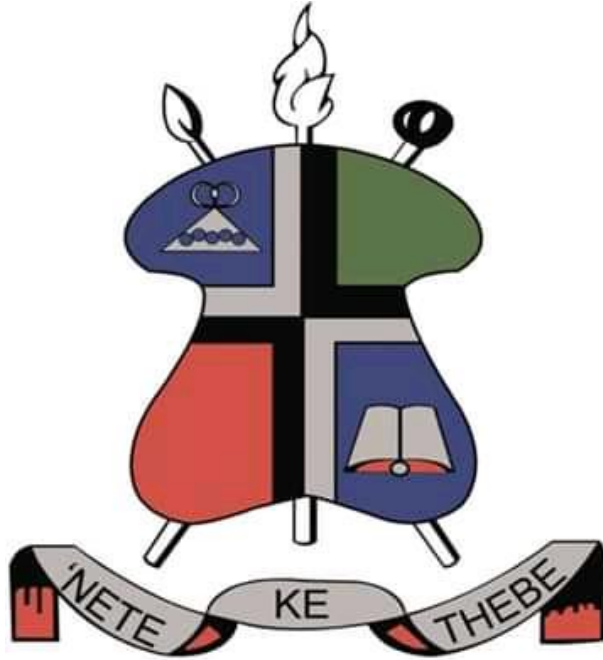


Exploring Teachers' Perceptions on History Public Examinations Performance in Five High Schools in Maseru



BY

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Submitted in fulfilment for the Master of Arts in Education (History Education)

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DECLARATION

I, Kaizer Felix Nonyana, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own original work and it has never been previously submitted to any other academic institution. I, further, declare that the work presented will not be submitted to any other academic institution for consideration for a Masters' degree award. Aside from that, no information from other academics is included in the dissertation, and where it is, appropriate citation is supplied.

Signature  _____

Date _____ 12/09/2024 _____

SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval.

Signature_____

A small rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "W.S." followed by a stylized flourish.

Date_____12/09/24_____

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. Moreover, the study intended to explore the views of teachers on the status of History in the national curriculum, considering learners' performance in History public examinations. The study was further aimed at investigating how History teachers perceive the factors influencing the performance of History learners in public examinations. Therefore, understanding the status of History in the national curriculum and factors influencing History learners in public examinations can help raise awareness among educational stakeholders, including History teachers, on how to deal with the unacceptable status of History and the negative factors influencing the performance of History learners. The study was to further explore teachers' suggestions on mitigation of History learners' performance in public examinations. In order to achieve the main purpose of the study, the research employed the interpretivism paradigm as the theoretical lens of this study. Further, the study employed a qualitative study and a case study design. Five schools and seven History teachers were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Open-ended questionnaires, field notes, and semi-structured interviews were used to generate data. The study further used both manual inductive and deductive thematic analysis to analyse data. The findings of this study uncovered that History is performed poorly in public examinations. The findings further revealed that despite the benefits of History in the national curriculum, this poor performance may result in an unacceptable status for History, which may lead to the subject being completely removed from the syllabus. The semi-structured interviews discovered the following major factors influencing the performance of History teachers: improper training of History teachers on how to teach, unclear communication between Examination Council of Lesotho and History teachers, and incompetence of History teachers. As a result, the study recommends training in-service History teachers on how to teach, mark, assess learners, and use technology in the teaching of History. The study also recommends that teachers should give learners more frequent assessments and immediate feedback and correct them to enhance their performance in History public examinations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	Curriculum and Assessment Policy
COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
ECOL	Examination Council of Lesotho
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
JC	Junior Certificate
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
PSS	Personal, Spiritual and Social

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1 Introduction

The performance of learners in History public examinations is a crucial aspect to be considered by educational stakeholders. The aim of this chapter, which functions as the introduction to this study, is to give a justification for the purpose of the study. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in public examinations in three high schools in Maseru. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, this chapter consists of background to the study, a statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions. The study further consists of the significance of the study, definition of terms, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, theoretical framework, and chapter outline. Below is the background to this study.

1.2 Background to the study

The academic performance of learners in a certain discipline is very important because it may determine their academic success or failure in that particular discipline (Narad & Bilkees, 2016). More often than not, academic performance may either be satisfactory or unsatisfactory, depending on the ability of an individual learner. According to Singh (2021), satisfactory academic performance is when learners obtain higher grades in examination scores, whereas unsatisfactory performance can be described as when learners obtain lower grades in examination scores.

Apart from that, satisfactory academic performance may be defined as the high levels of academic achievements and successful completion of learning objectives (PubGenius Inc., 2024). On the contrary, Al-Zoubi (2015) defines unsatisfactory academic performance as a performance that falls below the expected standard, as adapted by the examiner and other educational stakeholders. In assertion, Drugs.com (2024) agrees that unsatisfactory academic performance occurs when the grades of learners steadily and rapidly dwindle over time.

Based on the findings of Adedoyin (2013), it can be noted that satisfactory academic performance acts as the foundation of learners' careers and may determine their successful development. As identified by Narad and Abdullah (2016), satisfactory academic performance of learners signifies

their enhanced career visions and a protected future. In alignment with this, Singh (2021) asserts that the satisfactory academic performance of learners is crucial for securing good jobs, a better career, and a quality life. If that is the case, satisfactory public examination performance can provide learners with opportunities to achieve professional and economic success.

However, Kaur (2019) accentuates that the professional success of learners is largely attributed to the continuous mediation of teachers, who are key factors in their learners' academic achievement. In concurrence with Kaur, Johnson (2017) affirms that teachers play a crucial role in motivating learners and creating a supportive environment that enhances their learning outcomes. In other words, it would appear that the success or failure of learners is attributed to their teachers, who act as curriculum implementers and facilitators during the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is in this regard that History teachers may have better perceptions of the performance of their learners in public examinations than any other stakeholders.

Above all, it is important to define "perception, academic performance," and "public examinations" as essential terms used in this study. According to Amodu (2006), perception refers to the process of gathering and interpreting information from the world around us. Similarly, Keengwe et al. (2016) define perception as the ability of a human being to understand or interpret information to add meaning. In congruence with McDonald (2021), the study takes perception as an individual or group's unique way of understanding a phenomenon, which involves processing stimuli, memories, and experiences. Further, StudySmarter (2024) defines perception as the process of selecting, organising, interpreting, becoming aware, and producing stimuli into a meaningful and coherent worldview. Seemingly, perception is the process of understanding or interpreting the world around us, particularly in the academic performance of History learners on public examinations in this case.

Other than that, Lamas (2015) defines academic performance as the measure of the reflective and reactive abilities of learners, indicating their learning outcomes based on specific course objectives. Furthermore, the Education Policy on Ballotpedia (2023) adds that academic performance refers to the evaluation of the achievement of learners in various academic subjects. With that in mind, the literature suggests that academic performance can be evaluated through grade point average (GPA), standardised tests, and the high school graduation rate. Among other things, the Asia Development Bank (2017) affirms that academic performance can be evaluated

through classroom tests, national assessments, and public examinations, as defined in detail in the following paragraph.

According to Bernard (2009), public examinations may be defined as high-stakes standardised tests used by external agencies such as the Examination Council of Lesotho, in the context of Lesotho, to select learners for higher education. In support, Rind and Mari (2019) assert that public examinations refer to the systems that are used by the government universally in order to evaluate the abilities of learners for the next level of education. Therefore, it would appear that the above authors defined public examinations as summative assessments written by learners for their certification from one level of education to the next level of education, which in this case would be from high school (secondary) level to tertiary level.

Taking that into consideration, the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), through Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) and Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy (LBECP), mandates formative assessment (diagnostic and continuous), monitoring educational progress, and summative assessment (selection and certification) methods to evaluate educational and curriculum achievements (MOET, 2009; MOET, 2021). Fundamentally, Ismail et al. (2022) emphasise the importance of formative assessment, such as quarterly tests, in determining the success of summative assessment (a public examination) in selecting learners for higher education. As a result, it would seem that public examinations of learners are very important in determining their academic and professional progression.

Moreover, the 2009 Curriculum and Assessment policy mandates summative assessments at grades 10 (Junior Certificate) and 12 (Senior Secondary), respectively, but this does not happen as planned because the current public examinations are conducted once at grade 11. Bearing that in mind, Limene (2018) suggests that reducing written public examinations for learners may negatively impact their academic performance. On the contrary, the Ministry of Education and Training (2021) through LBECP recommends a rescheduled public examination for learners at the end of grade 12 due to CAP challenges.

What is important, Adedoyin (2013) emphasises the benefits of public examinations, including selection of suitable candidates, control over school curriculum, and provision of certificates after program completion. Taking that into consideration, in high schools, learners are taught different subjects, which may assist them in selecting suitable careers based on their interests (Lamas, 2015).

Aiming to achieve its objectives, the Ministry of Education and Training, through its curriculum frameworks (CAP and LBECP), has included History as an elective subject in the curriculum under Personal, Spiritual, and Social (PSS) (Social Sciences), where learners can make their choice (MOET, 2009; MOET, 2021).

On the face of it, throughout adolescence and adulthood, learners consistently engage in societal and national activities. A typical example is one of the 18-year-old and above youths who are allowed to participate in local government and general elections in Lesotho. This assertion is supported by the National Assembly Electoral Act of 2011, section 5, subsection (1) which outlines that individuals aged 18 and above in Lesotho are eligible to register for elections and vote (Government of Lesotho, 2011). In the opinion of Lamas (2015), it is at these stages where learners have the right to express their views about their society and the country they live in. Keeping that in mind, teaching History as part of the high school curriculum may be very crucial during these periods.

In conformity with Julina (2020), it should be noted that learners are future leaders who need to be instilled with knowledge to be responsible, active, participatory, and well-informed decision-makers in the society they live in and their entire nation. For that reason, it appears that History is a suitable subject that may impart learners with such enlightening and emancipatory knowledge. On that account, Sabbowa and Ng'ambi (2020) highlight that to impart this knowledge to learners in the 21st century, effective teaching and learning must be practised.

