), Mwaipopo (2019:23) attests that teachers with high levels of education, especially in a specified field, are capable of implementing policies appropriately compared to those with lower education. For instance, in the rural areas most of the pre-school teachers are

unqualified hence lack expertise. This acts as a barrier when they are supposed to implement educational policies effectively and efficiently. Okoro (2020:709) argues that requisite manpower and expertise are needed in order to effectively implement policies. He further indicates that lack of expertise impedes policy implementers from executing their duties effectively (Okoro, 2020:709).

In relation to issues pertaining inadequate human resources, the researcher supports the above-mentioned authors because many government policies fail to achieve the set objectives due to implementers who lack expertise. For instance, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009 would be a successful policy if the implementers were trained thoroughly. However, the training of the implementers was not done properly and they found it difficult to implement something that they were not conversant with.

2.6.7 Poor infrastructure

The rural pre-schools are affected by poor infrastructure which is not conducive to effective teaching and learning. This is another challenge that hinders the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the rural pre-schools of Lesotho. Mugambi (2017:102) argues that the less developed countries are lagging behind and do not consider infrastructure as one of their developmental priorities. In this case, Lesotho is not an exception pertaining to the issues relating to the poor physical infrastructure of schools. The physical infrastructure of most of the schools in the rural areas is not conducive to teaching and learning to take place effectively. Lesotho schools still have limited infrastructure to capacitate learners and teachers to deliver desirable education services. Mamba (2019:39) supports this view by indicating that most of the less developed countries are facing the challenge of poor physical infrastructure. This impedes most of the schools to attain the set educational objectives.

Mwaipopo (2017:25) argues that in the less developed countries, early childhood centres, especially those located in the rural areas, are facing a challenge of poor infrastructure. Poor infrastructure that lacks appropriate facilities and equipment hampers execution of teaching and learning services (Mwaipopo (2017:25). This bars proper implementation of the education policies. She points out that lack of proper infrastructure forces some of the parents to build stone and mud classrooms for their children (Mwaipopo, 2017:25).

Parents do this because they are eager to see their children attending school. Poor infrastructure at early childhood centres in the rural areas contributes to poor health and safety risks for young children.

In a similar vein, Niyi and Musa (2020:96) state that the operating buildings are not in good condition due to lack of financial assistance to repair them. This prevailing situation of the buildings has an unfavourable impact on the standard of teaching offered in such buildings and also impedes implementation of useful education policies such as the NPIECCD. Personal experience shows that the physical infrastructure in the rural areas of Lesotho is not child-friendly at all. Many of the classrooms are built with mud and stones and during winter it is very cold in such classrooms and they also pose safety hazards for teachers and children.

2.7 Benefits of Early Childhood Care and Development programmes

Giving children an opportunity to participate in ECCD programmes is beneficial to children in many ways. Some of these benefits include the following:

- Cognitive development
- Language development
- Preparedness for school
- Social and emotional development
- Evading poverty
- Provision of children with care and support
- Gender equality.

2.7.1 Cognitive development

In my view, early childhood programmes enhance the cognitive development of children. Thus, early childhood programmes are extremely crucial in children's lives. It is during this period that children go through the most rapid growth and development. Heckman (2000:2) argues that early childhood intervention is crucial in the formation of cognitive ability. Therefore, it is essential that children are given the opportunity to attend early childhood education prior to enrolling at primary education. In supporting this point, Ntumi (2016:56) indicates that the cognitive level of children is enhanced when they participate

in early childhood programmes. He argues that the literacy and numeracy skills of such children are enhanced and that this helps the children to be outstanding performers in all the subjects they do at school. Mwaipopo (2017:16) supports this view by postulating that pre-school programmes assist learners to acquire basic foundation skills that would enable them to have both short and long-term benefits in future. Mwaipopo (2017:16) further attests that the cognitive development of children is enhanced when they perform various activities. These activities may include identifying different colours, manipulating various objects, and solving simple addition and subtraction problems. Amadioha (2017:131) also supports this view by stating that early childhood education encourages children to be effective because they do their lessons in a fun and exciting manner. The cited literature shows that children who attend pre-schools have eagerness to continue with their studies. This is useful for teachers as such learners may aim high and ensure that their academic route becomes a success.

2.7.2 Language development

Early childhood care and education programmes help children to develop language skills. The early years of children are considered to be the years where children have an innate ability to learn any language successfully (Chukwbikem, 2013:16). Chukwbikem further notes that the language development of children who participate in early childhood education is enhanced (Chukwbikem, 2013:16). He goes further to indicate that children who participate in early childhood education develop a spirit of enquiry (Chukwbikem, 2013:16). Early childhood education inculcates the spirit of creativity through exploring the environment around the children (Chukwbikem, 2013:16). Mwaipopo (2017:16) maintains that the language is developed when children engage in group discussions with their age mates. Songs and reading of short stories also enhance children's language development (Mwaipopo (2017:16). The researcher supports this view because it may be true that the vocabulary of children who participate in pre-school education could develop at a quicker pace than that of children who are not exposed to pre-school education.

2.7.3 Preparedness for school

Children's participation in pre-school programmes assist them to be ready for primary education. Chukwbikem (2013:162) points out that early childhood education prepares

children for primary education level. Ntumi (2016:56) adds that early childhood education is pivotal for children from a low socio-economic background. He further reports that early childhood education programmes prepare children to be ready for primary education (Ntumi, 2016:56). The numeracy and literacy skills of children who participate in early childhood education are therefore enhanced (Ntumi, 2016:56). This is supported by Mwaipopo (2017:16) who argues that participation of children in early childhood education assists them to have positive attitudes towards schooling, thus ultimately reducing the dropout rate and class repetition. Furthermore, children who participate in early childhood education enrol for primary education at an appropriate age and this minimises delayed enrolment at primary school level (Mwaipopo, (2017:16). Moreover, children who participate in early childhood programmes have eagerness to complete their education and to become best achievers in life (Mwaipopo (2017:16). The researcher believes that it is important that children should be given the opportunity to attend pre-schools before enrolling into primary education level. Early childhood programmes assist children to adapt to the school environment more easily.

2.7.4 Social and emotional development

Early childhood education helps learners to be sociable and be able to work with other people without encountering problems. Evans (2000:16) points out that when young children are given attention from the early years, they are being given an opportunity to avoid problems that could emanate in future. Good care of young children is the best preventive measure to avoid disabilities and developmental delays (Evans, 2000:16). Maudeni (2013:56) maintains that early childhood education enhances children's emotions and social development while they also learn to socialise with their peers and teachers at school. More so, through these interactions with their peers and teachers, they learn to respect each other, share and care for one another (Maudeni, 2013:56). In addition, Chukwbikem (2013:162) illustrates that early childhood programmes teach children cooperation and team spirit. Ntumi (2016:56) reinforces this by attesting that early childhood education inculcates competence in children. They become emotionally and socially competent adults when compared to those who did not participate in early childhood education (Maudeni, 2013:56). He further argues that children who participate

in early childhood programmes are less involved in criminal activities and are likely to complete their high school education and go as far as to the institutions of higher learning (Maudeni, 2013:56).

Ntumi (2016:56) notes that early childhood education assists children to learn how to cooperate with others and this helps them to acquire the necessary skills that will assist them in the future. Amadioha (2017:131) illustrates that early childhood education programmes assist children to socialise with other people besides their immediate families. He further reiterates that early childhood education does not only assist children to socialise but also to make friends, hence early childhood programmes help children to overcome shyness and gain self-confidence (Amadioha, 2017:131).

Through practical experience, it is observable that early childhood education prepares children socially and emotionally. Children who participate in early childhood education do not encounter problems when they start primary education. The social skills which they acquire during the pre-school education level arouse their interests to work with other people and enable them to develop a positive attitude towards schooling. Pre-school education is therefore lauded for accelerating the social and emotional development of children which prepares them to cope in different social settings as they mature.

2.7.5 Evading poverty

Early childhood education gives destitute children an opportunity to partake in pre-primary schooling. Ntumi (2016:56) postulates that early childhood education is crucial for children from a low socio-economic background. Mwaipopo (2017:18) also adds that poverty is an obstacle to children in their early years of life and that pre-school education is the only weapon that can be used to help them to escape poverty. Educated people live a better life than those who are not educated (Mwaipopo, 2017:18). The academic performance of children who participate in early childhood education improves and this gives them an opportunity to be successful in life (Mwaipopo, 2017:18). Moreover, they stand a chance of holding high positions and having better earnings (Mwaipopo, 2017:18). Amadioha (2017:131) avers that early childhood education encourages children to learn in an effective manner because lessons are conducted in a fun and exciting manner. Children

become fond of reading stories, drawing and colouring pictures, learning new songs and discovering new things as part of their learning (Amadioha, 2017:131).

One has observed several times that in early childhood programmes, teaching and learning is done in a fun and exciting manner. This helps learners to learn and have fun at the same time. This serves as a form of intrinsic motivation to learners and they tend to have a positive attitude towards schooling hence they are likely to develop eagerness to continue with their studies up to tertiary level.

2.7.6 Provision of care and support for children

Mwaipopo (2017:18) states that health education, which is provided at early childhood centres, prevents poor health. Early childhood education gives children access to health services such as immunisation thus reducing high rate of child and infant mortality (Mwaipopo, 2017:18).

Early childhood centres are second homes of young children. Chukwbikem (2013:16) shows that early childhood education helps children with care and support while their siblings are doing their daily chores. Mwaipopo (2017:17) also points out that most of the early childhood centres are headed by females and this gives them an opportunity of playing a role of a mother figure for destitute children. The early childhood centres complement the care and education that children receive at their respective homes and in their families. In a nutshell, early childhood centres provide young children with care and support and parents do not have to worry about hiring people to look after their children because they are taken care of at these centres.

2.7.7 Gender equality

Early childhood education promotes gender equality. It gives both boys and girls equal opportunities to have access to pre-primary education despite their gender differences (Mwaipopo, 2016:17). Mwaipopo (2016:17) illustrates this fact by postulating that early childhood interventions serve as a panacea for social and gender inequalities for children during their early years of life prior to enrolling into primary education. The researcher assumes that early childhood education gives vulnerable and disadvantaged children from the rural areas the opportunity to develop the same way as those from privileged

families. This opportunity of having access to pre-primary education, thus, closes the gender inequality gap in education.

Mwaipopo (2017:17) points out that with pre-primary education, parents can have positive attitudes towards schooling and they can encourage their children to enrol in the education system even if they are old.

2.8 Scope of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development

The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development covers the following issues:

- Access to education
- Equity in education
- Gender equality in education
- Quality of education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:9).

2.8.1 Access to education

Access to education is one of the issues covered by the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. According to the Ministry of Education and Training (2013:35) the Policy stipulates that the Government of Lesotho is making some efforts to expand and promote integrated early childhood care and development (IECCD) throughout the country and also to achieve target 4.2 of goal 4 in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which states that by 2030, boys and girls should be in a position of accessing quality services at early childhood centres, this prepares them for pre-primary education which enables them to be ready for primary schooling. Furthermore, as reported in the NPIECCD, MOET is speeding up access to education through facilitating registration of all pre-schools for regulatory purposes (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:35). Therefore, according to the Ministry of Education and Training (2013:35), this initiative will enable the government to increase IECCD by giving home-based caregivers grants and also providing them with food at school which would

incorporate children with special educational needs (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:35).

Levesque, Harris and Russell (2013:1) define the term access as affordability, obtainability, openness, accommodation and acceptability. To ensure that access prevails the above mentioned issues should be taken into consideration, they should not be separated because they are the foundations of access (Levesque et al., 2013:1).

Todres and Higinbothan (2016:150) maintain that giving children access to education is very crucial because if they are not given an opportunity to attend school their rights are being violated. Access is all about being given an opportunity to do something or enter into a particular place.

The researcher observes that the principle of access to education is in line with the Constitution of Lesotho. Lesotho is a democratic country, therefore, the Constitution is a tool that is used as a guide in matters relating to social development. It is a supreme law and all laws and policies must align with it (Government of Lesotho, 1993:24).

According to the Government of Lesotho (1993:24), the Constitution of Lesotho, Section 28 (a) and (b) states that Lesotho shall endeavour to make education available to all and shall adopt policies aimed at securing that:

- Education is meant to develop children holistically.
- The government would ensure that primary education is free and obligatory to all.

In line with what is stated in the above paragraphs, the Government of Lesotho through the Ministry of Education and Training introduced the NPIECCD in 2013. This policy was introduced to give many vulnerable and disadvantaged Basotho children access to pre-school education, especially the reception classes where there is no payment of school fees at all. This implies that all Basotho children have access to education irrespective of their socio-economic background.

The issue of access to education as stipulated in the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development indicates that there are centre-based pre-schools formerly known as Early Childhood Care and Development centres, home-based pre-

school services that are supported by communities and reception classes for five-year old children that are attached to primary schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:87). The Policy goes further to indicate that the reception year services are going to be free of charge to give vulnerable and disadvantaged children an opportunity to attend pre-schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:87).

As it is a constitutional right to education for all, the NPIECCD advocates to improve and expand pre-school services for children age 3-5 (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:88). According to MOET, this will improve the transition of these children from home and pre-school to primary school.

2.8.2 Equity in education

Equity in education is another issue which is covered by the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (Ministry of Education and training, 2016:25). Thus, the issue of equity, as highlighted in this Policy, is in accordance with the Constitution of Lesotho, which postulates that all Basotho shall have equal access to quality education (Ministry of Education and training, 2016:25). The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development emphasises that particular attention should be paid to resource distribution patterns in Lesotho in order to identify and accelerate the correction of any disparities in education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016:25).