However, it appears that the performance of History in public examinations is a global issue that requires global attention. The problem with the subject is that the majority of schools and learners perform it unsatisfactorily (Ntaben, 2006; Fru, 2015). Evidently, studies conducted in Asia, Europe, America, and Africa show poor performance in History due to negative attitudes towards the subject among learners, a lack of resources, and rote learning (Nyamwembe, Ondigi, & Kiio, 2013; Chong & Yeo, 2016; Samuelsson, 2018; Juliana, 2020). Contextually, the Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL) reported that from 2020 to 2023, most schools and learners performed below par in public examinations in the History subject (ECOL, 2020; ECOL, 2021; ECOL, 2022; ECOL; ECOL, 2023).

As an extra, the Examination Council of Lesotho's statistics from 2020 to 2023 show a consistent decline in the performance of high school History learners on Lesotho's public examinations

(ECOL, 2020; ECOL, 2021; ECOL, 2022; ECOL, 2023). For instance, Examination Council of Lesotho (2022) examination results reveal that out of 60 History schools, only three performed well, with the majority performing unacceptably. On account of that, the Examination Council of Lesotho (2022) reported that the majority of schools in Lesotho struggled with History, with learners obtaining lower grades like F, G, and U. However, these schools with unsatisfactory performance have few learners achieving higher grades (A* to C) and average grades (D to E) (ECOL, 2022). This implies that, even though most of the schools perform unsatisfactorily on History public examinations, some individual learners in these schools excel.

Another essential point is that the unsatisfactory performance of History learners on high school public examinations is reportedly outpacing their satisfactory performance (ECOL, 2022; ECOL, 2023). This low performance among History learners has raised concerns among educational stakeholders, who view the subject as irrelevant and unsuitable for the 21st century (Okechukwu, 2023). According to Naicker (2020), some people indicate that learning History may be a waste of time as it is not useful in everyday life. By appearance, these raised concerns about History public examinations have led to public outcry, with some parents even discouraging their children from studying it due to poor performance (Ntabeni, 2006; Fru, 2015a).

Several similar studies on public examinations performance of high school learners were conducted. First, Fisher (2023) conducted a study in 2023 in America on the perceptions of teachers about learners' low performance on the Advancement Placement English Language and Composition exams. Secondly, Lekhetho (2013) conducted a study on the stakeholder's perspectives on strategies that can improve learners' low performance. Thirdly, Lebata (2014) conducted a study on the low performance of learners in biology. Additionally, Lekhetho (2021) conducted another study on factors that influence the performance of high-achieving secondary schools in Lesotho.

Furthermore, Ntabeni (2006) conducted a study on the status of History teaching, learning, and examination results in Lesotho, which focused on the low performance of external learners (both the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) and the Junior Certificate (JC)). Besides, Ntabeni (2007) conducted another study on History teaching, learning and Junior Certificate examination results in Lesotho, 2000–2006. Observably, most of the studies conducted focused on

non-historical subjects, except Ntabeni's 2006 and 2007 studies, which identified essay writing skills and inadequate teacher training as primary factors causing poor performance.

Fundamentally, the public examinations written by external learners are considered to be a reflection of quarterly examinations as they measure learning improved through quarterly examinations (Ismail et al., 2022). Therefore, performance in public examinations appears to be influenced by quarterly examination performance factors (Lekhetho, 2021). For that matter, there is a need for the educational development stakeholders to address quarterly examination factors affecting the performance of History learners in their public examinations. Nonetheless, it seems that there is a limited study conducted specifically to hear from the voices of teachers about the status of History on performance in public examinations. As a result, it is against this background that the study aims to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in three high schools in Maseru district.

1.3 Statement of the problem

History as a subject in Lesotho is seemingly performed poorly among other subjects across the entire nation. In support, the Examination Council of Lesotho reports that the performance of History learners in public examinations from 2020 to 2023 fluctuates annually (ECOL, 2020; ECOL, 2021; ECOL, 2022; ECOL, 2023). Resultantly, the issue with the frequent change seems to be falling below average performance, causing a shift from one level of low performance to another. In appearance, the overall performance of History learners in the public examinations in 2023 was significantly lower than in 2022, 2021, and 2020. This assertion is proven by the History Examiner's report of 2022, which showed a decrease in the performance of both History papers 1 and 2 compared to the other aforementioned previous years (ECOL, 2022).

Additionally, the Minister of Education and Training's speech released on 17th January 2024, on Lesotho General Certificate in Secondary Education results revealed that History's performance was unsatisfactory, ranking among well-performed subjects like Sesotho (58%), English (26%), Physical Science (22%), and Mathematics (11.2%) (Lesotho News Agency, 2024). With that being said, the lower public examination performance of History learners appears to be an escalating issue that warrants further attention. For that reason, failure to consider it may put History subject at risk of being removed from the syllabus (Fru, 2015).

However, it seems that there are limited studies on the perceptions of teachers on why the majority of schools and grade 11 History learners perform poorly in public examinations. On the grounds of this, this study seeks to understand teachers' perspectives on why some schools and learners perform better in History, while most perform unsatisfactorily in the same subject. This knowledge gap on the performance in public examinations of History learners in Lesotho's high schools presents a challenge for educational stakeholders responsible for improving and maintaining the public examination performance of grade 11 History learners.

Therefore, it is against this problem that the current study intends to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in three high schools in Maseru. The study further seeks to understand and inform policies and strategies to improve the public examination performance of grade 11 History learners by mitigating negative factors and maintaining positive ones.

1.4 Research objectives

The main research objective: To explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in three high schools in Maseru.

Sub-research objectives

1. To explore the views of teachers on the status of History in national curriculum considering learners' performance in public examinations.
2. To investigate how History teachers, perceive the factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations.
3. To explore History teachers' suggestions on mitigation of History learners' performance in public examinations.

1.5 Research questions

The main research question: What are teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in three high schools in Maseru?

Sub-research questions

1. What are the History teachers' views on the status of History in national curriculum considering learners' performance in public examinations?

2. How do History teachers perceive the factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations?
3. What are History teachers' suggestions on mitigation of History learners' performance in public examinations?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study may be significant to the school management for the introduction of new teaching and learning policies and the adjustment of the existing ones. Importantly, these policies may promote learners' performance on History public examinations. In addition to this, the findings of the study may be significant to the teachers, as they may help them improve their teaching and learning strategies as well as their content knowledge. Over and above, the study may be significant to the Ministry of Education and Training for improving the education system of Lesotho to meet the current needs of History learners. This may not only benefit the country but its citizens by paying more attention to History subject which may be very important in moulding the future leaders of this country to be effective leaders who may make informed decisions.

Apart from that, with the help of the findings from this study, the Ministry of Education and Training may improve the training of qualified teachers through several workshops. The study may similarly be significant to the National University of Lesotho and the Lesotho College of Education, which are the tertiaries that train student teachers in Lesotho. For this reason, with the aid of this study, these tertiaries may introduce new policies and adjust the existing ones to improve the training of trainee teachers, which may in turn improve their pedagogic content knowledge.

Besides, this study may contribute to existing knowledge, and the findings from this study may also be significant to scholars who may use this study as a reference. Considering that, the study may contribute to the existing knowledge on the perceptions of teachers on History public examination performance and factors that may affect History learners' public examination performance. The study may also be significant to the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) for the amendment of History curriculum policy where necessary for the benefit of the learners. With that in mind, the recommendations from this study may enlighten the above-mentioned stakeholders about the importance of considering the public examination performance of grade 11 History learners.

1.7 Definition of terms

Academic performance: This may be defined as the evaluation of the achievement of learners in different academic subjects.

Curriculum: It is defined as a plan guided and directed by the school for selecting content and organising learning experiences for the purpose of changing and developing the behaviours and understandings of learners.

Motivation: It is a process that stimulates the individuals to actions which may help them to accomplish certain goals.

Demotivation: It is the state of mind characterised by a lack of interest in enjoyment in the process of teaching and learning.

Grade: It refers to the measurement of learners' performance in public examinations or tests.

Examination score: This refers to the numerical representation of learners' performance on an examinations or tests.

Expectancy: It is the belief that an effort leads to better performance.

Examination Council of Lesotho: It may be defined as a body that is responsible for assessing learners' abilities in public examinations for their certification from level of knowledge to another level of knowledge.

Instrumentality: It refers to the positive value of reward for acceptable performance.

History: It is a social science subject which focuses on the study of change and development over time and it covers all aspects of human society.

High school: It refers to the school that offers secondary education to learners.

Perception: It refers to the ability of human beings to interpret information from the world around us to add meaning.

Public examinations: It may be defined as summative assessments written by learners for their certification from one level of education to the next level of education.

Quality education: It is the kind of education that provides learners with abilities to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance individual well-being.

Satisfactory academic performance: It is when learners obtain higher grades in examination scores.

Unsatisfactory academic performance: It is the performance that falls below the standard.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

This study was conducted in five high schools in Maseru district of Lesotho. Two participants were selected from the first school, one participant was selected from the second school, another participant was selected from the third school, the other two participants were selected from the fourth school and a remaining participant was from the fifth school. The scope of the study was delimited to the History schools that were underperforming and well performing in the last four years. Among these four schools, one school performed well in 2022 and one school improved its History performance in 2023 as compared to other previous years. However, performance was not as good as expected according to the Examination Council of Lesotho and the Ministry of Education and Training standards.

1.9 Limitation of the study

The fact that the study was based on the performance in History public examinations, it was difficult to access the learners to get their views. That is why the study ultimately focused on the teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. However, in future, the researcher will conduct a study on the learners' perceptions on performance in History internal examinations so that History learners' views will be accessed. Apart from that, the findings of this study revealed that the evolving marking by Examination Council of Lesotho plays a very significant role in poor performance of History learners in their public examinations due to the fact that History teachers are not even trained on how to mark History. Having considered that, another limitation was the difficulty in evaluating the effectiveness of History teachers in marking the subject hence there will be another future study to be conducted on this matter.

1.10 Theoretical framework

The study is underpinned by the Expectancy Theory (Process Theory), which is also a motivational theory. The theory was developed by Victor Vroom in 1964 with the aim of analysing and interpreting individual behaviour in learning, decision-making, attitude formation, and behaviour (Vroom, 1964; Lokman et al., 2022). Based on the ideas of Day (2020), this theory stresses that individuals possess a diverse array of goals, which can be fuelled by specific expectations. The theory was used in this study to explore whether History teachers have certain expectations regarding learners' performance in public examinations.

Basically, the Expectancy Theory consists of three principles: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence, which emphasise the positive value of reward for acceptable performance (Vroom, 1964). By definition, expectancy is the belief that an effort leads to better performance, while instrumentality is the trust that achieving good performance will lead to the expected outcome (Rehman, Sehar, & Afzal, 2019). On the other side, valence is defined as the unique value one places on the expected outcome (Day, 2020). Considering that, the suitability of this theory in this study may be beneficial for History teachers, as diligent efforts may enhance the performance of grade 11 History learners in their public examinations.

Moreover, the Expectancy Theory suggests that people's behaviour is primarily driven by their willingness to choose from a variety of options (Lokman et al., 2022). In addition to that, Rehman, Sehar, and Afzal (2019) emphasise that an individual will always select the behaviour that may maximise their satisfaction and minimise their stress. On the face of it, good performance by History learners in their public examinations can satisfy their teachers, while poor performance can dissatisfy them and cause stress among teachers. On the basis of that, motivation is one of the crucial aspects that may boost teachers' satisfaction and reduce their stress levels.

Therefore, the Expectancy Theory was used in this study to understand whether History teachers are motivated or demotivated to work hard in order to produce quality public examination results for grade 11 History learners. The theory was further helped the researcher explore the driving forces behind motivation and demotivation in individual teachers. The theory was used to assess the effectiveness of History teachers in selecting optimal opportunities and teaching methods to enhance the performance of grade 11 History learners in their public examinations (Day, 2020).

In essence, History teachers with high motivation are dedicated to imparting their learners with the necessary knowledge for their successful performance in public examinations. Another essential point is that History teachers who are motivated can significantly impact the motivation of their learners in the process of teaching and learning (Mhonyiwa, 2014). In the same way, motivated learners may exert effort to excel in their public examinations. In the similar manner, Rehnman, Sehar, and Afzal (2019) emphasise the importance of motivated learners for successful learning. On the other hand, low-motivated or demotivated teachers may not work hard, leading to unsatisfactory performance, hence the importance of the Expectancy Theory.

1.11 Chapter outline

The research is divided into five chapters being chapters one, two, three, four and five as well as the references. Chapter one provides background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study, definition of terms, delimitation of the study, and limitation of the study, theoretical framework which explains the theory that underpin this study as well as chapter outline. The chapter two further presents the themes and empirical review of relevant literature and the knowledge gap to be filled by this study.

Chapter three includes methodology specifically paradigm of the study, research approach, design and instruments. The chapter further consists of data analysis technique, sampling procedure, trustworthiness of the research as well as ethical considerations. Chapter four consists of data presentation and analysis. In this chapter, data is presented through the use of tables. Further, chapter five includes summary of findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations. Lastly, references of the cited literature are provided at the end.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter presents a review of the related literature on the main themes derived from the research objectives and research questions of the study. These are the status of History in the national curriculum of Lesotho, factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations and mitigation of History learners' performance in public examinations. Equally important, the researcher reviewed related studies that are relevant to this current study.

2.2 The status of History in the national curriculum

Historically, Chatterjee (2020) argues that the English word "history" has its roots in the Greek word "*historia*," which translates to inquiry and knowledge gained through investigation." Nevertheless, the word "history" comes from the German word "*Geschichte*", which means an important account of historical events. In general, History is the study of the past, covering all aspects of civilisation, human thoughts, deeds, and sufferings, and their impact on present events and changes (Chatterjee, 2020). According to Ajala (2003), History serves as a tool for fostering peaceful coexistence in society by imparting norms and values to learners in order to promote healthy human existence. History, according to Radha (2021), is the study of historical events, their causes and consequences and why and how they occurred.

Based on the findings of Nguringa and Cheprasow (2023) History refers to the study of evaluating and interpreting historical knowledge, lifestyles, and events. Nyarko (2023) defines History as the study of societal change and development over time and space. In addition, History, as defined by History Today (2024), is the study of people, actions, decisions, interactions and behaviour. As a result, the present study notes that History is the study of people, their actions, decisions, societal change and development as well as how people's actions, decisions, societal change and development affected the past, the present and the future.

The Ministry of Education and Training (2009) outlines Lesotho's secondary education aim as equipping high school learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for effective democratic participation and social activities. As stipulated in the History syllabus, History can equip learners with knowledge and skills for effective democratic processes and social activities,

instilling patriotism and nationality (Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), 2020). Another essential point is that the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) and Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy (LBECP) frameworks aim to provide learners with moral and religious education, promoting social and cultural acceptable character development, co-operation and service to others (MOET, 2009; MOET, 2021). This is in alignment with one of the History aims being to promote understanding of Basotho's diverse social and cultural values, emphasising tolerance as a prerequisite for peace, stability, and national unity (MOET, 2020). To all appearances, the alignment of secondary education national curriculum goals with high school History syllabus proposes that History could significantly contribute to Lesotho's national curriculum for national development.

As identified by Wasserman (2010), History introduces learners to their heritage through teaching them about their society's origins, development, functioning and future state. In doing so, History promotes Basotho heritage, potentially fostering a sense of identity and culture essential for nation building (Fru, 2015b). Furthermore, Van Eeden (2012) argues that History enhances critical thinking skills in learners by evaluating evidence, distinguishing facts from complex information, and providing protection against propaganda. In support, Fru (2015a) asserts that History fosters responsible, reflective, and active citizens who can make informed decisions about societal issues at both local and global levels. Seemingly, History plays a significant role in the national curriculum of Lesotho as it improves critical thinking skills in learners, protects people against propaganda, and promotes identity, culture, and active citizens who make informed decisions specifically for nation building.

However, it seems that History is at risk of being removed from the curriculum due to unsatisfactory performance of learners in public examinations. Ntabeni (2006) confirms that the subject is experiencing a decline due to its unpopularity within the social sciences group. In addition, Fru (2015b) echoes that in Lesotho, History appears to be underappreciated in the 21st century. Ntabeni (2007) and Fru (2015a) argue that the high failure rate in History, the government's failure in promoting History and stigmatising History teachers and learners are contributing factors to the decline of History in the national curriculum of Lesotho. However, the subject itself is not a problem but the problem may emanate on how other educational stakeholders

including History teachers and learners perceive it. If they view it as a useless subject, they will approach it with that mentality and ultimately this may result in poor performance.

The literature further stresses that the status of History in the national curriculum is unsatisfactory due to poor performance of learners in public examinations (Ntabeni, 2006). For instance, Fru (2015a) argues that after-lunch timetables lead to a regular neglect of History, which has a poor impact on learners' understanding of the subject because of the excessive fatigue that follows from eating, playing, and occasionally intense sun. Therefore, learners may get disengaged from their studies and fail to comprehend crucial historical information, which could have a detrimental effect on their performance in public examinations.

For that reason, the consequences may result in an overly dull and uninteresting subject reputation. That is why, according to Ntabeni (2006), many schools are not offering the History subject, leading to a decrease in the number of History learners. As a result, the study by Ntabeni (2007) indicates that both learners and parents have a negative attitude towards the History subject, with some parents even discouraging their children from pursuing it. Notably, not only stigmatisation of the subject contributes to the bad status of History but also the negative attitude of other educational stakeholders such as parents, learners and even some teachers contribute to the bad status of the subject.

2.3 Factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations

This section presents the factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations. Generally, there are many factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations. Therefore, the literature reviewed in this study reflects plenty of factors that are divided into internal (school), external, and personal factors. In this study, internal factors include classroom congestion, textbooks, libraries, computer laboratories, teaching aids, revision materials, information, communication and technology (ICT) (internet effectiveness, cellphones), assessment (homework, assignment, weekly tests and quizzes) and curriculum alignment (Mtwathwana et al., 2014).

The other internal factors are content coverage, relationship with principals, other teachers, and learners, support from school management, school type (private and government), coaching, English proficiency as medium of instructions, drilling, in-service training of teachers and teachers' role. In the context of this study, teachers' role is divided into professional development, pedagogical relationship between teachers and their learners, and mastery of subject matter (Limene, 2018). On the contrary, external factors consist of family education, family job types, family finance, parenting style, and parental involvement. Apart from that, in this study, personal factors include learners' behaviour and attitude, teachers' behaviour and attitude, and peer pressure. Below is the detailed review of each factor.

Primarily, Mtwathwana et al. (2014) identifies inadequate teaching and learning resources, libraries, laboratories, classroom congestion, teaching aids, and quality teaching as key factors influencing learners' performance in public examinations. Similarly, Mhonyiwa (2014) includes teaching resources like textbooks as contributing factors to performance of learners in public examinations. Additionally, the same scholar adds other factors influencing learner' performance in public examinations such as professional development, teachers' mastery of subject matter, teachers' experience, in-service training of teachers, motivation, English proficiency as a medium of instruction and school management and inspection. Similar to Mhonyiwa (2014), Annua-Sekyi and Nti (2015) consider motivation and support from school management as the key factors contributing to performance of learners in public examinations. They further mention factors such as pedagogical relationship between teachers and their learners, and assessment for learning. Concerning the issue of motivation, Oscan (2021) emphasises that teachers must be motivated, and the school environment itself must be motivating in order to enhance the performance of History learners.

Akkessa and Dhufera (2015) identify factors such as family education, and job types, which influence the economic status of learners' families and ultimately their performance in public examinations. Oscan (2021) categorises the same factors under economic conditions. What is more, Wachira (2021) pin-points factors such as availability of resources (textbooks), teaching environment, and learners' negative attitudes as contributing factors to performance of History learners in public examinations. More importantly, Mhonyiwa (2014), Mtwathwana et al. (2014),

Annua and Nti (2015) and Wachira (2021) find textbooks to be a similar factor. However, Mtwathwana et al. (2014) focused on lack of textbooks whereas Wachira focused on the availability of textbooks and Mhonyiwa (2014) together with Annua-Nti (2015) concentrated on how both availability and insufficient resources affect the performance of learners under physical environment.

Again, Limene (2018) identifies various factors affecting learners' performance in public examinations, including instructional resources, home-based factors (parental involvement, family socio-economic issues, parents' level of education), teacher-related factors, learners' attitudes, and school-based factors, including school environment and facilities. Regarding instructional resources, Sengai and Mokhele (2022) highlight the importance of their accessibility in the teaching of History because they help learners to conceptualise the subject matter and this may enhance the performance of History learners in public examinations. In line with Limene's (2018) findings, Asif et al. (2020) identify home-based factors such as family education, parental characteristics, and household income as significant determinants of learners' performance in public examinations. They further mention teacher qualification similar to the one found by Mhonyiwa (2014) and Annua-Nti (2015).