The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development states that equity can be achieved by giving children equal opportunities without non-discrimination (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:91). As a way of ensuring that equity prevails in Lesotho schools, the NPIECCD emphasises that stakeholders in education should abide by the Education Act 2010 which stipulates that children with developmental delays or disabilities should be given an opportunity to attend pre-schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:91).

The National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development over-emphasises the issue of equity in education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018:9). For example, the Policy stresses that orphans and other vulnerable children with special

needs shall also be enrolled in pre-schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018:9). The Policy further shows that inclusive education shall be provided in all public and non-public pre-schools (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:91). This is supported by the Lesotho Inclusive Education Policy which stipulates that the Special Education Unit within the Ministry of Education and Training advocates for the inclusion of children with special needs in the school system at all levels, for provision of curriculum materials in braille as well as training teachers in sign language (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018:9).

The key concepts related to equity are fairness and justice (Shale, 1999:48; Polvosen, Borup & Fosse, 2011:50). Therefore, when there is non-discrimination for people, they are given equal rights and opportunities. The NPIECCD encourages equity. That is, learners should be accepted in schools irrespective of their diverse educational needs. This Policy does not entertain any form of discrimination. Learners with special educational needs are given a chance to scaffold their potentials, and this helps them to make a positive contribution in society. Moreover, this Policy gives children with special needs access to opportunities which could enable them to function independently for the betterment of their lives.

The issue of equity in schools is important. However, the majority of teachers in the pre-schools are not trained to deal with children with special needs, particularly in the rural pre-schools. Most of the children in the rural areas do not attend school at all because of the treatment they get at schools. In a nutshell, the element of discrimination still prevails at schools.

2.8.3 Gender equality in education

Another policy issue which is addressed by the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is gender equality in education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17). According to the International Labour Organisation (2000:48), gender equality is all about considering and valuing the rights of men and women equally. Women and men do share the same rights and responsibilities and they should not be given opportunities depending on their gender (International Labour Organisation, 2000:48).

Furthermore, gender equality refers to enjoying equal rights, equal job opportunities and treatment by men and women and by boys and girls in all spheres of life (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2003:53). Thus, people's rights, responsibilities, social status and access to resources do not depend on whether they are born male or female (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2003:53).

One therefore understands gender equality as a state in which females and males are given equal opportunities and rights despite their gender differences. For instance, at work places people should be treated equally by being given managerial positions if they qualify for such positions. People should not be judged or treated according to their gender differences.

As stated in the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development, the mission of the MOET is to:

Ensure that all Basotho children grow up healthy, well nourished, safe and protected (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17).

In a nutshell, the researcher is aware that the NPIECCD advocates the element of gender equality in education. This policy is not gender-biased because it proposes that both boys and girls should be given an equal opportunity to be enrolled in pre-schools.

2.8.4 Quality of education

Another issue which is addressed by the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is quality of education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:37). This Policy states that to achieve quality services in ECCD, the MOET should collaborate with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) as a way of providing support to the in-service training of caregivers on how best they should provide care, stimulation and pre-schooling education to children (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:37). As a result of the influence of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development, out of 3,000 caregivers, more than 100 are in-service trained annually (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:37). Moreover, this Policy led to the

following achievements which contributed to the quality of education in the pre-schools in Lesotho:

- The Lesotho College of Education introduced a certificate in Early Childhood Education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016:37).
- Certificate in Early Childhood Education (CECE) graduates from Lesotho College of Education have been absorbed by the MOET in the teaching service (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016:37). This has not only contributed to quality education in the pre-schools but it also contributed to job creation and women empowerment in ECCD (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016:37). Thus, because of this development, CECE teachers are spread in both lowlands and mountains of Lesotho (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016:37).

2.9 Implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in public pre-schools

The main focus of this section is to establish whether the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is implementable in the public pre-schools of Lesotho. Literature reveals that educational policies are implementable if some of the following conditions are satisfied:

- Availability of resources (Viatonu, Usman-Abdulqadri & Dagunduro, 2011:213)
- Preparedness for policy (Viatonu et al., 2011:213)
- Political will (Diakole et al., 2017:25)
- Budget (Mwaipopo, 2019:20)
- Infrastructure (Ogunode, Jegede & Ajape, 2021:7)
- Trained teachers (Niyi & Musa, 2020:95)
- Collaboration between policy-makers and policy-implementers (Koloti & Jita, 2021:2).

2.9.1 Availability of resources as a condition for policy implementation

Availability of resources plays a vital role towards the implementation of educational policies. According to Viatonu et al. (2011:213), a policy is implementable only if resources are adequate.

lyanda and Bello (2016:63) point out that lack of appropriate modern teaching and learning resources in early childhood centres impedes educational policies to be implemented in public pre-schools. Amadioha (2017:132) adds that availability of resources for early childhood education programmes assists teachers to nurture and support children's development and also to implement the curriculum effectively.

The issue of the availability of resources is critical in the implementation of educational policies. Niyi and Musa (2020:95) observe that the lack of instructional resources in the classroom affect policy execution. They argue that there is no way that teachers can be able to implement the syllabus successfully without the necessary teaching and learning materials.

In the opinion of the researcher, the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is not foreseeable due to unavailability of financial resources and other educational resources. There is an acute shortage of teaching-learning materials and other resources which are needed for teaching and learning to take place effectively in the public pre-schools in Lesotho. In the rural areas of Lesotho, the reception classes do not have the needed and necessary instructional resources like story booklets and exercise books. Therefore, this situation impedes the implementation of this policy in the public pre-schools.

2.9.2 Preparedness as a condition for policy implementation

To ensure that educational policies are implemented accordingly, thorough preparations should be made prior to the implementation of such policies. Viatonu et al. (2011:213) maintain that a policy is implementable if thorough preparations are made prior to the implementation of such policy. Diakole, Ukah and Maduagwuna (2017:22) argue that failure to involve the beneficiaries in the policy process hinders implementation of the policy. Thus, the researcher supports this argument. It is highly unlikely that a policy can

be implemented if necessary preparations are not made for such an implementation. At this point, it must be stated that the purpose of this section is to respond to this question: Is the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development implementable in the public pre-schools in Lesotho? Therefore, the researcher's opinion is that this policy is not effectively implementable. The Ministry of Education and Training did not make the necessary preparations for the implementation of this Policy and as such, it was not successfully implemented.

2.9.3 Political will as a condition for policy implementation

When those in power lack political will to implement policies, such policies are likely not to be implemented appropriately. Diakole et al. (2017:25) attest that political leaders are not disciplined. Thus, they lack will power to implement policies. Ogunode et al. (2021:7) support this view by pointing out that in the less developed countries political leaders and top government officials lack political will to implement policies. Thus, this has a negative impact on implementation of educational policies. Ikechukwu and Chukwuemeka (2013:63) postulate that policies that are formulated to attract public recognition have a high possibility of not succeeding. Okoro (2020:709) observes that the passion with which political leaders implement policies depends on whether the policy meets their personal interests. However, if such policies do not meet their personal interests they choose not to implement such policies. The opinion of the researcher regarding this issue is that it is true that most of the government officials and political leaders do not have political will to implement policies. They formulate policies but fail to implement them because they do so to gain political support, not that they want such policies to benefit the public. Therefore, the researcher assumes that the NPIECCD is not implementable in the public pre-schools in Lesotho due to lack of political will.

2.9.4 Budgeting as a condition for policy implementation

In order to attain the desired objectives of a policy, there should be enough funding to ensure that all activities are taken care of. Mwaipopo (2019:20) avers that financial support is not considered as a critical issue in less developed countries when dealing with the implementation of educational policies. Mwaipopo further maintains that lack of financial support serves as an obstacle that inhibits proper execution of pre-school

activities. Okoro (2020:708) also points out that when financial support is not ample to implement policies, such policies normally fail to reach their set objectives. Financial support plays a vital role in ensuring that educational policies are implemented effectively. In addition, Viatonu et al. (2011:213) attest that implementation of educational policies cannot happen properly if there are inadequate financial resources. They observe that in most of the least developed countries, policies and budgeting are not taken seriously and this serves as a barrier to implementation of educational policies (Mwaipopo, 2019:20; Okoro, 2020:708, Viatonu et al., 2011:213).

The views shared above demonstrate that it is undeniable that when there is no funding, it is not easy to implement education policies because most of them require huge financial resources. Therefore, the NPIECCD is not an exemption in this case. It is not easy to implement this policy in the rural pre-schools due to inadequate financial resources.

2.9.5 Infrastructure as a condition for policy implementation

Lack of infrastructure is one of the factors which impedes the implementation of educational policies. Ogunode et al. (2021:5) postulate that lack of appropriate infrastructural facilities hinders the implementation of policies. Mwaipopo (2017:25) as well points out that early childhood centres located in the rural areas lack proper infrastructure which could facilitate educational policies to be implemented smoothly. This author points out that most of the pre-schools located in the rural areas lack appropriate infrastructure to ensure that teaching and learning take place smoothly and that this acts as a barrier to implement education policies (Mwaipopo, 2017:25).

In my opinion, it appears, therefore, that the pre-schools in the highlands are not in good condition for effective formal instruction. Most of them are not user friendly. In most of the pre-schools the buildings are not in good condition and the children are not even safe to use such buildings. This situation, therefore, makes the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the public pre-schools in Lesotho to be impossible.

2.9.6 Trained teachers as a condition for policy implementation

Employment of qualified teachers is essential in ensuring that quality education is attained and also that education policies are implemented effectively. Therefore, to implement educational policies, it is of paramount importance to employ teachers who have undergone thorough training. Ogunode et al. (2021:5) argue that shortage of professional teachers is a big problem that impedes the implementation of education policies in the developing countries. It is observable that teachers who lack professional training fail to implement education policies accordingly. For the fact that they are not professionals, they are not conversant with education policies and it is not easy for them to implement something that they are not familiar with. There is a shortage of qualified teachers in the public pre-schools in Lesotho and therefore, this problem makes the NPIECCD difficult to implement in the public pre-schools in Lesotho.

2.9.7 Collaboration between policy-makers and policy-implementers

Koloti and Jita (2021:2) aver that in the public pre-schools, policy implementation is unsuccessful due to lack of cooperation between policy-makers and those who implement it. The authors' further state that teachers play a vital role in the process of policy development and execution because they are the ones who ensure that alterations made or proposed concerning the policy needs to be practiced in a classroom situation (Koloti & Jita, 2021:2). The researcher supports the view that lack of collaboration between policy-makers and policy implementers is a problem which bars the implementation of policies. This could be one of the reasons accounting for the failure to implement the NPIECCD. In most cases, teachers and principals do not have information regarding the alterations made when new policies are introduced because they are not consulted when such changes are made. Some of the teachers do not implement policies in the public pre-schools because of unfamiliarity while some do not have knowledge in dealing with policy formulation.

2.10. Recommendations for enhancement of the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development

In order to add value to the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the reception classes, the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

- Employment of professional teachers
- Employment of professional policy-planners
- Adequate funding
- Provision of adequate infrastructure facilities
- Supervision of the implementation of policies
- Resources.

2.10.1 Employment of professional teachers as a requirement for enhancing implementation of education services

Employment of professional teachers is a strategy that can be used to enhance the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in reception classes. Sooter (2013:175) argues that the quality of teachers determines their expertise in implementing education policies. Furthermore, the author indicates that unqualified and unprofessional teachers fail to execute their duties effectively (Sooter, 2013:175). Amadioha (2017:133) as well points out that teachers are the agents who hold the key for the successful implementation of educational policies. Ogunode et al. (2021:8) suggest that governments should employ more professional teachers and deploy them in all public pre-schools.

It is apparent, therefore, that teachers should be professionals who have an understanding of educational policies and, in essence, it is easier for them to implement policies effectively. Therefore, it is important that the government of Lesotho should ensure that it employs qualified teachers to enhance the implementation of the NPIECCD in the reception classes.

2.10.2 Employment of professional policy-planners as a requirement for enhancing implementation of educational policies

Employment of professional policy-planners is always a good plan that can be used to ensure that the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is done properly. Ogunode et al. (2021:8) postulate that the formulation of education policies requires people with specialised skills and expertise. The authors indicate that policy implementation involves various aspects such as quantification, programming, stimulation and analysis. In this regard, policies should be implemented by skilful people who could execute their duties effectively (Ogunode et al., (2021:8). So, the Government of Lesotho should employ professional policy-developers. Okoro (2020:710) maintains that policy-formulators require a good understanding of the problems and needs of the people. This will help them to develop policies properly knowing fully the needs and problems of the people.

2.10.3 Funding as a requirement for enhancing implementation of educational policies

Adequate funding is crucial for policies to be implemented properly (Ogunode et al., 2021:8). These funds are needed in order to ensure that all the educational activities are done properly. In this regard, it is advisable that the government should fund all the reception classes to ensure that all educational activities take place properly to ensure that quality prevails in these classes.

2.10.4 Provision of adequate infrastructure facilities as a requirement for enhancing implementation of educational policies

The implementation of educational policies requires adequate infrastructure to enable a smooth execution of education activities. Ogunode et al. (2021:8) are of the view that infrastructural facilities are a necessity in enabling implementation of policies. In essence, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that all reception classes have appropriate infrastructure for effective teaching and learning. That is, in order for the NPIECCD to be effectively implemented, appropriate infrastructure should be availed.

2.10.5 Supervision of the implementation of policies as a requirement for Enhancing implementation of educational policies

Lack of supervision leads to failure of implementation of educational policies. Okoro (2020:710) observes that supervision and monitoring are crucial aspects that should be taken into consideration to ensure effective implementation of public policies. Furthermore, Okoro (2020:710) notes that poorly monitored and supervised policy implementation does not yield the desired results and that this eventually results in constant underdevelopment of a country. Ogunode et al. (2021:8) also note that governments should improve supervision of the implementation of educational policies in the early childhood programmes. The researcher supports the stance that improved supervision of policy implementation is likely to result in an effective implementation of educational services. On the basis of this, it is suggested that the MOET should closely monitor and supervise the implementation of the NPIECCD.

2.10.6 Availability of resources as a requirement for enhancing implementation educational policies

Resources are essential for smooth implementation of educational policies. The focus here is particularly on material resources. Chukwbikem (2013:164) points out that availability of educational resources plays a vital role in ensuring that educational policies are implemented properly. Ntumi (2016:57) postulates that in order to enable effective implementation of policies, quality resource materials should be available. Appropriate resources arouse learners' interest to learn (Ntumi, 2016:57). Thus, educational resources have a great influence on policy implementation. Therefore, it is crucial that the government, through the responsible ministry, should ensure that prior to implementation of any educational policies, there should be adequate resources to ensure smooth implementation of such policies.

2.11 Summary

This chapter covered the following sections: the challenges that hinder the implementation of the NPIECCD in the public pre-schools, benefits that young children receive by attending pre-primary programmes, the physical infrastructure of schools in

the rural areas, the scope of the NPIECCD and the recommendations that can be made to enhance the proper implementation of the NPIECCD. The next chapter deals with the methodology adopted in this study.

CHAPTER 3

Research methodology and design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology which encompasses research paradigms, research approach, research design, data collection, data collection procedure, methods of analysing data and ethical principles.

3.2 Research paradigms

This section focuses on the research paradigms adopted in this study. Savin-Baden and Major (2013:3) argue that through research paradigms, the researcher can have a better understanding of the nature of the study since it provides a clear understanding of the entire world of research. Khan (2014:298) describes a paradigm as a compilation of inferences which generalise a concept. Rakotsoane (2019:44) asserts that a research paradigm is a broad perspective that states major assumptions about the nature of knowledge, nature of reality, nature of values and value judgements.

3.2.1 Critical paradigm

Critical paradigm is adopted as one of the two research paradigms which are applicable to this investigation. This paradigm focuses on the social justice problems of the researched individuals and this paradigm was deemed applicable to this investigation. The intention of this research is to address the social injustices which are encountered by children in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong. This was attained by determining the challenges which impede the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the pre-schools.

Rehman and Alharthi (2016:57) postulate that a critical paradigm places its research on the social justice issues of people. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:35) observe that the aim of

critical paradigm in research is to address the political, social and economic issues which lead to social oppression. Critical researchers' main concern is to reveal the assumptions and experiences that restrict human independence with the purpose of transforming the condition (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:35). The authors further aver that critical methodology is dialogic in nature and helps to bring change to those who are oppressed.

Critical paradigm strives to ensure that social justice prevails. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:35) postulate that critical paradigm is suitable for investigations which focus on the study of social justice. This paradigm endeavours to empower the researched individuals (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:37). The above-stated characteristics of the critical paradigm qualify this paradigm to be applicable to this study. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of this study shares the same sentiments with this paradigm.

3.2.2 Interpretive paradigm

This investigation adopted the interpretivist paradigm. This approach is ideal for the qualitative kind of this investigation. Interpretive paradigm focuses mainly on the quality of an individual awareness and encompasses principles for the inferred connection between the inquiry of man and inquiry of community (Ralebese, 2018:74). The qualitative methodology shares its rational base with the interpretive paradigm as this paradigm is used to gain knowledge of the creation from a particular angle (Al-Ababneh, 2020:80).

The main goal of interpretive researchers is to gain knowledge based on the personal background of those being investigated, how they think, feel and how they do things in their habitual contexts (Al-Ababneh, 2020:80). The interpretive approaches rely on methods of data collection like interviews and analysis of existing texts. These methods ensure that adequate dialogue between the researcher and those with whom they interact in order to collaboratively construct meaning which is taken into consideration (Al-Ababneh, 2020:80). Furthermore, interpretive illustrates that there are many truths and multiple realities associated with qualitative research as it portrays all features of the qualitative approach discussed above (Al-Ababneh, 2020:80). Therefore, it was adopted in this study for this reason.

The researcher used interpretive paradigm to choose techniques of collecting data that enabled her to interact with participants socially in their own natural surroundings. This paradigm assisted the researcher to recognise the worth and extent of comprehending different participants pertaining to the challenges which impede implementation of the NPIECCD. The participants came from different schools, they had different qualifications and different work experiences, they observed the problems that hamper the implementation of NPIECCD policy differently as the interpretive paradigm considers numerous facts. Participants were able to explain their various judgements and understanding about the problems that impede implementation of the NPIECCD in the Lesotho pre-schools by stating their views and opinions pertaining to issues which block implementation of this Policy.

This investigation, as earlier stated, is based on the interpretive paradigm. Features of interpretive, as employed in this study, include the purpose of the research, nature of reality (ontology), nature of knowledge, relationship between the inquirer and inquired (epistemology) and the methodology (Rakotsoane, 2019:47).

3.3 Research approaches

This investigation used a qualitative approach. According to Jackson, Darlene and Sakile (2007:23), qualitative research is a method for searching and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to human problems. This investigation intends to gain in-depth information on the problem investigated. Qualitative research is interested in the thoughts, feelings, views or beliefs of individuals or the groups being investigated and all of them cannot be measured by using numbers (Khan, 2014:300). It focuses on understanding social phenomena and gives a rich verbal description of settings, situations and participants (Ahmad, Wasin, Ifran, Gogoi, Srivastava & Farheen, 2019:2829). Rakotsoane (2019:3) points out that qualitative research does not provide information that could be generalised to other larger groups. Therefore, this approach is suitable for this investigation because its intention is not to generalise the findings to the entire Lesotho pre-schools, but to reflect teachers, principals and parents' views about reception classes in Mokhotlong.

3.3.1 Qualitative research versus quantitative research

Qualitative research deals with open-ended and non-numerical data. Rakotsoane (2019:3) maintains that qualitative research is utilised to obtain detailed knowledge of how human beings behave, their backgrounds, attitudes, aims and encouragements. This is done through observation and interpretation. Qualitative research uses interviews to collect data (Mohajan, 2018:3). On the other hand, quantitative research employs natural science methods to produce numerical data and hard facts (Ahmad et al., 2019:2829).

Ahmad et al. (2019:2829) assert that quantitative research methodology uses mathematical and statistical methods to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between two variables. Rakotsoane (2019:2) observes that quantitative approach is used by researchers to test theories. This approach uses deductive reasoning. Rakotsoane (2019:3) further states that objectivity is of paramount importance in this approach. Researchers ensure that their behaviour, presence and attitudes do not have any impact on the research results.

3.3.2 Qualitative research approaches

This section focuses on five qualitative research methods, namely narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study. The applicability of qualitative research to this study is also discussed in this section.

3.3.2.1 Narrative research

Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou (2013:5) aver that narrative research is based on the assumptions that people give meaning to their lives through stories. Andrews et al. (2013:5) further indicate that narrative inquiries analyse stories in order to understand people, cultures and societies. On the other hand, Khan (2014:4) observes that narrative approach is used to explore the lives of individuals and that its focus is on the events that have occurred in their lives. On the other hand, Ntinda (2018:2) reports that narrative falls under qualitative research methodology and that this research uses many methods to collect data. It uses various methods of data collection, namely autobiographical writing, documents such as plans and bulletins, journals, field notes, interview transcripts, observations, storytelling, letter writing, pictures, metaphors and personal philosophies

(Ntinda, 2018:6). In relation to data analysis, Mohajan (2018:7) reiterates that narrative research uses narrative analysis to analyse data and that its focus is on the stories told by participants. Stories are taken as complete entities and this is undertaken when the study has contextual focus, such as stories about organisations and classroom (Mohajan, 2018:7).

3.3.2.2 Phenomenological research

Qutoshi (2018:219) observes that phenomenological research looks for the broad nature of an experience. Moreover, it attempts to have a full understanding of perceptions, perspectives and understanding of a particular phenomenon. Its main focus is on the experiences of people regarding a particular phenomenon (Qutoshi, 2018:217). Rakotsoane (2019:2) states that phenomenological research studies human behaviour in a deeper level of understanding by describing and interpreting fully the lived experiences, and that phenomenological approaches are effective in describing the phenomena rather than explaining subjective realities. Phenomenological research approach could be used on single case and multiple cases and in addition, data collection and meaning making in phenomenological research happen simultaneously (Rakotsoane, 2019:25).

Elkatawneh (2016:4) indicates that there are two types of phenomenological research, namely, hermeneutic phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology usually explains messages to explore existing experience to determine people's life experiences in accordance with a particular phenomenon (Elkatawneh, 2016:4). Transcendental phenomenology, on the other hand, usually focuses on people's sense of an existing practice of an impression of phenomenal (Elkatawneh, 2016:4). Its goal is to describe the nature of experiencing the investigated phenomena (Elkatawneh, 2016:4).

Rakotsoane (2019:26) points out that a phenomenological study uses long in-depth interviews. These interviews could be made several times with the same subject in order to come up with a full picture of experience with a phenomenon (Rakotsoane, 2019:26). Usually, a phenomenological study tries to answer the question what is like to experience such and such a thing (Rakotsoane, 2019:26). Therefore, looking at different

perspectives, a researcher is in a liberty to make some generalisation of what something is like as an experience (Rakotsoane, 2019:26).

The main objective of phenomenological research is to describe and investigate the phenomenon without theories or what causes them (Rakotsoane, 2019:26). A phenomenological study includes the four steps, including bracketing, intuiting, analysing and describing (Rakotsoane, 2019:26). These terms are described below.

Bracketing means to set aside the ideas that the researcher might have to avoid biasness of issues (Tufford & Newman, 2010:81). Intuiting is a state in which the researcher immerses herself or himself totally in the phenomenon that is investigated and he or she has a knowledge of what the participants are experiencing (Rakotsoane, 2019:26). Analysing, in a phenomenological research, is meant to achieve an understanding of patterns of meanings from data on life experiences (Sundler, Lindberg, Nilsson & Palmer, 2019:730). Analysis in phenomenological research includes categorising, coding and making sense of meaning of the phenomenon (Sundler et al., 2019:730). Describing involves a situation in which the researcher defines the phenomenon (Rakotsoane, 2019:27).

Phenomenological studies use small samples of about 10 participants. Data are collected through the use of interviews, diaries, drawings and observation (Rakotsoane, 2019:27).

3.3.2.3 Grounded theory

Elkatawneh (2016:8) postulates that grounded theory research design seeks to develop theory that is grounded in data. It is inductive in nature and investigates people's experiences, responses and reactions (Rakotsoane, 2019:20). Rakotsoane suggests that it is appropriate to apply grounded theory where there are no previous theories concerning what the researcher intends to investigate. Grounded theory uses interviews as a major tool for data collection (Rakotsoane, 2019:20). Conducting interviews continues until saturation takes place which ranges from 20 to 30, normally with the use of open-ended questions. In grounded theory, questions include what is the process to the core phenomena Elkatawneh (2016:8).

Elkatawneh (2016:8) explains data analysis in grounded theory as follows:

Data analysis in grounded theory is usually done through three stages. These stages include open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The last step that grounded theory uses to analyse data is discriminant sampling. With regard to discriminant sampling the researcher recruits a new group of participants, who are similar to the first participants. The researcher conducts the same interview questions. Discriminant sampling is meant to determine whether the new participants put on trial will come up with the same theory that was already created. This assists the researcher to validate whether the theory was precise or not.

Elkatawneh (2016:8) further argues that grounded theory's limitation lies on the obstacle of enlisting participants, prolonged data gathering, rigor to analyse data, biasness of the researcher and small number of participants.

Rakotsoane (2019:20) postulates that grounded theory data collection techniques involve participant observation and unstructured interviews. He goes further that in the social setting of the participants, the researcher carries out interviews and observes structure and patterns.

3.3.2.4 Ethnographic research

Elkatawneh (2016:9) maintains that ethnographic research originated from Anthropology and Sociology. Ethnographic research is a qualitative approach that focuses on the social and cultural world of a certain group (Elkatawneh, 2016:9). Ethnographic studies are characterised by culture, beliefs, behaviours, language and values (Elkatawneh, 2016:9). Ethnographic studies rely on up-close personal experience (Rakotsoane, 2019:16). In conducting this type of research, the researcher does not rely on observation only but she or he also becomes part of the group that is being studied (Rakotsoane, 2019:16). It focuses more on the role of culture in shaping the experience (Elkatawneh, 2016:9). Ethnographic studies use observations, field notes, in-depth interviews, artefacts, newspapers and journals to collect information (Elkatawneh, 2016:9). As a result, the ethnographic researcher usually immerses in the everyday lives of the group that is being studied (Elkatawneh, 2016:9). Researchers learn the culture of such group by being part of it for a certain period (Rakotsoane, 2019:16). In addition, ethnographic researchers engage themselves in the field notes and discussions (Rakotsoane, 2019:16). They do

this to find the main subject that narrate the group culture (Rakotsoane, 2019:16). This is how ethnographic data are analysed and the final report is presented narratively (Rakotsoane, 2019:16).

Elkatawneh (2016:8) points out that ethnographic research's limitations include a long period that is taken by the researcher in the field in order to understand the culture of a group. Additionally, the writing of the final report is not easy because it is to be written using a narration and also, for the fact that researchers are obliged to become part of the group which is being studied, they might lose their identity and ethics (Elkatawneh, 2016:8).