In addition, Mani et al. (2020) classify the above-mentioned factors influencing learners' performance into internal and external factors. According to their findings, internal factors include learners' proficiency in English, class congestion, assessments, textbooks, teachers' role in the class, technology and examination system. Further, the external factors consist of family problems, work and financial, social and other domestic problems. Seemingly, Mani et al.'s (2020) study is more encompassing as it covers most of the identified factors that may affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

On the other hand, Iquabal et al. (2022) classify factors that influence learners' academic performance into personal (individual, social and domestic) and school factors. They further subdivided individual factors into individual behaviour, self-reflection and motivation. The authors also categorises social factors into social interactions, online social media, communication and peer influence. They finally classify domestic factors into home environment, family income,

parents' education, family stress, and family support. Similarly, Briones et al. (2021) highlight factors such as parenting style, learner characteristics, internet effectiveness, lack of motivation as significant influences on performance of learners in public examinations. They further unpack parenting style into supportive, strict and democratic styles of parenting. Below is the explanation of the reviewed factors used in the context of this study.

2.3.1 Teachers' teaching experience

Teachers' teaching experience is one of the factors influencing the performance of History learners in public examinations. Milkie and Warner (2011) argue that teachers' teaching experience positively influence learners' academic performance. For instance, Mhonyiwa (2014) claims that teachers with over 5 years of teaching experience positively affect learners' performance in their public examinations, while those with less than 5 years of teaching experience have a negative impact. Bolapinwa et al. (2020) validate the findings of Mhonyiwa by revealing that in Nigeria, schools that have more teachers with over 10 years of teaching experience achieve better results than schools that have more teachers with below 10 years of teaching experience. In agreement, Oguta (2022) affirms that teachers' experience plays a crucial role in enhancing learners' success in public examinations because experienced teachers possess greater confidence, a deeper understanding of subject matter, and implement the curriculum effectively. Therefore, History teachers with more experience may enhance the performance of History learners, while those with less teaching experience may negatively impact their performance in public examinations because the experienced ones may have more exposure to historical content and knowledge while less experienced ones may not.

Nevertheless, Limene (2018) challenges findings of the preceding scholars by arguing that learners of experienced teachers with 5-15 years of teaching experience often perform below public examination expectations as discovered in Namibia. This was supported by the study of Musau and Abebe (2015) which demonstrates that teachers' experience does not significantly contribute to the high performance of learners in public examinations. They cite Kenya where 17 fresh graduates who have less teaching experience improved the performance of learners than 18 in-service teachers with more than 5 years of teaching experience. As a result, the argument suggests that teachers' teaching experience alone may not significantly improve learners' performance in their public examinations but it will also depend on the effort of individual teachers. Further, as

per Musau and Abebe (2015), performance of History learners in public examinations may be improved by the career growth of teachers. This implies that the more career growth of the History teachers, the more will be the improvement of the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

2.3.2 School type

In the context of this study, school type is classified into two categories being private schools and public schools or government school. Mhonyiwa (2014) found that school type affects performance of learners in public examinations, with private schools performing better than government schools. As to the support offered by Monserate (2018), learners who attend private schools are in a better position than those who attend government or public schools because they have more access to computers and the internet. In assertion, Canziz et al. (2016) concur that attending private school boosts learners' academic performance in their public examinations since these learners are intrinsically motivated to learn there. Based on the ideas of the aforementioned scholars, it is clear that private school History learners perform better than public school learners due to increased motivation and access to resources like computers and internet.

Hahn et al. (2014) corroborate the aforementioned claim by stating that learners in private schools perform better than those in public schools since the former is superior in terms of preparing learners for tertiary education. Hurry (2016), on the other hand, challenges the notion that learners' performance in public examinations is determined by the type of school they attend. Rather, performance is driven by a number of factors, such as family income, teacher qualifications, and school management. Hurry appears to be right hence it is not always the case that learners' performance in History is determined by their school type. In the context of Lesotho, for example, there are numerous government schools that do better in History than private ones. Although private schools outperform public schools, it would seem that performance of History learners in public examinations may not only be attributed to school type alone but it may also be attributed to other several factors such as teacher qualifications and school management.

2.3.3 Teachers' professional qualifications

Professional teachers and their development may affect the performance of History learners in public examinations. As identified by Mhonyiwa (2014), teachers' professional development encompasses their understanding of the subject matter, curriculum, and methods of how learners learn. Bernard's (2009) study shows that some teachers are not subject-specialists whereas some are under qualified. In the opinions of Mani et al. (2020), unqualified teachers often struggle with effective use of teaching resources, accepting learners' responses, dominating classrooms, addressing incorrect responses, and explaining concepts effectively. Therefore, it seems that such teachers may negatively affect performance of History learners in public examinations, indicating the need for schools to engage high qualified History teachers. On the contrary, Briones et al. (2021) suggest that high qualified teachers possess a greater understanding of their subject area's pedagogical content. In appearance, Briones et al.'s (2021) findings are accurate, as highly qualified teachers may possess sufficient content to be effectively transmitted to their learners. For that reason, qualified teachers may improve the performance of History learners in public examinations.

2.3.4 Teachers' mastery of subject matter

More importantly, teachers' mastery of subject matter is among the factors that affect performance of History learners in public examinations. The teachers' mastery of subject matter is categorised into knowledge of content, pedagogical content knowledge and general pedagogical content knowledge (Mhonyiwa, 2014). This implies that History teachers must effectively teach various subject concepts to learners as per Shing et al. (2015). Contrary to this, the literature indicates that some teachers who lack mastery of certain topics may struggle with content and pedagogical skills (Heeralal & Dhurumraj, 2017). Moea (2022) argues that teachers' lack of pedagogical skills is attributed to their unclear understanding of the curriculum due to their exclusion in curriculum planning and their lack of in-service training. With that being said, it seems that teachers' poor mastery of subject matter may be due to their lack of pedagogical skills, which may not only emanate from misunderstanding of the curriculum but also from their lack of in-service training through workshops. This may contribute to lower performance of History learners in their public examinations since teachers struggling with content knowledge may not deliver historical content effectively to their learners.

2.3.5 Content coverage

Content coverage is another factor influencing performance of History learners in public examinations. Content for education includes all of the procedures, knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities and values needed to accomplish the learning objectives listed in lesson plans and programs (Smowltech, 2024). According to Smowltech (2024), effective and appropriate content promotes learning, accessibility, and adaptability by allowing learners to effectively interact with their teachers. Nakhanu (2012) claims that although learners who cover the syllabus early outperform those who do not, most of the schools only cover a portion of the curriculum and never teach certain topics, in most of the schools. According to the findings of the aforementioned scholars, it appears that learners who complete the syllabus early in the year do better in their public examinations since they dedicate their more time on revision, even though some schools do not cover the syllabus due to various challenges such as shortage of teachers.

Wafulal et al. (2019) point out that late or non-content syllabus coverage negatively impact learners' performance, with in-depth and timely coverage leading to better performance of learners in their public examinations. It is in this regard that Peterson et al. (2020) argue that teachers must view content as a collection of concepts, competences, and facts to be deliberately selected rather than a list of topics to be covered. This means that History teachers must teach not only to cover content but also to instil broad knowledge in learners for their effective learning. On the other hand, Oketch et al. (2013) debate that content coverage influences learners' performance positively and significantly if content coverage is the only predictor. For that reason, teachers in low performing schools should not be held accountable; instead, the government should investigate non-school factors as they may be partially responsible for the persistent differences that may result in the unfavourable failing schools and few succeeding schools.

2.3. 6 Revision materials

Revision materials are some of the factors influencing performance of History learners in their public examinations. Based on the ideas of Cross et al. (2016), using sample exam papers can enhance question literacy, making exam questions clearer and easier to understand for learners. For this reason, this may enable History learners to understand examination questions and answer them correctly hence their higher passing rate. As specified by Onteng and Bruwer (2020), learners regard viewing and practising of past assessments to have an influence on their performance in

final examination. Learners utilise past assessments as a deductive tool in order to predict future areas that will be assessed as well as certain characteristics such as the level of difficulty of question papers and how to address them.

According to Wangdi and Zangmo (2023), the time used to revise the lesson taught in class engage learners in learning and has great impact on learners' performance in public examinations. Lopz et al. (2021) highlight that revision instruction increases learners' ability both to detect and correct substantive issues in the text and benefits the quality of writing of learners hence enhance their performance. As a result, it appears that revision materials may improve the performance of History learners in their public examinations as they help learners to be familiar with the questions that are asked in public examinations. Apart from that, most of the questions repeat themselves and revision materials may help them to be in an opportunity of getting such questions correctly hence the improvement of their performance. However, the literature highlights that it is not always the case that the questions are repeated and learners must not rely on revision materials only but should also read their notebooks and do their work on time (Lopz et al., 2021).

2.3.7 Lesson preparation

Besides, it would seem that teachers' lack of pedagogical skills might be attributed to lack of lesson preparations. Mumba (2019) suggests that lesson preparations can enhance learners' examinations performance by preparing lesson plans, scheming, selecting effective teaching methods, and monitoring prepared work by administrators. In addition, Strong (2021) emphasises that lesson planning facilitates the learning of learners by positively influencing their affective, cognitive, and psychomotor skills. On the other hand, it seems that History teachers without lesson planning can lead to confusion among the learners, hindering meaningful learning and good performance of their learners in public examinations (Khan et al., 2024). Therefore, the above scholars demonstrate that inadequate and improper lesson preparation may significantly contribute to poor performance of History learners whereas adequate lesson preparation may positively affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

Straessele (2014) stresses that the scheme of work clearly outlines the use of resources, class activities, and assessment to ensure that the course's learning aims and objectives are met. Further, Khan et al. (2024) affirm that the scheme of work assists school supervisors in assessing teachers'

efforts in achieving the syllabus objectives. Nonetheless, the findings of Mumba (2019) demonstrate that lack of preparation of scheme of work might lead to learners performing poorly academically since teachers may be teaching haphazardly without proper arrangement of teaching resources, and teaching aids. Additionally, the literature shows that teachers may also run the risk of excluding significant and often examined topics from the syllabus (Munba, 2019). Seemingly, proper lesson preparation through a well-structured scheme of work positively impacts History learners' performance in public examinations, as teachers ensure proper use of teaching resources, activities, and assessments unlike teachers without proper scheming who teach haphazardly. It would appear that teachers who teach in this way may improperly plan, ineffectively deliver the content to learners, and may skip important content which may appear in the final examinations thus contributing to the failure of History learners in their public examinations.