3.3.2.5 Case study

A case study is another type of qualitative research. It is an in-depth study of a problem, process, event, activity, single person or a group which serves as a case that is being investigated (Elkatawneh, 2016:10). Rakotsoane (2019:12) observes that case studies are normally used to narrow down a broad field of research into one or few researchable examples. Moreover, case studies are used when there is a new phenomenon to be studied, and they provide both descriptive and exploratory data (Rakotsoane, 2019:12).

Elkatawneh (2016:10) points out that case studies use various types to have a comprehensive knowledge of the case and that these kinds include instrumental case study, multiple case study and intrinsic case study. In one instrumental case study, the researcher's focus is on a matter and then picks a bounded case to illustrate the matter (Elkatawneh, 2016:10). With multiple case study, the researcher's focus is on an issue and many bounded cases are selected to clarify that issue (Elkatawneh, 2016:10). Intrinsic case study is where the researcher studies the case without focusing on the issue (Elkatawneh, 2016:10). The researcher chooses an unusual case and studies it (Elkatawneh, 2016:10).

Case studies use questionnaires, interviews, observations and written documents as data collection tools (Rakotsoane, 2019:13). Data are analysed through categories and interpretation by putting common themes together (Rakotsoane, 2019:13). However,

Rakotsoane (2019:13) notes that a case study has some limitations in that it is prolonged and costly, and it is also not easy to determine the case.

3.3.3 Applicability of qualitative research to this study

After having highlighted the different approaches of qualitative research, the researcher decided that qualitative research would be the most suitable methodology to adopt in this particular investigation. There are a number of reasons which urged the researcher to follow this route. For example, qualitative research gives researchers a chance to go deeper into the issues or phenomenon under investigation and the researcher can probe the participants/respondents (Mohajan, 2018:1). As such, choosing qualitative in this study assisted the researcher in gathering full and comprehensive data on the issue. This methodology is suitable for this study because it allowed explanations and probing for information in a natural setting to generate data. In using qualitative approach, the researcher gets involved with respondents during data collection in order to understand the situation better (Rakotsoane, 2019:3). Moreover, this study uses a qualitative approach over quantitative to address the research problem. Qualitative approach enabled the researcher to delve more into the studied problem (Aspers & Corte, 2019:4).

3.4 Research design

Research design is a planned structure which indicates the route that the researcher aims to take when conducting an investigation (Ralebese, 2018:72). In this investigation, a case study was adopted as a research design that underpins this study. The importance for using a case study was the fact that this design is suitable to uncover the challenges that hinder a smooth implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the Lesotho pre-schools. Yin (2014:2) considers a case study as an extensive study of a single situation such as an individual, family or organisation. In sharing the same view, Karlsson (2016:3) defines case study as a study of a person, a small group, a single situation or a specific case.

The other reason that influenced me to employ a case study in this particular investigation, is the fact that case studies are appropriate designs for conducting qualitative studies, just as this investigation is qualitative in nature (Creswell, 2014:30). A case study as the

appropriate design for qualitative studies, enabled me to get a richer and more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2014:30) pertaining to the problems impeding implementation of the NPIECCD in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong. A case study is often employed when the researchers intend to explore a programme, event and an activity in detailed manner (Creswell, 2014:30). Thus, using this research design enabled the researcher to identify problems that hamper implementation of NPIECCD in Lesotho pre-schools in-depth, as a unit or case to be studied. This investigation, employed the case study because it was more concerned with a specific situation which was impeding the implementation of educational policy in the reception classes in Mokhotlong.

Focusing on Mokhotlong reception classes as a single entity, one gained an understanding of the key strengths of a case study which was both exploratory and descriptive in nature, thus providing more detailed information about the challenges which hampered the implementation of the educational policy in the Mokhotlong pre-schools. This case study covered 17 reception classes found in Mokhotlong district.

3.5 Research population and sample

The focus of this section is on research population and research sample.

3.5.1 Research population

The population for this study comprised 17 principals and 17 teachers from the 17 pre-schools located in Mokhotlong district. Seventeen parents from that area, also participated in this investigation. These three groups were considered to be relevant to this study. That is, the principals, reception class teachers and parents are the stakeholders who should have a say in matters relating to proper and effective implementation of educational policies.

In research, population refers to individuals or groups of individuals whom the researcher wishes to investigate (Majid, 2018:3). Majid further asserts that careful selection of the target population should be geared towards deepening the understanding of the incident under investigation.

3.5.2 Research sample

The sample was made up of 17 principals, 17 reception class teachers and 17 parents, all of whom were sampled purposively. Sampling is a process where a representative group for a study is selected from the population (Bhardwaj, 2019:158). This study adopted the purposive sampling technique since it was the most appropriate technique to investigate the challenges that hinder the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in Lesotho pre-schools. This kind of sampling enabled data to be collected from various reception classes in order to understand the issue under investigation.

Crossman (2020:8) defines purposeful sampling as a type of non-random sampling in which a variety of data collection methods are used to discover all viable cases of extremely clear and not easy to reach data. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate for this investigation as it allowed the investigator to obtain reliable data in a relaxed atmosphere where the researcher and the participants felt at ease during the interviews. Selecting principals to be interviewed for this study was purposeful in that they are leaders at their respective schools and would understand the best processes to be utilised when implementing educational policies. As for teachers, they are the most important stakeholders who ensure that the implementation of educational policies is done properly. The selection of parents was also purposeful in that they are stakeholders in education because a school is a tripartite organisation and parents have a *locus standi* in their children's education. The limitation of purposive sampling, however, is that the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population.

This study employed non-probability sampling to select principals, teachers and parents. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012:4) attest that non-probability sampling gives the researcher an opportunity to choose a sample on the basis of her knowledge and credibility. Saunders et al. (2012:4) believe that non-probability sampling gives the investigator an opportunity to decide on what can be an acceptable sample size.

3.6 Data collection

Data collection is a procedure of collecting and monitoring information on the variables of interest in a stable and structured manner that allows researchers to respond to research questions, test hypotheses and evaluate outcomes (Kabir, 2016:202). Data collection element of research is identical to all disciplines of research including education and others (Kabir, 2016:202; Priya, Rajeshkumar, Gomathic & Sindhu, 2022:1). Kabir (2016:202) further demonstrates that even though methods may vary depending on the discipline, the value on ensuring that precise and sincere data collection stays similar. The main purpose of data collection in research is to obtain a standard evidence that interprets to rich data analysis that ensures credibility of answers that have been asked by the researchers (Kabir, 2016:202). However, regardless of the field of study or choice for defining data (whether quantitative data or qualitative data), precise data collection is important to provide the integrity of the research results (Priya et al., 2022.2). Most importantly, Kabir (2016:202) notes that both the choosing of suitable data collection tools and certainly depicting guides for their appropriate usage reduced errors to occur.

Kabir (2016:202) acknowledges that in conducting a study, data collection is one of the most crucial stages. Even if a researcher may have an outstanding research design, if she fails to collect the required data, that particular study cannot be easily completed (Kabir, 2016:202). Data collection is a very challenging job which requires accurate planning, diligence, discipline and persistence, and begins by deciding on the sort of data needed accompanied by choosing a sample from a particular population (Kabir, 2016:202). After the selection of a sample, the researcher has to utilise particular tools to collect data from that particular sample (Kabir, 2016:202).

Kabir (2016:203) and Priya et al. (2022.2-3) report that there are two categories of data, namely qualitative data and quantitative data. For this particular investigation, qualitative data were collected. At this juncture, it is proper to briefly describe what qualitative data entail. According to Kabir (2016:203), qualitative data normally do not use numbers and are usually descriptive or nominal in nature. Thus, qualitative data use words, phrases and sentences (Kabir, 2016:203). Predominately, qualitative data capture feelings, emotions and subjective perceptions of the participants (Kabir, 2016:203). Qualitative

data are aimed at addressing the 'how' and 'why' of the phenomena and tend to use unstructured and semi-structured strategies to collect data and explore the research problem fully (Kabir, 2016:203). Qualitative approaches usually use open-ended questions (Kabir, 2016:203).

Qualitative instruments comprise focus groups discussions and interviews (Paradis & Martimianakis, 2022:5). To explore the results and accidental outcomes of a programme, qualitative approaches are essential (Paradis & Martimianakis, 2022:5). They are, however, costly and prolonged to execute (Kabir, 2016:203). In addition, it is not easy to generalise the findings to other participants because they only apply to the involved group (Kabir, 2016:203). Qualitative data collection approaches play a vital role in impact evaluation by making it possible to comprehend the processes behind perceived outcomes and evaluate changes in people's perceptions of their well-being (Priya et al., 2022.3). According to Kabir (2016:203), qualitative instruments are characterised by the following aspects:

- They are open-ended and less structured, that is, researchers are at liberty to change the data collection strategy by adding, refining, or dropping techniques or informants.
- They use interviews; respondents may be interviewed several times to follow up on a particular issue, clarify concepts or check the reliability of data.
- To increase credibility of their findings they use triangulation, that is, researchers rely on multiple data collection methods to check the authenticity of their results.
- The findings are not generalisable to any specific population, rather, each case study produces a single piece of evidence that can be used to seek general patterns among different studies of the same issue.
- Regardless of the kinds of data involved, data collection in a qualitative study takes a great deal of time.
- The researcher needs to record any potentially useful data thoroughly, accurately, and systematically, using field notes, sketches, audiotapes, photographs and other suitable means.

- The ethical principles of conducting a study should observe data collection methods. The qualitative methods most commonly used in evaluation can be classified in three broad categories, namely, in-depth interview, observation methods and document review.

For this study, data were collected through the use of the following instruments:

- Questionnaires for teachers
- Interview schedule for parents.

3.6.1 Questionnaire for teachers

Questionnaires for teachers were used to collect data from pre-school teachers and principals from the 17 pre-schools in Mokhotlong. This instrument was developed by the researcher, and was employed to collect data relating to the following themes:

- Problems that hamper the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the rural areas.
- Benefits which young children get from participating in early Childhood Care and Education programmes.
- Physical infrastructure of pre-schools in the rural areas.
- The scope of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development.
- Implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in public pre-schools.
- Recommendations for enhancement of the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools.

3.6.1.2 Questionnaire types

A questionnaire is described as a research tool comprising of a sequence of questions and other prompts for the purpose of collecting data from respondents (Kabir, 2016:208). There are two types of questionnaire namely, open-ended and closed-ended questionnaire (Kabir, 2016:208; Priya et al., 2022.5). An open-ended questionnaire requires the respondent to formulate his/her own response while a closed-ended

questionnaire requires the respondent to select a response from a given number of choices (Kabir, 2016:209; Priya et al., 2022.5). Priya et al. (2022.5) note that the response options for a closed-ended questionnaire should be comprehensive and collectively single.

3.6.1.3 Advantages of using a questionnaire for data collection

For this particular investigation, the researcher opted for a closed-ended questionnaire. According to Kabir (2016:209) and Priya et al. (2022.5), questionnaires have a variety of benefits over some other types of surveys. Therefore, the following are some of the reasons which influenced the researcher to choose a questionnaire to collect data for this study:

- Questionnaires do not demand hard work from the one who asks questions as unwritten or other means of data collection and often have organised responses that enables the researcher to collect information easily (Kabir, 2016:208).
- It is effortless to collect and analyse the data according to the research needs (Priya et al., 2022.5).
- Within a short time of period large amounts of data can be gathered from many people in a relatively cost-effective way (Kabir, 2016:210).
- Questionnaires can be administered to the respondents by the researcher or by other people with little effect to its validity and reliability (Kabir, 2016:210).
- It is easy for the researcher to quantify results of the questionnaires and they can also be quantified by using software package (Kabir, 2016:210).
- It is easy to analyse data collected using questionnaires than data which are collected using other forms of instruments (Kabir, 2016:210).
- Questionnaires enable researchers to collect both subjective and objective data (Abawi, 2013:10).
- A questionnaire is also a good instrument of data collection that protects the privacy of the respondents (Abawi, 2013:10).

In a nutshell, a questionnaire was used to collect data because it was found it to be convenient and reliable to protect the privacy of the respondents. It also enabled coverage of a large sample of the study population within a short period.

3.6.2. Interview schedule for parents

Interview schedule for parents was used to collect data from the parents whose children attended pre-schools in Mokhotlong. The interview schedule was developed by the researcher.

This instrument was employed to collect data relating to the following aspects:

- Benefits which a child gets from attending a pre-school.
- Physical infrastructure of the pre-schools.
- Parents' recommendations relating to enhancing effective teaching and learning of children in pre-schools.

3.6.2.1 Interview types

Abawi (2013:13) describes interview as a less formal and appropriate instrument for data collection that enables researchers to have an opportunity to modify and probe participants where they need clarification of questions. According to Kabir (2016:211), interviews entail asking participants' questions and receiving responses from them. Interviewing has multiple forms, including: individual interviews, face-to-face interviews and face-to-face group interviewing (Kabir, 2016:211). The process of asking and responding to questions can be done telephonically or using other electronic devices such as computers (Kabir, 2016:211).

According to Kabir (2016:211) and Priya et al. (2022.6), there are three types of interviews and they are as follows:

- **Structured:** It entails asking respondents predetermined questions. These questions normally have a tight set of response categories (Kabir, 2016:211). There is generally limited angle for variation in responses and there are few open-ended questions included in the interview guide (Kabir, 2016:211).
- **Semi-structured:** This type of interview is dealt with in detail below.

- Unstructured: There is a formal conversation between interviewer and respondents (Priya et al., 2022.6). The one who asks questions has a crystal ambition in mind pertaining to the focus and goal of the interview, and this leads the conversation (Kabir, 2016:213). Normally structured interviews do not have interview guide, rather, the interviewer ensures that the relationships between her and the respondents is favorable, giving them an opportunity to open up and voice their views the way they feel comfortable (Kabir, 2016:213). Unstructured interviews use open-ended questions and they do not have much on the responses given by the informants (Kabir, 2016:213).

3.6.2.2 Semi-structured Interviews

For this particular investigation, the researcher opted semi-structured Interviews. Priya et al. (2022.6) and Kabir (2016:213) note the following qualities of semi-structured Interviews:

- The one who interviews and the respondents participate in an official conversation (Priya et al., 2022.6).
- The interview guide is used by the interviewer, which entails a list of questions and topics that require to be covered during the conversation, they placed in an orderly manner (Priya et al., 2022.6).
- Even though the interviewer follows a guide, she/he is able to stick to the topic and does not allow things that may lead her astray in the conversation (Kabir, 2016:213).

According to Kabir (2016:212), a situation or condition dictates which type of instrument could be used to collect data. For this particular study, the following reasons determined the choice of semi-structured interviews to collect data:

- Semi-structured interviewing is best used when a researcher notices that he/she cannot have an opportunity to interview someone more than once and when a researcher sends interviewers to collect data in the field (Kabir, 2016:212). It is precisely because of this reason that the researcher opted for semi-structured interviews to collect data for this study. That is, because of financial constraints

and a limited time, it was not going to be easy to meet the participants one more time. One of the reasons was that I was a part-time student and I was teaching in a remote place – Mokhotlong.

- The interview guide used in semi-structured interviews gives a crystal set of directions for interviewers and can give a solid and matching qualitative information (Kabir, 2016:212). Thus, this instrument gave me an opportunity to probe the participants in order to collect authentic information
- Normally semi- structured interviews are led by attention, informal and unstructured interviewing which gives the researchers an opportunity to establish a zealous comprehending of what to be discussed for establishing proper and relevant questions (Kabir, 2016:212). I decided to use semi-structured interviews as a result of this reason. For example, during the process of data collection for a pilot study, I was able to have some informal talks with the participants of my study. Furthermore, before the actual time of data collection, I was able to phone some of the participants and had an opportunity of having informal discussions on the planned interviews.
- Training interviewers to follow relevant topics and using open ended questions helps those who may stray from the interview guide an opportunity to identify and understand what the topic requires (Kabir, 2016:212).

3.7 Validity and reliability of questionnaire for principals and teachers

Validity means how accurate a research tool measures what it is planned to measure. Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the consistency of a measure (Rakotsoane, 2019:57). Therefore, to validate whether the research instruments were valid and reliable for data collection, a pilot study was conducted. Ralebese (2018:83) attests that a pilot study is a small study that a researcher conducts prior to collecting the actual data for the main study. Ralebese further notes that the main purpose for conducting a pilot study is to detect whether the research instruments and methodology are ample and suitable for that particular investigation.

3.7.1 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire for principals and teachers

The validity and reliability of the questionnaire for principals and teachers were ascertained by administering this instrument to five teachers and five principals. The outcomes of the pilot inquiry disclosed that some question items in these instruments were not clear to the respondents. Some of those question items were modified while others were replaced.

3.7.2 Validity and reliability of interview schedule for parents

The validity and reliability of the interview schedule for parents were ascertained by conducting face-face interviews. Three parents participated in those interviews.

3.7.3 Benefits of the pilot study

For this particular investigation, the pilot study enabled the researcher to test the data collection instruments prior to using them. This enabled modifications of the data collection instruments to be made where necessary. Thus, the pilot study helped the researcher to identify the question items which were not clear to the participants.

The pilot study helped the researcher to address vital issues pertaining to the actual study, they include procedure for data collection, the study objectives and the flaws which could emanate in the course of main research.

3.8 Trustworthiness and transferability of research findings

Trustworthiness and transferability are integral parts of empirical studies (Stahl & King, 2020:26). In qualitative research, trustworthiness entails credibility and transferability (Stahl & King, 2020:26).

3.8.1 Trustworthiness of research findings

Trustworthiness of the research findings entails authenticity or credibility of the data which a researcher has collected (Stahl & King, 2020:26). In this study, authenticity was ascertained through observance of research ethics such as honesty, integrity and fairness in the process of data collection.

3.8.2 Transferability of research findings

In this investigation, the trustworthiness of the research findings was established by employing various methods which made the findings of the study credible. Mamba (2019:50) states that sustaining reliability in investigation develops a degree of congruity that produces valuable findings. In following and maintaining the standard of reliability, this investigation employed standards adopted by Lincoln and Guba in (Mamba, 2019:50). Thus, according to Lincoln and Guba, proponents of qualitative research should always strive to achieve the issues of credibility and transferability (Mamba, 2019:50). Therefore, in this study, the researcher endeavoured to attain the principle of credibility by maintaining a systematic level of objectivity through observance of research ethics throughout the life span of this investigation

3.9 Ethical considerations

It is imperative to maintain ethics in the process of conducting research. Ethics are considered as the principles and guidelines that ensure that researchers conduct their investigation without causing any harm to the participants (Bryman, 2012:130). Bryman (2012:130) also believes that it is not wise to ignore ethical issues because they relate directly to the integrity of research and the disciplines that are involved.

It is crucial to adhere to ethical norms when conducting academic research. There are numerous reasons why it is crucial to ensure that ethical norms are adhered in an academic research. Firstly, norms in research encourage the aims and objectives (Kabir, 2016:206). Ethical norms help researchers to obtain understanding, authenticity, neutrality and to avoid errors (Kabir, 2016:206). For instance, ethical norms forbid forging, faking and fabricating research data (Kabir, 2016:206). Secondly, the fact that research usually entails teamwork and collaboration among people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical principles improve the values that are important to collective research assignment, such as trust, responsibility, respect and fairness (Kabir, 2016:206). For instance, codes in research, such as standards for writing, copyright and evident policies, information participating policies and privacy orders in peer review, are established to safeguard scholarly property interests while promoting cooperation (Kabir, 2016:206). This is so because it is unethical not to acknowledge other researchers work (Kabir,

2016:206). Thirdly, ethical norms assist researchers to ensure that they are responsible for any unethical they do (Kabir, 2016:206). Fourthly, ethical norms in research also assist to get help from the public (Kabir, 2016:206). For instance, researchers may get sponsorships if the sponsors trust that their work portrays good quality (Kabir, 2016:206). Lastly, ethical norms and standards of research help researchers to develop several vital moral and social values (Kabir, 2016:206).

Most importantly Kabir (2016:206) notes that lack of ethics in research can result in harming human beings and animal subjects, academics and the public in general. For example, a researcher who forges information yet working in a hospital or clinic can harm the patients or even cause their death.

3.9.1 Definition of ethics in research

Bless et. al (2013:28) consider ethics as the set principles that people should comply with. The authors continue to assert that ethical issues in research should comply with the standards that enable researchers to deal with other people in a manner that they would like to be dealt with during the course of their research. Mamba (2019:52) regards research ethics as those matters that comply to a code or a set of principles, which in and of themselves are based on the principle of reciprocity. In essence, ethics in research cover the basic issues of acceptable research process that ensures non-violation of participants' rights (Mamba, 2019:52).

3.9.2 Study ethical guidelines

This investigation was led by the following ethical guidelines:

- Informed consent
- Honesty
- Confidentiality
- Beneficence
- Integrity.

3.9.3 Informed consent

The researcher asked for a permission from the Ministry of Education and Training to conduct this research in schools. The approval to undertake this investigation was accorded by providing the researcher with a letter that she had to hand to the principals of the selected schools. The principals of the concerned schools were requested to grant the researcher permission to collect data in their respective schools. The aim of the investigation was clarified thoroughly to the principals with the aim to build rapport with the principals and to ensure that they understood the gist of the research objective.

A meeting with the participants was organised where the researcher presented her request. The participants were enlightened that even though they were asked to take part in this study, they are at liberty not to accept the plea if they felt uncomfortable (Australian Council for International Development, 2017:21). The participants were enlightened that agreeing to take part in this investigation was voluntarily and they could withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable (Creswell, 2014:95). The purpose of this study was well articulated to the participants prior they could give their voluntary consent. This was done to make sure that the ethical procedures of the study were carried out properly (De Jager, 2015:6). The topic was thoroughly explained to the participants and they were told how they should participate in this study by providing the relevant information. They were informed that they were going to be interviewed and the questions guiding them were given and discussed, and then the consent forms were given to those willing to participate.

3.9.4 Honesty

In research, honesty refers to the element of being fair, transparent and avoiding to be biased at all costs (All European Academies, 2017:6). Therefore, in this investigation, the researcher tried by all means to be fair, transparent and avoided being biased at all costs. The issue of honesty in relation to the possession of the gathered and examined data was emphasised (Mamba, 2019:52). In this regard, the researcher ensured that appropriate reference of data collected from the corresponding sources as a way of justifying its originality and possession was preserved (Mamba, 2019:52). Furthermore, the researcher strived to maintain appropriate interpretations of the scripts to avoid distorting their desired meanings (Mamba, 2019:52). This was done to ensure that the

meanings of the contexts under which literature was reviewed, and data were collected and analysed were maintained despite the fact that they were being converted into scholarly scope (Mamba, 2019:52). Documented opinions of people were taken into consideration, the researcher ensured that they were maintained and respected.

3.9.5 Confidentiality

The names of the schools were not included when reporting the research findings. In this way, the participants' rights were safeguarded. Pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality and protect the identity of the participants. The participants were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable,

3.9.6 Beneficence

Beneficence in research is concerned with the identification and assessment of the risks and benefits that a proposed study might encounter (Pieper & Thomson, 2016:3). To ensure that good relations with the participants were established, a thorough explanation of the purpose of conducting the study was given to them. The researcher ensured that issues pertaining to the health, safety and welfare of the participants were taken into consideration before embarking on this study.

3.9.7 Integrity

In research, integrity refers to operational attachment to the ethical principles and qualified standards necessary for the accountable practice of research (All European Academies, 2017:6). To ensure that integrity was maintained in this study, the researcher tried to by all means to comply with all the essential research regulations and codes.

3.10 Summary

This chapter reviews literature on the challenges which impede the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong. It also discusses the theoretical framework and the theories which are applicable in this investigation. Furthermore, the chapter outlines the ethical principles which the researcher observed during the process of data collection.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the analysis of data collected from 51 respondents. Graphs, bar charts, pie charts and frequency tables are used to present data. Thematic approach is employed to analyse data. Analysis is made in relation to six research questions posed in Chapter 1.

4.2 Background information on the research site

Mokhotlong is one of the poorest districts and the most remote district in the country (Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2008:2). It is 291.5 km from the capital city of Lesotho (Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2008:2). The area of Mokhotlong district is 1,573 square kilometres (Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, 2008:2). In this district, many pre-schools are attached to primary schools. The Ministry of Education and Training attached these pre-schools to primary schools to ensure that young children are given the opportunity to access early childhood education. However, children's access to these schools is not easy. That is, due to the terrain of Mokhotlong, it is not easy to reach these schools. The problem of children's access to schools is further compounded during the winter period. In winter, there is a lot of absenteeism because children must walk for long hours to go to school. Even those who manage to attend, it is not easy to cope in the classrooms as they are cold and there are no means to heat them. Furthermore, the classrooms are not conducive to learning because most of them are built with mud and stones, and therefore, they are cold. Another problem is high unemployment rate. As a result, the livelihoods of most parents in Mokhotlong is based on subsistence farming. However, some parents work as Local Government Councillors. Since, the majority of the parents are not employed, it is difficult for them to support the education of their children.

4.3 Background information on research participants

The sample for this study was made of 17 parents and 34 teachers. The parents who participated in this study were not educated; most of them left school at the primary level. The second group which participated in the study were 17 principals. As indicated earlier, the pre-schools in Mokhotlong are attached to primary schools, so the head teachers are automatically responsible for the preschools. Data were collected from the principals through questionnaires and all those who took part were qualified teachers. Their qualifications ranged from diplomas to degrees. Of the 17 principals who participated in this investigation, seven were diploma-holders while 10 held degree. Most of the diploma holders had work experience that exceeded ten years while the work experience of graduate principals exceeded 30 years. The third group which took part in this study was comprised of 17 reception teachers with the work experiencing that ranged from 3 to 10 years. This group completed the questionnaires.

4.4 Data presentation and analysis

This part focuses on the analysis of data collected from a sample of 51 participants. Qualitative data are analysed on the basis of the research questions.

4.4.1 Research question one

Data pertaining to research question one, are presented in Figure 4.1. These data were collected from the sub-sample of 34 respondents, namely 17 pre-school teachers and 17 principals. These data were analysed to answer the following research question:

- Which challenges are hindering the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Child Care and Development?