Evidently, Mhonywa (2014) found that in Tanzania, some of the teachers were frustrated by the challenging topics they teach their learners. Keeping that in mind, some teachers allow learners to work in groups without brainstorming previous topics, instead of preparing lesson presentations on some of the topics they teach (Iquabal et al., 2022). Apparently, these are the signs of ineffective teachers who Ntabeni (2006) regard as ineffective in preparing History learners for essay writing skills, leading to high failure rates on performance of History learners in public examinations. Bearing that in mind, it would seem that such kinds of teachers may inadequately prepare for their lessons prior to their teaching process.

The study of Aada (2020) reports that ineffective teachers without proper planning struggle to effectively facilitate learners from previous lessons to the current ones, leading to failure for learners to establish a connection between lessons. Consequently, this may affect the examination performance of History learners negatively. On the other hand, Limene (2018) asserts that knowledgeable teachers with proper lesson preparations effectively scaffold learners and connect previous topics to current ones. Besides, such teachers may even use teaching aids and various learner-centred teaching methods such as role-play, presentations and debate hence this may result in good performance of History learners in their public examinations (Alkalaki, 2021). Taking that into account, it appears that History teachers with well-structured lesson preparation may

positively affect the performance of their learners in public examinations as they may use teaching strategies and teaching aids properly.

The literature further suggests that selecting effective teaching methods can positively influence the performance of History learners in their public examinations (Muhoza et al., 2023). Munyaradzi (2013) suggests that combining teacher-centred and learner-centred teaching methods is the most effective approach for achieving optimal learners' outcomes. Even though Munyaradzi recommended using both of these teaching strategies in the teaching and learning process, learner-centred approaches promote better topic mastery than teacher-centred which centralise the flow of knowledge as one-way from a teacher to the learners. In support, Badar et al. (2022) emphasise the importance of learner-centred methods like demonstrations, stating that they lead to improved learners' performance. As a consequence of that, it would seem that interaction among learners and between learners and teachers can enhance their knowledge acquisition, leading to better performance in public examinations, emphasising the importance of learner-centred teaching methods.

2.3.8 Coaching in the teaching of History

As discovered by Ehsanipour and Zaccarellin (2017), coaching is defined as a tool for teachers to enhance their ability to assess the effectiveness of instructional strategies in supporting learning. As to the definition provided by Krat et al. (2018), coaching is a type of professional development program where teachers receive feedback from peers or coaches after they observe their instruction to assist them better. According to Trido (2021), coaching consists of a few fundamental components, including continuing support, non-evaluative feedback, and assistance in helping teachers gain a better knowledge. Therefore, it appears that coaching could be advantageous for both teachers and learners since it could enhance learning and encourage the retention of highly successful teachers, both of which would eventually boost learners' performance. It is for this reason that the literature suggests that both teachers and learners require to go through the process of coaching (Summer, 2011; Krat et al., 2018).

Based on the ideas of Kenny and Faunce (2004), learners who experience and enjoy coaching outperform learners who do not experience and enjoy coaching. Using the concepts from Summer (2011), instructional coaches assist teachers with lesson analysis, use of assessment data, lesson

planning, teacher observation and conferences, and lesson modelling. However, despite the fact that coaching may promote the performance of History learners, the literature further specifies that there are some learners who perform worse even when they are coached (Kennedy & Faunce, 2004). Therefore, it would appear that coaching History teachers and their learners may be beneficial as it may enhance the performance in History public examinations. However, coaching may require effective training of History teachers and regular monitoring to learners for it to be effective and beneficial to learners in public examinations.

2.3.9 Drilling in the teaching of History

According to Aini et al. (2020), drilling involves repeating what is heard after listening to the model which is given by the teacher or another learner in the classroom. Drilling is further described by Mayasari (2020) as an instructional strategy in which teachers model a word or sentence and learners repeat it in order to help learners recall and understand the aim. In accord, Rofiah (2022) says that drilling is a method that teachers employ while imparting new language concepts to their learners. During this process, learners listen to their teachers and mimic their phrases and words. It is apparent that drilling appears to be an instructional strategy used by teachers whereby learners are taught to repeat what they are taught by their teachers to help them understand the taught concept. Seemingly, understanding the concept may help History learners to perform well in their public examinations.

Due to Septibera's (2016) observation that drilling could increase learners' participation by allowing them to respond to the teachers, pay attention, listen to the teachers, repeat what they hear, and complete the task, it is possible that using drilling in the teaching of History may be advantageous to History learners. Mayasari (2020) reiterates that drilling enhances learners' learning and participation by providing unique information, as all learners need to learn from each other. According to the literature, drilling may help History learners become more proficient in vocabulary, communication, pronunciation, and may also encourage lengthier word memory, error correction, and conversation practice (Rofiah, 2022). In doing so, drilling may engage learners in learning, help them in understanding historical content, terminologies, and facilitate their retention of information, ultimately leading to better performance in public examinations.

On the other hand, the literature notes that teaching drilling is challenging since it calls for an extraordinary amount of the teachers' creativity, skills and effort (Mayasari, 2020). Besides,

Rofiah (2022) adds that drilling takes a lot of time, is monotonous unless learners are highly motivated, does not always help them understand the content being taught, and can prevent learners from applying their skills in the same situation if it relies too heavily on memorisation. Therefore, this may support the findings of Aini et al. (2020) who emphasise the need for drilling to be used in conjunction with action research cycles from cycle to cycle in order to enhance History learners' comprehension. If that is the case, understanding historical content could help History learners in performing well, just as practising oral presentations and memorisation exercises through drilling improve these skills.

2.3.10 Relationship with the principals, other teachers and learners

The relationship of History teachers with the principals, other teachers and learners appear to be one of the factors influencing learners' performance in History public examinations. Based on the ideas of Edgeron et al. (2006), teachers who have strong relationship with their principals inspire and motivate their learners to perform at the highest level in public examinations. This is because positive environments boost teachers' energy and productivity and help learners perform well on public examinations. Koso et al. (2019) state that principals' leadership responsibilities connected to the development of learners' character are restricted to the setting an example for learners, inspiring them to think critically, and offering daily guidance for learners' academic progress. In this regard, the relationship of the principals with both History teachers and learners should be cordial for the benefit of learners, and this may contribute to the creation of positive learning environments that may ultimately improve the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

Based on the existing literature, fostering great school cultures and guaranteeing learners performance require the presence of amicable, cordial relationship between the teacher and learners and between the teachers and principals (Better Leaders Better Schools, 2022). Accordingly, Edigbo (2024) states that cordial relationship between the teachers and the learners result in improved performance of learners in public examinations since it facilitates teaching and learning process. On the other hand, Emosivwe et al. (2023) show that while a friendly relationship between teachers and learners improves learners' performance in public examinations, most secondary schools do not have a friendly relationship between teachers and learners because most teachers punish their learners for misbehaviour, and some teachers are harsh with their learners in

the classroom. Consequently, as highlighted from the literature, harsh teaching styles may negatively impact History learners' performance in public examinations, as they may retreat and hide their abilities in such situations (Edigbo, 2024). It is therefore, against this matter that cordial relationship between the History teachers and their learners is required in the teaching of History in order to improve performance in History public examinations.

2.3.11 Assessment methods

Equally important, assessment methods like testing, assignments, homework and feedback can significantly influence the performance of History learners in their public examinations, either positively or negatively. This may depend on whether or not teachers regularly and effectively assess their learners through homework, assignments, quizzes, and classwork each week (Atabek et al., 2014). Moreover, Shin et al. (2017) add that this may also depend on whether teachers provide their learners with immediate feedback and do corrections with their learners or not. Considering that, Djarfour (2018) emphasises the importance of weekly feedback from tests, assignments, homework, and class activities as it aids learners in recognising and correcting their mistakes. This means that it is apparent that History learners' performance in public examinations is influenced by teachers' regular assessment and immediate feedback, with regular assessment and immediate feedback positively affecting performance, while rare assessment and delayed feedback negatively affect it.

According to Annua-Sekyi (2015), some teachers skip difficult topics, provide insufficient feedback, and provide destructive comments on learners' feedback, while others incompetently prepare for examinations. Therefore, according to Mani et al. (2018), the aforementioned factors symbolise that learners are partially taught. History learners may not perform well in their public examinations because the examinations are designed in accordance with the prescribed content to be covered (Iquabal, 2022); as a result, History teachers must provide learners with immediate feedback with constructive plans as recommended by the Lesotho educational policy frameworks (MOET, 2009; MOET, 2021).

Besides, Moghaddam's (2013) research suggests that weekly quizzes significantly enhance the performance of learners compared to those who do not participate in them. To validate this, Basolm and Johnson (2009) state that weekly quizzes generate extrinsic motivation for learners, as they

strive for good grades in their courses, leading to extensive preparation and effort not only in their weekly quizzes but also in their tests, home works, and assignments. Besides, the literature demonstrates that frequent tests expose learners to class material, helping them become familiar with examiners' expectations and test-wise, enabling them to identify questions for final examinations (Moghaddam, 2013). Therefore, it appears that frequent tests and quizzes may reduce learners' test anxiety, leading to enfeebling test anxiety during final examinations compared to those who take tests less frequently. Atabek et al. (2014) stress that practising and testing aid learners in retaining previously learned information hence this prepares for public examinations.

Djarfour (2018) proclaims that assessment helps in knowledge development of learners that enables them to see their errors and shortcomings, and enables them to work towards correction. Additionally, Oyinloyr and Imenda (2019) confirm that learners who adhere to the assessment teaching strategies outperform those who do not. According to Songsirisak and Jipranee (2019), homework and other forms of assessments have a significant impact on learners' performance because they force them to focus more intently on the materials and lessons, which may improve test results. In support, Haq et al. (2020) affirm that homework not only reinforces classroom instructions but also enhances understanding and keeps learners engaged in their studies at home. Therefore, it appears that frequent assessment with immediate feedback motivates learners intrinsically and extrinsically, while not only rare assessment but also over-loading assessment demotivates learners to learn.

2.3.12 English as a medium of instruction

English as a medium of instruction is another factor that influences performance of History learners in public examinations. As noted by Mlay (2010), History learners struggle to communicate well in English and lack confidence in using it. It is for this reason that teachers use code switching and code mixing in their teaching in order to help learners to understand the subject matter. This is supported by Mhonyiwa's (2014) study, which demonstrates that most teachers utilise their mother tongue for their teaching instruction to assist learners to understand the subject content. According to Patrick (2020), many high school learners struggle with language errors like unclear instruction, inappropriate word usage, and poor written language structure. However, the literature discovered that incompetence in instruction language is a problem not only for learners but also for teachers, as many lack fluencies to confidently deliver engaging lessons (Mhonyiwa,

2014; Patrick, 2020). Therefore, it seems that not only History learners but also their teachers face challenges with English usage, often delivering content in their mother tongue, highlighting the need for History teachers to use English for instruction and mother tongue for scaffolding learners only.

2.3.13 Teaching resources

According to Gogliotti (2020), teaching resources are important components of high-quality education. As identified by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2020), teachers need teaching resources in order to transmit education that is up-to-date and that is challenging and responsive to the needs of learners. Sengai and Mokhele (2022) further state that improved access to instructional resources can enhance teachers' effectiveness in the classroom by aiding History learners in conceptualising taught content and having a significant impact on their academic performance in their public examinations.

Contrary to this, Juliana (2020) emphasises that inadequate resources in high schools have a severe negative impact on both learners' learning and teachers' ability to teach a class. However, History teachers must be as innovative as they can in addressing the challenges of inadequate resources. According to Sengai and Mokhele (2022), it may be encouraged for teachers to create basic teaching resources so that learners are better acquainted with the material they would be covering in class. Seemingly, these inadequate resources may demotivate teachers, leading to stress and negative impact on the performance of History learners. In the context of this study, the discussed teaching and learning resources include textbooks, computer laboratories, library resources, and technology. The resources are discussed in detail below starting with textbooks to technology.

2.3.13.1 Textbooks

Textbooks in schools may affect the performance of History learners in public examinations. Evidently, in Tanzania, Mhonyiwa (2014) exposes an extreme shortage of textbooks in government schools compared to private schools. In the opinions of Mwatwana et al. (2014), government schools face textbook shortages due to limited government funds, causing parents to rely on purchasing expensive textbooks for their children. In consideration of that, Lamas (2015) proposes that parents' inability to afford expensive textbooks for their children may lead to unsatisfactory performance of learners in public examinations. Resultantly, Makori and Onderi (2014) argue that shortage of textbooks influences teacher workload, pace of learning, and

negatively impact syllabus coverage, potentially leading to poor performance of History learners in their public examinations. Bearing that in mind, the absence of textbooks can negatively impact performance of History learners, while their availability and effective use can positively impact their performance in public examinations.

2.3.13.2 Library resources

Aside from textbooks, library resources may also affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations. According to Mhonyiwa (2014), library resources are crucial for teaching and learning, instilling a reading culture among learners. Mwathwana et al. (2014) exemplifies that high schools of Kenya often lack current textbooks, store prehistoric and unapproved materials in their libraries and some libraries lack textbooks. In a similar manner, Moea (2022) notes that in Lesotho, high schools lack libraries and textbooks. Therefore, it is without doubt that unavailability of libraries may negatively influence the performance of History learners' in their public examinations.

2.3.13.3 Technology

Technology is another factor that may influence the performance of History learners in public examinations. According to the literature, technological tools such as computers, projectors, internet and audio-visuals can be employed in the teaching of History to enhance the performance of History learners in their public examinations (Boadu et al., 2014). Monserate (2018) further expresses that teachers and learners' computer literacy positively affect the performance of learners in public examinations. To bolster this, Risda and Rey (2023) note that learners who receive instructions using technology outperform learners who receive instructions through traditional ways of teaching since technology improves learners learning and useful teaching practices. Additionally, Monserates (2018) highlights that learners attending private schools tend to possess greater self-efficacy and utilise technology more extensively, leading to improved performance in their public examinations. In light of this, technology may help History learners perform better in their public examinations because learners who are computer literate outperform those who are not.

However, Bingimlas (2009) identifies challenges in technology integration, including lack of accessibility, poor resource organisation, poor hardware, inappropriate software, insufficient

computers, lack of technical support, slow internet, lack of teachers training, malfunctioning computers, and outdated computers. Apart from that, Boadu et al. (2014) highlights other significant barriers to integrating technology in History teaching, including the unavailability of technological tools, insufficient time, and lack of administrative support. Ismai et al. (2020) further highlights the challenges of integrating technology in teaching including lack of teachers' relevant skills, lack of expert and inadequate administrative support. All these factors mentioned above may not only negatively affect the internal performance of History learners but also their performance in public examinations.

Besides, Dube et al. (2018) point out that poor training, negative attitudes and lack of ICT software are the challenges of integration of ICT in the teaching and learning. Kennedy (2023) states that the main obstacles to integrating ICT into the classroom are a lack of computers, projectors, lack of institutional internet access, lack of support for instructors, lack of training, a shortage of ICT experts, funding inflexibilities, and lack professional development. Even though technological tools may enhance the performance of History learners in their public examinations, integrating technology in History teaching is challenging due to lack of administrative support, lack of accessibility, poor resource organization, poor hardware, in-appropriate software, and lack of technical support, and less ICT experts. Factors such as teacher competence, training, malfunctioning computers, inadequate computers, old computers, unavailability of projectors, slow internet, lack of internet, lack of History teachers' training, insufficient time, and funding inflexibilities also hinder progress.

2.14 Computer laboratories

Literature reveals that use of computers in teaching and learning could address textbook and library shortages, improve performance of History learners in their examinations, as they perform similar tasks (Mhonyiwa, 2014). However, Limene (2018) reports that while some schools have computer laboratories in Namibia, the internet is often unavailable. Besides, Mani et al. (2020) highlight that some schools neglect to utilise existing computer laboratories and internet facilities, limiting teachers and their learners to look for updated knowledge. As far as anyone can judge, computers are very important because they may address the challenges of lack of textbooks. However, it seems that most of the schools that have computer laboratories often lack internet facilities as is

the case of Lesotho, potentially leading to lower performance of History learners in public examinations (Moea, 2022).

2.3.15 Motivation of teachers and learners

Motivation of both teachers and learners may also influence the performance of History learners in their public examinations. According to Liu et al. (2022), motivation is the driving force behind goal-directed academic activities and key to the good academic performance of high school learners. In that regard, Wilkesmann et al. (2021) suggest that teachers play crucial role in fostering the motivation of learners. Although teachers have a significant influence in motivating learners, learner and teacher motivation may be equally important in improving performance of History learners in their public examinations.

Correspondingly, Mudago (2017) asserts that teachers' motivation stems from their desire and commitment to achieve individual and school goals, which is reflected in their job performance and this can maintain learners' attention, behaviour, and provide their energy for task completion. Thoka (2020) argues that lack of self-motivation among the learners is the major cause of poor academic performance of learners in public examinations. Therefore, according to the above scholars, it seems that motivation can result in good performance of learners while demotivation can result in poor performance in their public examinations and teachers are key to motivation. Not only that, teachers' motivation seems to come from their dedication and desire to accomplish personal goals, which is evident in how well they perform at work.

Mruma's (2013) ideas suggest that teachers' motivation stems from their work environment, which in turn boosts their morale, enabling them to perform better than average. It is in this regard that their effort may ultimately and positively affect the performance of their learners in their public examinations. Nevertheless, Mhonyiwa (2014) states that government high school teachers are often demotivated to teach their specialist subjects due to factors like low salaries, inadequate resources, and lack of promotion whereas private school teachers are motivated by their high salaries and close supervision from heads of department and principals. As a result, it appears that school environmental factors such as resources may be the source of teachers' motivation and demotivation. Adequate and effective use of these factors may result in teachers' motivation, while inadequacy and ineffective use may result in teachers' demotivation.

In addition to that, Mudongo (2017) highlights that teachers' motivation stems from job satisfaction and career development opportunities like promotions, in-service training, workshops, seminars, and revision courses. For that reason, Annua-Sekyi and Nti (2015) argue that demotivated teachers do not truly teach, but rather instruct and assign tasks to their learners. Seemingly, job satisfaction and in-service training also contribute to teachers' motivation. Teachers who are motivated can have a positive impact on performance of History learners in their public examinations, while those who are demotivated can have a negative impact.

2.3.16 Support from school management

Support from school management may also affect the performance of History learners in public examinations. As highlighted by Nzoka and Orodho (2014), most school managements fail to adequately support their teachers and learners due to their inconsistent instructional supervision and uncoordinated guidance and counselling. This may affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations because teachers may not teach learners well enough to prepare them for public examinations. For example, there may be high rate of History teachers' absenteeism, and some may even skip important historical content which may appear in the public examinations. It is against this notion that Sengai (2021) posits that the responsibility of the head of department to guarantee that History is taught correctly in the classroom might result in the adoption of demanding programs for instructional leadership, which will help to enhance teaching methods in History classes to ultimately improve the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

Additionally, this support may be determined by the management styles used by the principals of the schools as demonstrated by Mani et al. (2020). These authors claim that autocratic principals often communicate ineffectively with teachers, preventing them from expressing their opinions on learners' performance in public examinations. The literature suggests that this ineffective communication of autocratic principals to teachers and learners suggests a lack of support from school management (Oscan, 2021). If that is the case, this kind of management style may demotivate teachers to teach and learners to learn and ultimately affecting the performance of History learners negatively in their public examinations. At the same time, this lack of support from school principals seems to be related to insufficient management training, which exposes

their shortcomings and may have a detrimental impact on History learners' and teachers' performance in History public examinations.

Furthermore, Sulan (2024) confirms that learners' performance is negatively affected by autocratic school principals who typically exhibit excessive strictness and harshness, discouraging their teachers from giving their best effort. Nonetheless, Oscan (2021) argues that principals with effective instructional leadership skills improve school system development by enhancing teachers' knowledge levels and enhancing learners' achievement. According to Senguo and Ilomo (2020), these kinds of principals work effectively for planning, motivating, and inspiring learners to put in a lot of effort in order to enhance their academic performance in public examinations. On the other hand, it would seem that supportive principals with effective leadership skills can significantly influence curriculum instruction, academic success, and performance of History learners in public examinations.