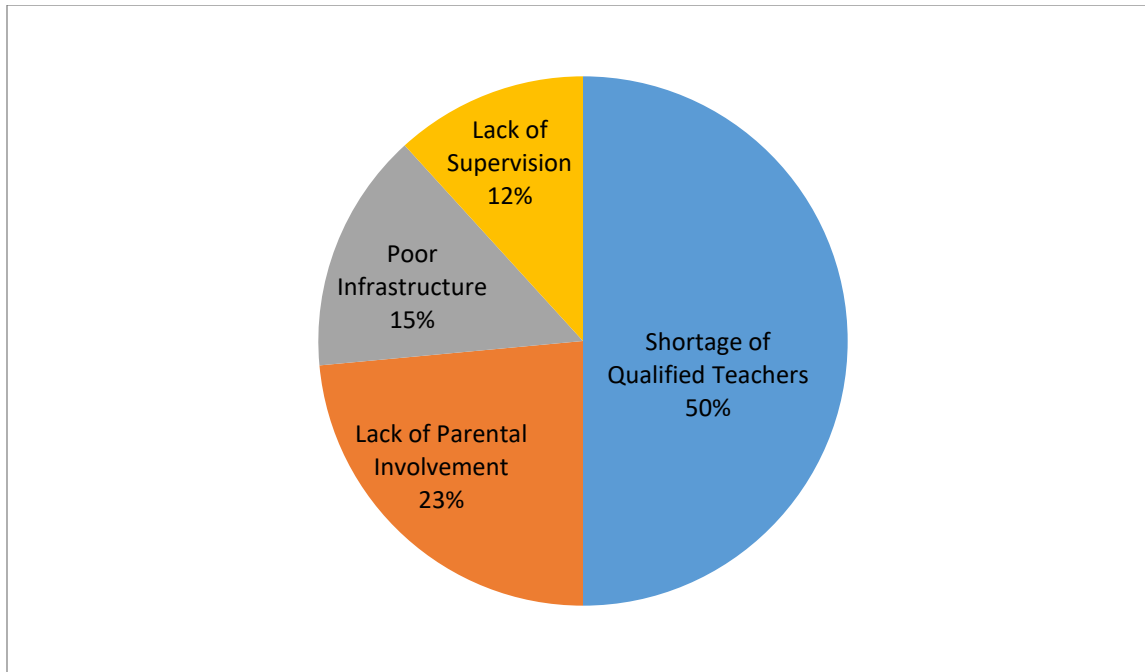


Figure 4.1: Challenges hindering the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in preschools

4.4.1.1 Shortage of qualified teachers

As portrayed in Figure 4.1, 50% of the respondents asserted that one of the challenges that hindered the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development is a shortage of qualified teachers. According to the researcher's observation, there is an acute shortage of qualified teachers in Mokhotlong. In every preschool in the district, this problem is prevalent and there are some schools that have only one qualified teacher. Therefore, there is no way that this policy can be properly and effectively implemented under these conditions because trained teachers are critical in the implementation of educational policies. Teachers who lack proper training in Early Childhood Care and Development didactics normally resort to teacher-centred approaches that put more focus on learners' academic performance than on developing learners holistically (Mwaipopo, 2017:42).

4.4.1.2 Lack of parental involvement

According to the data presented in Figure 4.1, another challenge that hampers the implementation of the policy is the non-involvement of parents in the education of their children. This was reiterated by 23% of the respondents. It has been observed that children whose parents are not actively partaking in their schoolwork, generally perform poorly in nearly every sphere of life (Fioriello, 2023:2). Such children tend to display deficits in cognition, developmental skills, rational skills, emotional skills and social skills. When there is no parental involvement in children's education, in most cases, children do not learn how to respect their teachers (Fioriello, 2023:2). Children learn about social cues and social hierarchy from their parents and if parents are not involved in their education, children begin to learn that their education is not that important (Fioriello, 2023:2). Children learn from their parents, therefore, their involvement in their children's education plays a vital role. Children spend a short time at school, compared to how much time they spend at home. Teachers usually assign children homework with the sole purpose of motivating them to continue the learning process at home. Parents must play an active role by showing up at school and working as a team with teachers. There is no way that the National Policy for Integrated Early Child Care and Development can be implemented effectively without the active involvement of parents. That is why the Education Act 2010 stipulates that parents must take part in the management of schools in Lesotho (Ministry of Education and Training, 2010:180).

As recently stated, a lack of parental involvement in the education of children is one of the main stumbling blocks which hamper the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Child Care and Development in Mokhotlong, which is the most rural and remote district. In this district, the majority of parents have low educational level and do not have interest in education because subsistence farming is considered important. Due to a lack of parental involvement in children's education, some children do not attend school regularly. Parents in the rural areas do not take education seriously and need to be sensitised about the importance of giving children a privilege to attend school daily. They should be made aware that their involvement in their children's education creates a connection between school and home. Thus, there is a need to strengthen and enhance

children's school activities at home. Some parents do not even attend parents' meetings convened by the schools. It is therefore difficult to implement educational policies without their involvement.

4.4.1.3 Poor infrastructure

As portrayed in Figure 4.1, 15% of the respondents reported that poor infrastructure was another challenge which impeded the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Child Care and Development in preschools in Mokhotlong. In this district, the physical infrastructure of the reception schools is not conducive to efficient teaching and learning. This study found that most of the reception schools did not have appropriate buildings, furniture and enough space to allow children to engage in outdoor activities and that the toilets and furniture were not suitable for use by young children. In some preschools, there are no chairs and tables, and children sat on the floor.

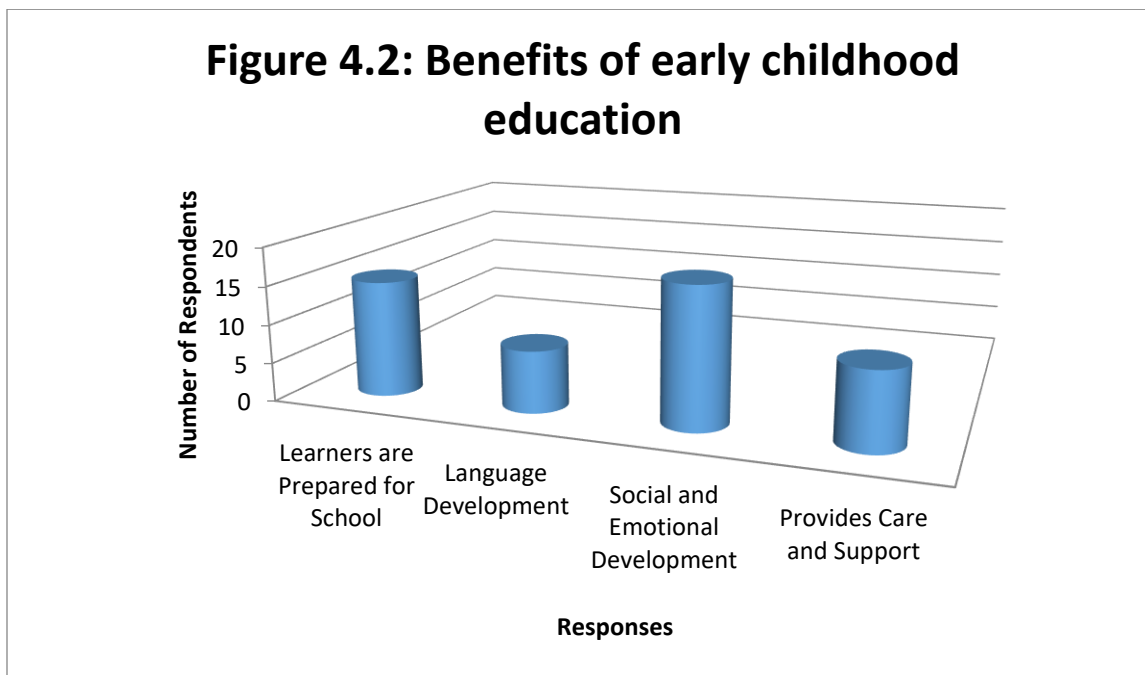
4.4.1.4 Lack of supervision

As depicted in Figure 4.1, 12% of the respondents stated that another challenge is a lack of supervision of the implementers of this policy. Poor supervision of the implementers of this policy is indeed a challenge which hampers its implementation. For example, the preschools in this district are not inspected. Some principals take the initiative and request inspectors to inspect their schools but the inspectors do not come to the schools on the grounds that there are no vehicles and that there is no money for buying petrol. The District Resource Teachers (DRTs) also do not visit the schools to support teachers. They give the same reasons as the ones given by the inspectors. It is highly impossible that the National Policy for Integrated Early Child Care and Development can be effectively and efficiently implemented under these circumstances. A shortage of qualified CECE teachers in preschools in Mokhotlong was also highlighted earlier in the study. Another problem is that 100% of the principals who are heading preschools in Mokhotlong are not knowledgeable in matters relating to early childhood education because they are not trained as CECE teachers. So, the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Child Care and Development is a futile exercise amid these problems.

4.4.2 Research question two

Data relating to research question two are presented in Figure 4.2. These data were provided by 51 respondents. The purpose of analysing the data in Figure 4.2 was to answer the following research question:

- Which benefits do young children get from participating in Early Childhood Care and Education programmes?



As reflected in Figure 4.2, 15 teachers reported that early childhood education prepares children for primary school education. For example, motor skills are some of the skills which children learn in preschools. They learn how to handle a pen and draw objects, people and animals. All these skills are of paramount importance for primary school education. Furthermore, early childhood education enables children to acquire literacy or know how to read and write. ECE is a foundation for primary school education. According to Pullein (2022:2), ECE is essential for children's intellectual development.

Another issue that must be emphasised in support of the view that early childhood education prepares children for primary school education is that ECE enhances learners' intellectual development which then provides a base for future learning, behaviour and

good health (Horizons, 2021:1). Thus, early childhood education serves as a strong foundation that helps children to develop the skills that they need to become well-functioning adults in their communities (Horizons, 2021:1). Moreover, preschool education helps children to develop positive attitudes towards schooling and ultimately reduce the high rate of dropout and class repetition in primary schools.

As depicted in Figure 4.2, eight participants reiterated that language development is one of the benefits of childhood schooling. Pre-school programmes indeed assist children to master communication skills. Children learn new words and how sounds work together. They learn how to put words together in various ways and construct sentences. According to Thomson (2022:3), during childhood, children have a great potential of learning speech sounds and to imitate adults. Young children are fond of making sounds and they make efforts to repeat sounds and words they come across (Thomson, 2022:3). In this regard, pre-school is the most ideal environment which promotes these activities. Pre-school teachers encourage children to say what they are thinking, tell stories and describe their feelings (Thomson 2022:3). Teachers play an important role in the language development of children in early childhood classrooms (Thomson, 2022:3).

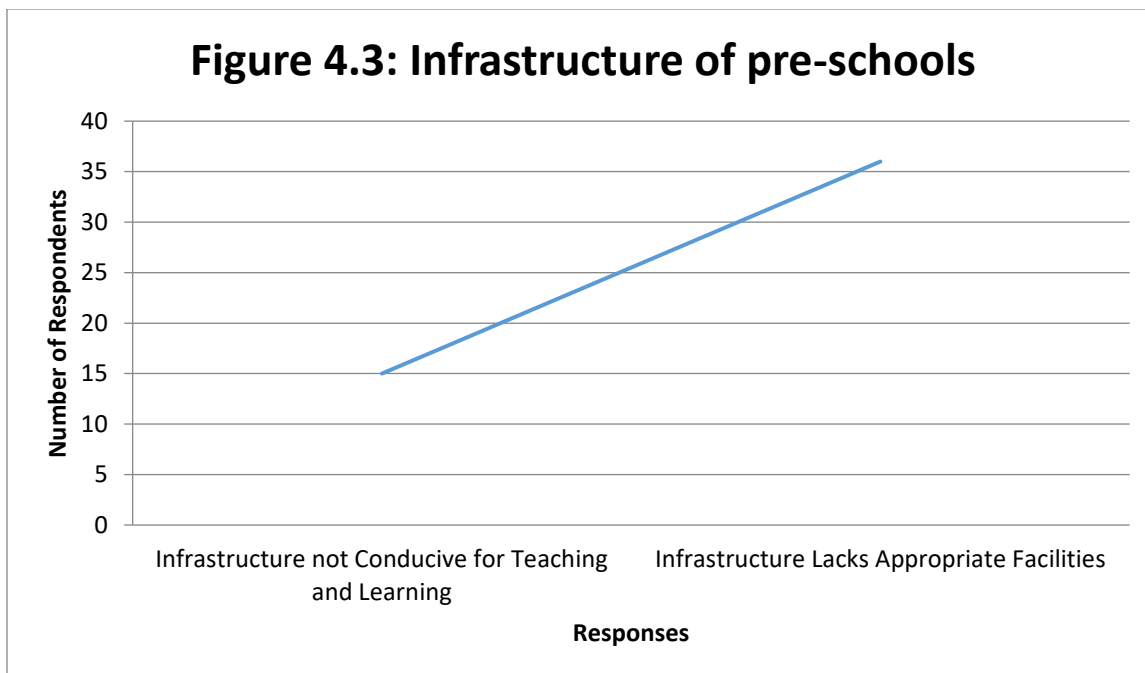
As illustrated in Figure 4.2, social and emotional development is the other benefit which children get in early childhood education. This response was suggested by 18 respondents. The researcher concurs with the view that social and developmental processes of emotions are another benefit of preschool schooling. Early childhood education develops children socially and emotionally in the first years of their lives. In the pre-schools, teachers help children to acquire social skills. They encourage children to interact with their peers. Early childhood education enables children to be comfortable with being away from their parents and to have curiosity and interest in learning. Children learn to respect others and their teachers. In pre-schools, teachers use teaching strategies such as play and exploration. In these schools, children learn in a safe and stimulating environment. Thus, preschool teaching is a base for a child's healthy learning and other aspects of development.

With reference to the data presented in Figure 4.2, early childhood education enables children to be provided with care and support. This issue was reiterated by 10

respondents. This type of education is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and for children whose parents are working. Early childhood programmes provide children with care and support. Early childhood centres help parents who are working to work peacefully knowing that their children are safe at the centres. The findings revealed that all children in the reception schools in Mokhotlong are taught by female teachers mainly because they know to take care of young children. Thus, early childhood centres serve as a second home for young children.