2.3.17 Family job types and income

According to Akessa and Dhufera (2015), the family job types affect learners' academic performance in public examinations either positively or negatively. They further argue that learners with working parents perform better than those with farming or not working parents. Asif et al. (2020) confirm that household income significantly and positively affects performance of learners in public examinations. Resultantly, it seems that the wealthy families can purchase necessary teaching resources like textbooks, smart phones, and data for History learners, promoting stress-free learning for learners hence improving performance of History learners in public examinations.

To the casual observer, learners from low socio-economic families often struggle to afford teaching resources, school fees, and may be expelled from schools, which can demotivate them and hinder their learning experiences. As a result, this creates additional stress on both learners and their parents thus negatively affecting performance of History in their public examinations (Oscan, 2021). To elaborate, Khan (2010) highlights that South Asian learners from low socio-economic backgrounds change school attendance dates based on their attendance and absence patterns as they become present on certain days and absent on certain days. Therefore, this may affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations negatively.

2.3.18 Examination system

Based on the findings of Limene (2018), the ministerial system of automatic promotion negatively influences the academic performance of completing learners. In support, Zhang and Huang (2022) assert that learners are promoted to the next grade without achieving the basic competencies of the current grade. James (2017) highlights the significant issue of learners appearing unprepared for the next grade due to this serious problem. Therefore, promotion may significantly influence the performance of History learners negatively in their public examinations, as promoted learners may be demotivated to work hard.

With reference to Lesotho, Moea (2022) comments that the introduction of the integrated curriculum brought the idea of promotion, preventing primary and some high school learners from repeating even if they failed. The literature further reveals that promotion often results in incompetent learners, making it challenging for high school teachers who lack elementary teaching skills (Moea, 2022). Additionally, James (2017) asserts that learners who are automatically promoted from previous classes are not prepared for the current class. The literature further indicates that promotion leads to lazy learners who do not put extra effort to pass to the next class putting more loads on high school teachers. Seemingly, high school teachers may struggle to cover anticipated content due to learners' unpreparedness in reading and writing. Some teachers may use a lecturing method, rush over content and skip another content causing a higher failure rate among History learners in public examinations (Limene, 2018).

2.3.19 Curriculum alignment

Phaenton (2017) highlights the confusion in teachers' interpretation of curriculum due to misalignment between curriculum designers and examiners, who often fail to express the curriculum's intention regarding practical work. According to Meij and Merx (2018), curriculum alignment at program-level, that is, the positive coherence between instruction, learning and assessment is crucial. In the opinions of Oscan (2021), in some schools, there are misalignment between the examination questions set and the marking schemes used. According to the literature, some of the misalignment are the results of exclusion of History teachers in curriculum design (Moea, 2022). That is why Sengai and Mokhele (2021) underscore that in order to effectively execute curriculum reforms, policy-makers should make an effort to include teachers in the process

as this may allow them to voice their concerns that are critical in the successful curriculum implementation.

The literature further stresses that there is also misalignment between the content of the syllabus and the examination questions set (Limene, 2018). In addition, Moea (2022) warns that unclear communication between curriculum designers and examiners as well as markers affect teachers negatively who in turn affect the performance of their learners negatively. Therefore, it would appear that misalignment of curriculum between designers and examiners may negatively affect the performance of History learners while proper curriculum alignment may positively affect the performance of History learners hence a need for alignment between planned and implemented curriculum. It is in this regard that Sengai and Mokhele (2022) accentuate that History teachers should be urged to use their creativity and utilising educational resources that support the themes they teach in each lesson, particularly when a new syllabus is implemented.

2.3.20 Health of learners in the learning of History

Health is another factor that influences performance of History learners in public examinations. According to Show et al. (2015), learners with poor health have higher probability of failure in their public examinations because poor health on children results into emotional, social, physical, and mental problems. In concurrence, Olusegun (2017) acknowledges that learners who frequently attend class due to their good health appear to perform better in their studies and are more successful than the ones who do not regularly attend class due to poor health. This poor health may emanate from poor nutrition, hunger, poor hygiene and lack of humanisation and it may ultimately hinder History learners from performing well in their public examinations because it demotivates them to learn. To add more, Sabir et al. (2021) confirm that learners' general well-being has significant impact on how well they perform in their public examinations. With that in mind, it would seem poor health of History learners may negatively affect their performance in public examinations while good health may positively affect their performance in public examinations.

2.3.21 The attitude and behaviour of History teachers

The attitude and behaviour of teachers also influence the performance of History learners in their public examinations. Based on the findings of Ullah et al. (2018), teachers who apply positive attitude and behaviour towards their learners motivate them in learning of the subject. In a similar

vein, Dar (2022) argues that positive teacher behaviour and interactions with learners strengthen the potential needed for enhanced performance of learners in public examinations, while on the other hand, harsh teachers can lead to demotivation of and poor performance of learners. As a result, it would appear that History teachers' pleasant behaviour and attitude could be highly important in motivating learners since it allows them to engage effectively with their teachers, which could improve learners' performance in their public examinations.

Additionally, Kahveci (2023) highlights the impact of teachers' attitude and behaviour on learners' academic, social, and emotional development, with positive interactions boosting comfort and interest, and oppressive ones leading to long-term sadness and failure in public examinations. Contrary to this, Baloglu (2009) explains that teachers act aggressively and authoritatively, with male teachers physically abusing and humiliating learners while some female teachers dress in a sexually aggressive manner. Further, Le Courtois (2024) warns that certain punishment methods and negative teacher feedback can harm the relationship between teachers and their learners, potentially leading to insecurity and demotivation. All these acts may destruct History learners and demotivate them to learn hence affecting their performance in public examinations. Therefore, positive attitude and behaviour of teachers may enhance learners' performance, while their negative attitude and behaviour may negatively impact History learners' performance in public examinations.

2.3.22 Attitude and behaviour of History learners

According to Simba and Kabuka (2016), general discipline characterised by obedience, politeness, orderliness, and social competence can influence the attitude and behaviour of learners that may ultimately influence their performance. This is because according to Dar (2022), indiscipline hinders learners' focus on educational goals, which require hard work, time management, and respect while disciplined learners are more likely to stay focused in their educational goals, and succeed academically. This is more so, because they are less likely to become involved in disciplinary cases that could take them away from their studies. Therefore, it would appear that such learners portray positive behaviour and attitude in learning and this may enable them to enhance their striving for academic success and eventually boost their performance in their public examinations.

According to Dar (2022), positive teacher-learner relationships have an influence on learners' attitude and behaviour in the classroom because happy teachers motivate them to have positive attitude towards the classroom learning and school as a whole. However, it is not always the case that learners portray positive attitude and behaviour in the classroom as sometimes they portray disruptive behaviour. By definition, Okeke et al. (2023) define disruptive behaviour as actions that hinder classroom facilitation and educational outcomes, often resulting from learners violating rules. To put it in simpler words, disruptive behaviour of History learners may not only affect their teachers negatively but also their performance in public examinations.

The literature also portrays that this type of behaviour could be detrimental to History teachers' well-being since it could be difficult for them to deal with disruptive learners' behaviour because it is unbearable and stressful, which lowers History teachers' psychological and cognitive well-being (Okeke et al., 2023). In this way, History learners' disruptive behaviour and attitude may demotivate their teachers and ultimately affect their performance in public examinations negatively as teachers may ineffectively transmit historical knowledge to them. Conversely, Kahveci (2023) debates that negative attitude and behaviour of teachers can lead to learners' negative attitude and behaviour ultimately resulting in subject failure due to feelings of sadness, hatred, anger, and oppression. From all appearances, teachers' attitude and behaviour significantly influence learners' attitude and behaviour with positive teachers motivating and developing positive learning attitude, while negative teachers demotivate learners, leading to high failure rates in public examinations.

2.3.23 Congested classrooms

Congested classrooms may also influence the performance of History learners in their public examinations. Mani et al. (2020), clarify that there are congested classrooms with inability to accommodate a large number of learners in high schools. According to West and Meier (2020), lack of teachers and inadequate classrooms are the key contributors of congested classrooms. These authors stress that teachers struggle with managing large classrooms with learners and efficiently revisiting stages, as they have limited time to attend to all learners. Consequently, based on the ideas of Mankgele (2023), classrooms with insufficient spaces are found to hinder learners effective learning and outcomes. Apparently, this may affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations because teachers may fail to address all the learners such as failure to

offer continuous assessment through several quizzes, tests, and exercises to maintain learners' commitment and understanding of the taught concept. For example, the teacher may not be able to address all learners' questions during learning, as they may need clarification on specific concepts.

2.4 Mitigation of History learners' performance in public examinations

Historically, Annua-Sekyi and Nti (2015) emphasise crucial role of pedagogical relationships between teachers and their learners in teaching and learning, as both are active participants in classroom settings. Nevertheless, in reality, this is not always the case as Mani et al. (2020) argue that the majority of teachers employ a banking approach system in which learners are passive recipients of knowledge rather than actively participating in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, the literature further shows that qualified teachers' qualities and effective use of teaching-learning resources significantly influence their pedagogical relationships with learners and their academic performance (Iquabal et al., 2022). Therefore, History teachers should foster a positive pedagogical relationship with their learners to enhance their academic learning performance in public examinations.

As emphasised by the literature, an incompetence in English as a medium of instruction is not only a problem to the learners but also to their teachers (Mhonyiwa, 2014; Patrick, 2020). According to Martirosyan et al. (2015), self-perceived English proficiency is influenced by motivation, self-efficacy, confidence, and a positive attitude towards English language so that teachers are better equipped to confidently and fluently deliver the lesson in the classroom. In light of this, Tian et al. (2022) advise teachers to steadily raise learners' English literacy levels by incorporating more teaching tasks, and activities, concentrating on developing learners' language proficiency, critical thinking, and learning methods during the teaching process. The implication here is that History teachers must not only concentrate on the correct historical content of learners but they must also concentrate on their correct use of English.

Support from school management is another factor influencing performance of History learners in their public examinations. In response to this challenge, Nzoka and Orodho (2014) propose enhancing leadership skills through exhaustive training of principals, enabling former learners to form organisations for government funding subsidies, and providing operational guidance and counselling. Further, Senguo and Ilomo (2020) suggest that school frontrunners should enhance their managerial practices, involve parents in decision-making processes, and accept constructive

ideas from learners to enhance academic performance. Jackson and Andala (2022) emphasise the importance of effective school management strategies and peer learning implementation in enhancing learners' performance. According to Sulain (2024), school administrators should refrain from autocratic management, giving teachers complete control over their workloads, instead, monitor them to ensure that they are following the rules and perform their work effectively. Apparently, school managers should improve their practices by involving parents in decision-making, embracing learners' constructive ideas, implementing effective management strategies, and offering guidance and counselling for History learners.