4.4.3 Research question three

Data pertaining to research question three, are presented in Figure 4.3. These data were collected from 51 respondents.



Data with regard to research question three are presented in Figure 4.3. These data were collected from 51 respondents. The purpose of analysing data in Figure 4.3 was to respond to the following research question:

- Is the physical infrastructure of the schools in the rural areas conducive to effective teaching and learning?

As shown in Figure 4.3, the infrastructure of schools in the rural areas in Mokhotlong is not favourable for efficient teaching and learning. This issue was pointed out by 15 respondents. The researcher concurs with the view that the infrastructure of schools in this district is not in good condition to execute teaching and learning effectively. The researcher was able to observe this problem during data collection. Some of the classrooms are dilapidated, while others are built with mud and stones. These conditions may make it difficult for children to concentrate during the cold weather.

With reference to the data presented in Figure 4.3, 36 respondents indicated that the infrastructure in pre-schools in Mokhotlong is poor and that there is an acute shortage of appropriate facilities and equipment. As stated earlier, this study found that most reception schools in Mokhotlong, do not have proper buildings for teaching and learning to occur effectively. There is inadequate furniture and space to allow children to engage in outdoor activities. For example, in these pre-schools, toilets and furniture are not suitable for use by young children. In some pre-schools, there are no chairs and tables, and children sit on the floor. Moreover, there are no outdoor playing areas for children. In these pre-schools, children do not have access to recreational tools such as toys and jumping castles.

4.4.4 Research question four

Data relating to research question four are presented in Figure 4.4. These data were collected from 34 teachers.

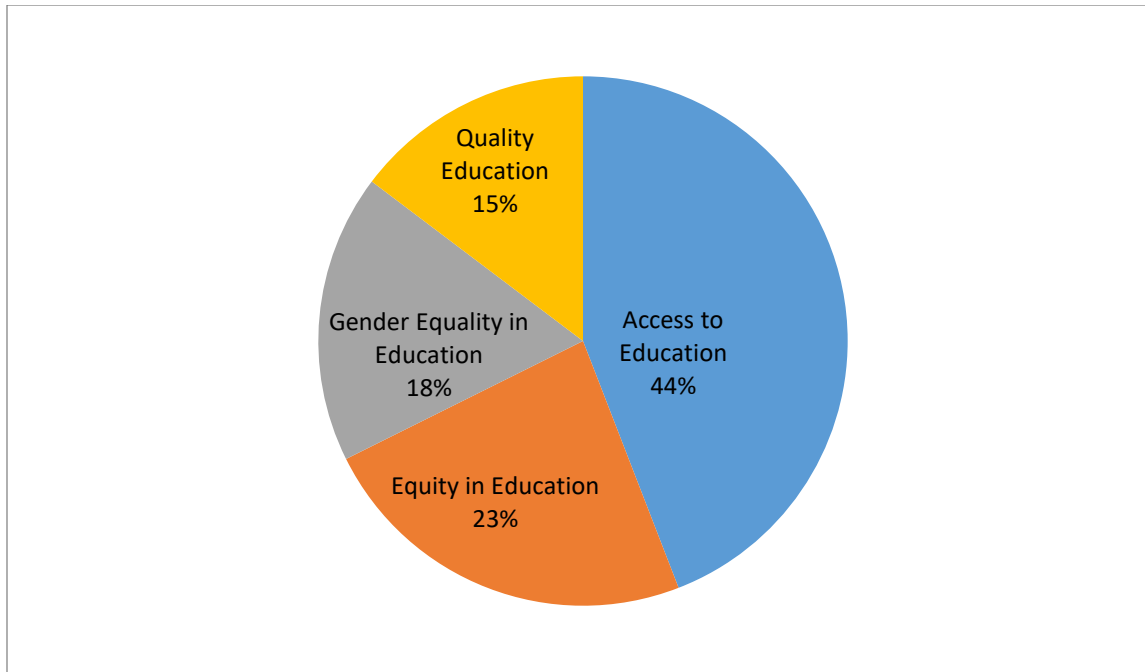


Figure 4.4: Scope of NPIECCD

Data pertaining to research question four are presented in Figure 4.4. These data were collected from a sub-sample of 34 teachers. The purpose of analysing data in Figure 4.4 was to respond to the following research question:

- What is the scope of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development?

As depicted in Figure 4.4, 44% of the respondents reiterated that the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development covers access to education. The main aim of developing the Policy was to attain target 4.2 of goal 4 in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which points out that by 2030, both girls and boys should be given an opportunity to access quality early childhood development programmes and pre-primary education in preparation for primary education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2016:35). Unfortunately, it seems highly improbable that this goal will be achieved by 2030. The most observable stumbling blocks which could impede the pre-

school education sub-sector to achieve this goal include a shortage of qualified teachers, scarcity of teaching facilities and poor buildings in rural pre-schools in Lesotho.

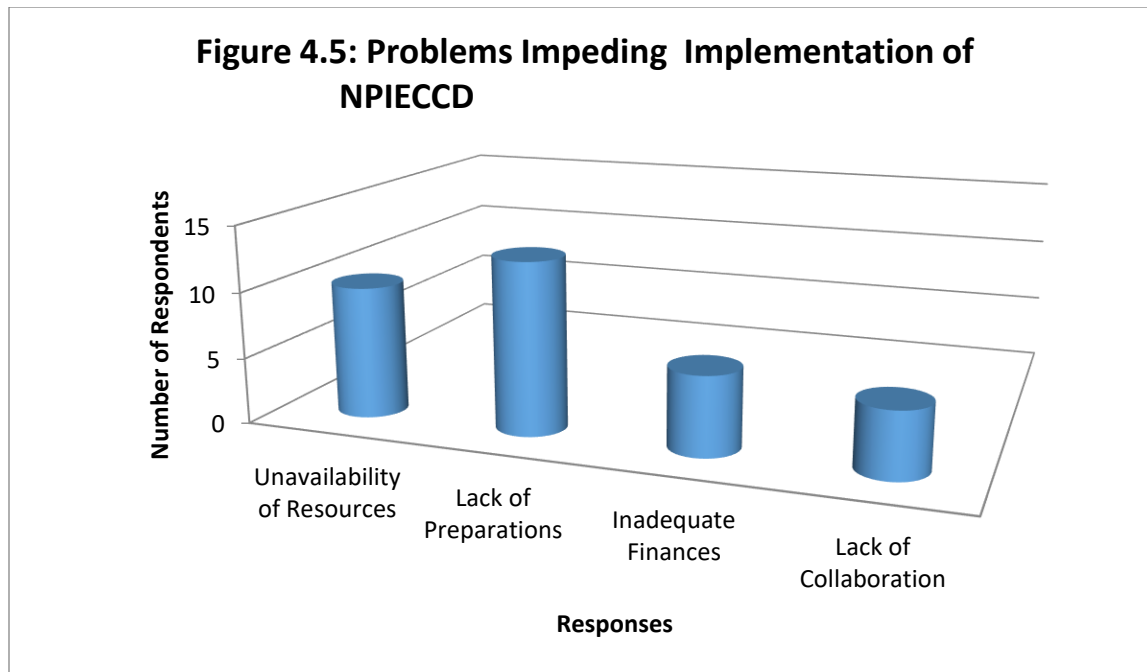
With reference to data presented in Figure 4.4, equity in education is another aspect that is covered by the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. This point was raised by 23% of the respondents. In contrast with what the Policy stipulates, the issue of equity in education does not prevail in rural pre-schools in Mokhotlong. For example, the outcomes of this study show that children with special educational needs are not accommodated in the reception classes in the rural areas of Mokhotlong. Another problem is that 99.9% of teachers in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong do not have relevant skills to teach children with special needs.

As reflected in Figure 4.4, gender equality in education is another aspect which is covered by the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. This issue was reported by 18% of the respondents. While the Policy stipulates that both female and male children should be given equal opportunities and rights in educational matters, the opposite is a reality in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong. The majority of the parents in Mokhotlong do not advocate the education of male children. For example, there are many cases in which male children between the ages of five and six are expected to look after animals.

As shown in Figure 4.4, quality education is another policy issue that is covered by the policy. This point was reiterated by 15% of the respondents. In the researcher's opinion, it is highly unlikely that quality education can be achieved in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong because the MOET is not making any efforts to encourage qualified teachers to be deployed to the pre-schools in this district. Furthermore, there are no attempts made by the MOET to develop the infrastructure in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong.

4.4.5 Research question five

Data regarding research question five are presented in Figure 4.5 and were collected from 34 teachers.



Data in relation to research question five are presented in Figure 4.5. These data were collected from a sub-sample of 34 teachers. The data are analysed to provide answers to the following research question:

- Is the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development implementable in the pre-schools in Lesotho?

As depicted in Figure 4.5, the unavailability of resources is one of the problems which impedes the implementation of the policy as reported by 10 respondents. As pointed out in the previous sections, there is a scarcity of appropriate teaching-learning facilities in Mokhotlong pre-schools. One of the factors which might exacerbate a shortage of resources in the reception classes in Mokhotlong is that the pre-schools are attached to primary schools and resources are shared. This, therefore, makes it difficult to implement the policy.

With reference to Figure 4.5, a lack of preparations prior to the implementation of a the ECD policy was reported to be another barrier by some 13 respondents. In most cases, the MOET fails to implement many excellent educational policies mainly because the Ministry does not prepare for the implementation of such policies. The Free Primary

Education policy is an example of policies which the Ministry failed to implement effectively because there were no preparations made prior to its implementation. One of the obvious indicators that the MOET is failing to implement this policy is that the cooks in primary schools are not paid in time. For example, since January to May in 2023, not even a single cook was paid.

As illustrated in Figure 4.5, inadequate financial resources is another barrier that impedes the implementation of the policy as indicated by six respondents. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons which MOET cites when preschool teachers in Mokhotlong request them to buy teaching resources for these schools is that there are no finances. This clearly shows that the MOET does not have finances to support the pre-schools.

With regard to data presented in Figure 4.5, lack of collaboration between policy makers and policy implementers is another stumbling block which hinders the implementation of the Policy as indicated by and five participants. The implementation of this Policy was imposed on the policy-implementers. For example, during the establishment of the pre-schools in Lesotho, the primary school principals were just instructed by the District Education Managers to prepare classrooms for the pre-school children. Those principals were not given furniture and teaching resources. As indicated in the previous sections, some of the reception classrooms are built with mud and stones. The other problem is that the District Education Managers do not visit the pre-schools, and there are no efforts made by the MOET to support the implementation of this Policy. Preschool teachers are not provided with technical support and teaching-learning facilities.

4.4.6 Research question six

Data regarding research question six are presented in Table 4.1 and were collected from 51 respondents.

Table 4.1: Recommendations for enhancement of the implementation of the NPIECCD

Responses	Number of Respondents
Employment of qualified teachers	10
Employment of professional policy-makers	8
Funding	6
Development of infrastructure	8
Supervision of policy-implementers	9
Availability of resources	10
Total	51

Data as presented in Table 4.1 are intended to answer the following research question:

- What recommendations could be made to enhance the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the pre-schools?

In responding to research question six, the respondents suggested the following recommendations:

- Ten respondents recommended that qualified teachers be employed in pre-schools.

- Eight respondents suggested that professional policymakers be engaged to guide teachers to implement education policies.
- Six people suggested that adequate funding is another issue that should be taken into consideration to ensure the smooth implementation of this Policy.
- Eight respondents recommended that infrastructure should be developed for pre-schools. They maintained that availability of teaching-learning facilities is also crucial for successful implementation of educational policies.
- Nine respondents reported that supervision of teachers during the implementation of this Policy is another critical issue which should be highly considered to enhance proper implementation.
- Ten participants noted that availability of resources in the form of books and toys is another important issue that should be considered when implementing this policy.

4.5 Summary

- This chapter presented the analysis of data in relation to six research questions. Thematic approach was used as a method of data analysis. The findings revealed that a shortage of qualified teachers in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong is one of the challenges which impede the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. This was reported by 50% of the respondents. Furthermore, the study revealed that poor infrastructure is another stumbling block which hampers the implementation of the Policy. For example, problems such as poor buildings and a lack of furniture were cited by the respondents. With regard to the benefits of early childhood education, this study revealed a variety of benefits of this type of education, which include children's preparation for entrance into primary education, language development and enhancement of children's social skills. With reference to what could be done to promote the implementation of this policy, the respondents suggested that qualified be employed in preschools, adequate funding be provided for

infrastructure and that there should be effective supervision of NPIECCD implementation.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research findings. In the process of this discussion, it will be established whether the findings of this study support or refute the findings of the previous studies.

5.1.1 Over view of the study

The main aim of this study was to uncover the challenges that hinder the implementation of the NPIECCD in Mokhotlong preschools. To address this aim, in chapter 1 I gave the introduction and background that states clearly the issues concerned with the NPIECCD. The statement of the problem, research questions, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study and definition of operational terms were addressed in relation to NPIECCD.

In chapter 2, I conducted a literature review that addressed challenges and benefits of participating in early childhood education. This section answered all the six research questions that guided this investigation. In chapter 3, the methodology used in this investigation was well presented. The research design, research paradigms and method of data analysis were presented. In chapter 4, the analysis and data presentation were based on all the research questions that guided this study. In chapter 5 discussions, conclusions and research findings were presented.

5.1.2 Findings of the study

This section highlights the findings of this study.

5.2 Challenges hampering implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development

This section focuses on the discussion of the challenges which hamper the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in preschools in Mokhotlong.

5.2.1 Shortage of qualified teachers

One of the findings of this study is that there is a shortage of qualified teachers which is a stumbling block that impedes the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. This finding is in line with the findings of previous researchers (Chukwuemeka 2013:64; Ikechukwu, Chukwuemeka, Chukwbikem & Mwaipopo, 2019:23; Okoro, 2020:709). For example, Ikechukwu et al. (2019:23) argue that unqualified teachers do not have the requisite expertise to implement education policies. This is because in most cases, unqualified teachers cannot manage the process of teaching and learning effectively which leads to poor academic performance of children. Therefore, it makes sense that a shortage of qualified teachers is a factor which hampers the implementation of this Policy.

5.2.2 Lack of parental involvement

Another finding of this study is that a lack of parental involvement in their children's education is an obstacle that blocks the implementation of the NPIECCD in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. A lack of parental involvement in children's education does not only jeopardise their resilience in the process of learning but it also hampers the implementation of education policies. On the other hand, parental involvement contributes significantly to the success of learners' education. For example, parents are valuable resources for the education of children because they are the first point of reference in matters relating to their learning. They guide children when writing homework and assignments. They have an ability to encourage children to study at home which means that while teachers manage children's learning at school, parents manage learning at home. Thus, parental involvement is very important in the academic life of a learner.

5.2.3 Physical infrastructure

Another finding of this study is that the physical infrastructure at preschools in the rural areas is not conducive to effective teaching and learning. This condition is said to be one of the challenges which hamper the implementation of the NPIECCD in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. This finding is in line with the results obtained by previous researchers (Mugambi, 2017:102; Mwaipopo, 2017:25; Niyi & Musa, 2020:96). For example, Mugambi (2017:102) reports that it is difficult to implement education policies in less developed countries because governments do not consider infrastructure as a priority. Therefore, it is concluded that inefficient implementation of this policy in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong results from poor infrastructure. For instance, in most pre-schools in Mokhotlong, the toilets and furniture are not in a good condition to be used by pre-school learners. In some schools, there are no chairs and tables for children.

5.2.4 Supervision

Supervision is another crucial aspect that should be taken into consideration when implementing education policies. This study revealed that supervision of the implementation of this policy is poor. Some 12% of the respondents reiterated that poor supervision is a challenge that hinders the implementation of the policy in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that this policy can be successfully implemented if teachers are not guided in the process of implementation. Another problem is that some teachers who are implementing this policy are unqualified.

5.3 Benefits of early childhood education

Early childhood education benefits children in a variety of ways, particularly preparing children for primary school education. This finding is congruent with the findings of studies by Chukwbikem (2013:162), Ntumi (2016:56) and Mwaipopo (2017:16). For example, Chukwbikem (2013:162) notes that early childhood education enables children to acquire numeracy and literacy skills, which are critical for success in primary education. Mwaipopo (2017:16) argues that early pre-school programmes help children to have a positive attitude towards schooling, which reduces dropout and class repetition in primary schools. Therefore, it is concluded that early childhood education familiarises children

with the business and operations of primary schools. For example, this type of education helps children to develop listening and questioning skills. It also teaches children about the importance of keeping timetables because children's activities in pre-schools are timetabled.

Another benefit which children get in early childhood education is language development. This finding is supported by researchers such as Chukwbikem (2013:16) and Mwaipopo (2017:16). These researchers argue that pre-school education enhances children's language development. One concludes that early childhood education plays a significant role in developing children's language since they learn new words and are taught to construct sentences. At this level of education, children learn how to read and write and also learn basic communication skills.

This study revealed that social and emotional development is another benefit which children get in early childhood education. This finding is compatible with the findings of Maudeni (2013:56), Chukwbikem (2013:162) and Ntumi, (2016:56) who pointed out that early childhood education programmes enhance children's emotions and social development. They note that in the preschools, children are given the opportunity to interact with their peers and teachers which enables them to learn to love, respect and care for one another. Therefore, it is concluded that early childhood education helps children to learn social skills. For instance, in the pre-schools, through interactions with one another, children learn the skills of making friends and develop a sense of self in relation to other learners. They learn a variety of skills such as communication skills, cooperation, taking care of one another, empathy and skills of avoiding conflict.

5.4 Infrastructure of pre-schools in the rural areas

One of the findings of this study shows that the infrastructure of pre-schools in rural areas is not conducive to effective teaching and learning. The respondents reported that this is one of the factors which hinder the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the pre-schools in rural districts such as Mokhotlong. This finding is in line with the findings of previous studies which point out that less developed countries are facing an acute challenge of poor infrastructure (Mamba, 2017:39; Mwaipopo, 2017:25). This has a negative impact on the educational

outcomes of basic education in Lesotho. Mwaipopo (2017:25) notes that the infrastructure in rural schools lacks appropriate facilities and equipment which affects the execution of effective teaching and learning. For the fact that I teach in one of the primary schools in Mokhotlong means I personally witness and experience some of these problems which are brought about by poor infrastructure in pre-schools in Mokhotlong.

5.5 Coverage of National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development

One of the findings of this study revealed that children's access to education is one of the aspects covered by the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. This point was reiterated by 44% of the respondents. As earlier indicated, the MOET, developed the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development with the aim of attaining target 4.2 of Goal 4 in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which states that by 2030, girls and boys should be given an opportunity to access pre-school programmes in preparation for primary education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:35). However, it seems that it will be very difficult to achieve this goal by 2030. The most obvious problems which are likely to hamper the pre-school education sub-sector to achieve this goal include a shortage of qualified teachers, a high rate of unemployment, a lack of teaching resources and poor infrastructure in rural pre-schools in Lesotho.

This study revealed that equity in education is one of the most important issues which covered by the policy. This point was highlighted by 23% of the respondents. This finding is in line with what is stated in the Policy that all children, irrespective of their developmental delays or disabilities, shall enrol in pre-schools in Lesotho (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:91). However, the issue of equity in education is not implemented in most pre-schools in Mokhotlong. Empirical data for this study indicate that children with special needs are not enrolled in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. That is, children with special needs are not registered in pre-schools in Mokhotlong. In a nutshell, with regard to what is obtainable in pre-schools in Mokhotlong, an issue of equity in education, is something which is only recorded in the documents but in reality, is not implemented.

Empirical data for this study indicates that gender equality in education is another policy aspect which is covered by the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. This finding is consistent with the mission statement of Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD) which stipulates that all children irrespective of their gender shall have access to free pre-school education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17). However, contrary to what the mission statement states, gender equality in education seems to be something which cannot be easily achieved in rural areas in Lesotho, particularly in Mokhotlong. For instance, in Mokhotlong, the majority of community members do not appear to be interested in the education of boys. Earlier sections indicated that there are many cases in which male children between the ages of five and six look after animals.

Quality education is another component covered by the NPIECCD. This issue was reported by 15% of the respondents. This finding supports issue 4 of the NPIECCD which stipulates that the Ministry of Education and Training shall provide quality pre-school education for children between three and five years old (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17). However, contrary to the efforts made by the Government of Lesotho to improve the quality of education, the quality of education is deteriorating every year in the country (Ministry of Education and Training, 2013:17). This is a serious problem which is experienced by teachers and lecturers in all the sectors of education in this country. Currently, there are many cases of secondary school learners who cannot read and write. For example, in 2022, a high percentage of learners failed Grade 11 examinations because of this problem. Secondly, there is an outcry over tertiary students who cannot express themselves in English. This problem is common in tertiary institutions in Lesotho.

5.6 Problems impeding implementation of National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development

This study showed that the unavailability of resources is a problem which impedes the implementation of the policy in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong. This finding corroborates the results of previous studies that a lack of teaching and learning resources inhibits implementation of education policies (Amadioha, 2017:231; Iyanda & Bello, 2016:63; Niyi

& Musa, 2020:15). This is valid because there is a shortage of teaching materials in preschools in Mokhotlong. For example, there are no books in some pre-schools in this district. This problem hampers the implementation of this Policy.

A lack of preparation was found to be another challenge that hinders the implementation of the Policy in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong. This finding is in line with the finding of a study conducted by Viatonu, Usman-Abdulqadri and Dagunduro (2011:213) which revealed that failure to implement many education policies in developing countries is the result of a lack of adequate preparations. The researcher concurs with this view as it is not possible that a policy can be effectively implemented if the necessary preparations are not put in place for such implementation. Therefore, the policy under study is not implementable due to a lack of thorough preparations by the Ministry of Education and Training.

Inadequate financial resources were also found to impede the implementation of the NPIECCD. On the basis of this finding, one concludes that failure to implement this Policy is the result of lack of financial resources. The Government of Lesotho is facing a problem of lack of finances which was exacerbated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is not enough money to build classrooms, train enough pre-school teachers and buy textbooks for pre-school children.

Another finding of this investigation shows that lack of collaboration between policy makers and policy implementers is a challenge which hampers the execution of the policy in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong. This view is supported in that lack of collaboration between policy-makers and policy-implementers is a factor which bars the implementation of this Policy in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong. There are a number of indicators which illustrate this point, which include lack of financial resources to fund the implementation of the Policy, unqualified teachers teaching in the pre-schools, lack of guidance from the Ministry of Education and Training on the operational guidelines for policy implementation and poor infrastructure. In order for a policy to be implemented, the policy-makers must take a leading role. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong.

5.7 Recommendations

There is a variety of challenges which impede the implementation of education policies in developing countries. These problems range from poor infrastructure, a lack of political will, and a shortage of human and financial resources. On the basis of the findings of this investigation, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Development of pre-school education sub-sector should be prioritised.
- Qualified teachers should be employed to teach in pre-schools.
- The implementation of education policies in pre-schools should be closely supervised by personnel in the Ministry of Education and Training.
- The inspection of preschools should be carried out at least annually as a means of empowering teachers in this sub-sector.

5.8 Suggestions for further research

The following proposed for future research:

- To investigate whether the NPIECCD is line with the global changes especially the 4th industrial revolution.
- The challenges and possibilities for protecting the right to education in Lesotho preschools particularly in the rural areas.
- Factors impeding the implementation of the NPIECCD in Lesotho preschools.

5.9 Conclusion

It is concluded that ineffective implementation of education policies in Lesotho is the result of insufficient financial resources, poor infrastructure and ineffective coordination of resources.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

COVERING LETTER

The National University of Lesotho
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Telephone: +266 22340601

<http://www.nul.ls>



P.O. Roma 180
Lesotho

20th February 2023

The Principal
Mokhotlong

RE: 'Malikoro Aletta Tiela (200903570)



This letter introduces 'Malikoro Aletta Tiela as a student registered in the Faculty of Education for Master of Education in Educational Management, Leadership and Policy Studies. She is in the final stages of her study and must collect data. Her topic is: "analysis of the challenges hindering implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the pre-schools in Mokhotlong" and she wishes to interview teachers and parents. I thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

Isaiah M. Makhetha (PhD)

Cell: 58032961

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Appendix B

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

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P.O. Roma 180
Lesotho
Southern Africa

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

31st July 2023

The Supervisor
Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education
NUL

Dear Supervisor

Re: proof of language editing

This letter proves that I read and edited 'Malikoro Aletta Tiela's dissertation titled: ***Analysis of the challenges hindering implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the Pre-schools in Mokhotlong.***

Sincerely,



Mahao Mahao (PhD)
Department of Language and Social Education
Faculty of Education,

Appendix C

TURN-IT-IN REPORT

Educational Management

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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SIMILARITY INDEX

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Internet Source

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Appendix D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Instructions: Tick the response which best suit your answer to the question. Put a tick in the appropriate brackets next to your choice.

1. Which challenges are hindering the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development?

- (a) Lack of teaching and learning resources. []
- (b) Overcrowded classes. []
- (c) Shortage of trained teachers. []
- (d) Less emphasis on play and discovery learning. []
- (e) Lack of parental involvement in children's education. []
- (f) Lack of supervision. []
- (g) Poor infrastructure. []
- (h) Imposition of policies. []

2. What are the benefits of early Childhood care and education?

- (a) Language development. []
- (b) Preparedness for school. []
- (c) Social and emotional development. []
- (d) Evading poverty. []
- (e) Early childhood centres provide young children with care and support. []

3. Is the infrastructure of the pre-schools in the rural areas conducive to effective teaching and learning?

- (a) Poor infrastructure that lacks appropriate facilities and equipment. []
- (b) Not conducive for effective teaching and learning. []

4. What is the scope of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development?

- (a) Access to education. []
- (b) Equality in education. []
- (c) Gender equality in education. []
- (d) Quality education. []

5. Is the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development implementable in the public pre-schools in Lesotho?

- (a) Unavailability of resources impedes the implementation of this policy in the public pre-schools. []
- (b) Lack of preparations has led to failure of the implementation of this policy. []
- (c) Lack of political will makes the implementation of this policy to be impossible. []
- (d) Inadequate financial resources lead to failure of the implementation of this policy. []
- (e) Lack of infrastructure impedes the implementation of this policy. []

(f) Shortage of qualified teachers hinders the implementation of this policy. []

(g) Lack of collaboration between policy-makers and policy implementers impedes the implementation of this policy. []

6. What recommendations could be made in order to enhance the implementation of the National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development in the pre-schools?

(a) Employment of professional teachers. []

(b) Employment of professional policy-planners. []

(c) Adequate funding. []

(d) Provision of adequate infrastructure facilities. []

(f) Supervision of implementation of this policy. []

(g) Availability of resources. []

Appendix E

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

1. Which benefits do you think your child gets from attending a pre-school?
2. Is the infrastructure of the pre-school where your child attends conducive
For effective teaching and learning? If not, mention three things which make it not
to be conducive.
3. Which things do you recommend that the Ministry of Education and Training
should do in order to enhance effective teaching and learning of children in the
pre-schools?