The issue of lack of resources need to be considered for better performance of History learners in their public examinations. It is in this regard that, Okongo et al. (2015) recommend that the government should allocate more funds for the purchase of teaching and learning resources, infrastructure development, teacher training, and recruitment. Juliana (2020) highlights the importance of community donations, the schools' prudent use of funds, and their efficient distribution of resources for the benefits of learners. Putting that into consideration, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2020) emphasises the necessity for sufficient, quality, and effective use of material resources by teachers and school management to enhance teaching and learning. Sengai and Mokhele (2022) also suggest that the government may set up resource centres where History teachers can borrow educational resources that are not always available in classrooms. Against this background, it would seem that in order to mitigate the performance of History learners, the government, community, school management, and teachers should collaborate to ensure the adequate quality, and efficient use of resources for History learners to improve their performance in public examinations.

The use of technology in the teaching of History has been shown to improve the performance of History learners in public examinations. Boadu et al. (2014) suggest that successful technology integration in History education requires teachers' familiarity with various technologies, motivational packages from managements of the schools, technology resources from the Ministry of Education and Training, and in-service training sessions. Musau and Abebe's (2015) study suggests that in order to help History teachers use information and communication technologies to enhance learners' performance, the government and non-government organisations should fund provision of computers and internet infrastructure to schools.

Furthermore, Monserate (2018) emphasises the importance of schools providing adequate computer use opportunities for learners, allowing learners to use technology independently, frequently, and providing teachers advanced technology training. With that being said, it seems that the government, non-government organisations, and school management should collaborate to provide schools with subsidised technological resources and infrastructures for the benefit of History learners. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Training should offer History teachers in-service training on the effective use of technology in the teaching of history.

In addition, motivation is a very important factor in influencing performance of History learners in public examinations. Fundamentally, Annua-Sekyi (2015) suggests that effective teaching and learning requires teachers to motivate their learners. In support, Iquabal et al. (2022) concur that motivated learners learn better than demotivated ones due to their ability to adapt their strategies based on workload. Additionally, Kokoro (2021) suggests that boosting teachers' motivation and effectiveness can be achieved through adequate salaries, fringe benefits, and in-service training. From all appearances, teachers who motivate their learners can foster a positive attitude, leading to better work ethic, punctuality, effective learning, and higher marks on performance of History learners in public examinations. Bearing that in mind, it would seem that teachers should be motivated so that they could motivate their learners in the teaching and learning.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory suggests that teachers should be intrinsically motivated and make the best choices to minimise stress and maximise their satisfaction (Vroom, 1964). Further, Kokoro (2022) highlights that motivating teachers is essential to achieving organisational goals and providing quality instruction. This is due to the fact that motivated teachers are unquestionably pleased; as a result, they are motivated to perform their jobs competently and with greater effort in order to produce high quality results. This is supported by the study of Wikiesmann et al. (2021). The study suggests that teachers should motivate their learners through the various applications of teaching aids and learners-centred methods. Therefore, the teaching and learning in the absence of resources appears to be advanced by motivated History learners who can choose from a wide range of options. These options may seem to address some of the barriers to instruction in order to deliver necessary and appropriate knowledge for use in the teaching and learning of History, which will improve the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

Moreover, Ullah et al. (2018) advise that History teachers should model positive behaviour and attitude towards their learners in the classroom, as this encourages their learners to study subject. This is in line with Iquabal et al.'s (2022), declaration that History teachers with positive behaviour, and attitude can positively influence their learners' performance in their public examinations, while those with negative behaviour and attitude negatively affect their performance in public examinations. In support, Briones (2021), echoes that learners with good behaviour, and attitude perform better than those without these aspects. Dar (2022) emphasises the importance of teacher and learner motivation in creating a positive classroom environment that promotes healthy interactions and goal achievement. Therefore, both History teachers and learners are urged to engage in good behaviour and attitude as positive attitude and behaviour can lead to better performance of History learners in their public examinations.

It appears that qualified and highly educated History teachers are deemed capable of providing good quality information to their learners. However, some highly educated and qualified History teachers may struggle to master subject content, necessitating teacher training through several workshops as suggested by Ntabeni (2006) and Fru (2015b). Along the same vein, Ene et al. (2022) suggest that educational administrators and governments should organise in-service trainings, workshops, and seminars for History teachers to improve their qualitative development experience that would enable them to enhance the performance of their learners in public examinations. In support, Peter et al. (2023) emphasise the need for workshops and seminars to address learners' persistent failure in public examinations.

In the opinions of Asif et al. (2020), professional teachers often involve learners in learning through discussion, independent learning, exercise writing, and appropriate response writing. Further, Oscan (2021) acknowledges that professional teachers, unlike unprofessional ones, actively work to enhance their teaching and learning resources, monitor learning, and effectively explain complex concepts. Actually, Peter et al. (2023) suggest prioritising the employment of qualified teachers by the government to enhance their experience and improve learners' performance in public examinations. Therefore, it could seem that the efforts and contributions of these teachers in the teaching and learning of History might promote performance of learners in their public examinations. For that reason, professional teachers should further work hard, monitor learning, and explain difficult concepts so that they can be comprehensible to History learners.

Furthermore, according to Oscan (2021), improved family education levels, good income from good paying job and learners' good health positively affect learners' academic success and attitude towards learning, as educated, working parents and learners with good health often have a positive outlook towards school. To support this, Argon and Kiyici (2012) concur that educated families can explain complex concepts to their children. Emanuel (2017) emphasises the need for parental sensitisation to improve children's psychological status, reduce stigma, and address poverty as a root cause of poor performance in public examinations. Resultantly, parents' education level can effectively affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations, suggesting their collaboration with teachers to utilise their knowledge for academic assistance.

Apparently, peer pressure could affect academic performance of History learners in their public examinations. In conformity with that, Alzoubi (2021) posits that friends' influence is more potent than that of families due to their shared age and environment over specific periods. In order to address the challenge of peer pressure, Simba and Kabuka (2016) suggest the practice of disciplinary in the school environment, as schools with a strong disciplinary climate tend to have higher improvements in learners compared to those with less discipline. In alignment with this, Dagogo (2020) concedes that disciplined learners are able to pass their examinations than undisciplined learners. The aforementioned scholars seem right, as many History learners may struggle in their public examinations due to peer pressure from negative friends. Nonetheless, good friendship among disciplined History learners who frequently collaborate and support each other can significantly enhance their performance in public examinations.

According to Phaeton (2017), curriculum can be problematic since things do not always go as planned due to potential discrepancies between curriculum designers' expectations and actual classroom activities. Basic principles of curriculum alignment, as proposed by Ziebell and Clarke (2018), stipulate that learners' knowledge should align with their teachings and assessments to determine their achievement level. Meij and Merx's (2018) findings emphasise the importance of ensuring alignment between the planned (intended), implemented (enacted) and assessed curriculum. Therefore, it seems that there should be clear communication among curriculum designers, teachers, examiners, and markers to align examination questions set with content and marking schemes. It is for this reason that Sengai and Mokhele (2021) argue that policy-makers

should endeavour to include teachers in curriculum reforms in order to address their concerns, as they are essential to the successful implementation of curricula.

2.5 Empirical Review

Ntabeni (2006) conducted a qualitative study about the status of History teaching, learning, and examination results in Lesotho, 2000-2004, providing insight for teacher education. The study focused on the unsatisfactory status of History teaching and learning in Lesotho. The study utilised five-year documentations of examination results for data analysis. It observed a declining number of schools and learners that still offer History and unsatisfactory performance of learners as the two indicators of unsatisfactory status of history.

Ntabeni (2007) conducted another qualitative study about History teaching, learning, and Junior Certificate examination results in Lesotho, 2000-2006: Implications for teacher education. The study used a seven-year documentation of Junior Certificate History examination results. It revealed that unsatisfactory public examination performance of History learners in Junior Certificates is due to lack of essay writing skills, possibly due to insufficient teacher training of both qualified teachers and student teachers.

Another related study was carried by Lekhetho (2013). He conducted a qualitative study in Lesotho on stakeholder perspectives on strategies that can improve learner performance in school-leaving examinations in Lesotho. The study involved learners, teachers, deputy principals, school board members, and school inspectors as participants with data generated through questionnaires. The 25 schools were selected through stratified random sampling, while the learners were selected through random sampling, and the data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Unlike the studies of Ntabeni (2006) and (2007) that recommend in-service training for teachers, the Lekhetho's (2013) study suggests that enhancing academic performance requires collaboration, English Language culture, regular class attendance, purposeful leadership, discipline, and learner selectivity.

Again, Lebata (2014) conducted a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews and document analysis as the research instruments. The study analysed the performance of Biology 5090 learners in selected high schools in Lesotho, using General System Theory (GST). Similar to the findings of Ntabeni's (2006) and (2007) on History learners, Lebata's (2014) study revealed that learners in Biology 5090 perform poorly due to factors like lack of resources, demotivation,

and ignorance of instructions, in-service teacher training, low classroom attendance, and inappropriate teaching strategies.

Additionally, Mhonyiwa's (2014) qualitative study used semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion, observation and documentary analysis to investigate factors influencing examination performance in commercial subjects in Tanzania. The study of Mhonyiwa (2014), unlike Ntabeni (2006) and (2007), Lekhetho (2013), and Lebata (2014), revealed that the qualifications of teachers significantly influence learners' performance in their public examinations. The study further showed that unqualified teachers, heads of department, and principals negatively affect the performance of learners due to lack of leadership skills and inclusive content knowledge, affecting delegating tasks to other learners.

Furthermore, Mwatwhana et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative study with the use of descriptive design in Kenya on the impact of History teaching/learning resources on learner performance. The study discovered that most Kenyan schools lack adequate History resources like textbooks, teachers' guides, maps, game facilities, and stationary, while minorities have sufficient resources. Further, the study discovered that few libraries have shortage of textbooks and journals due to insufficient funds for new publications. Apart from that, it was found out that most of the schools lack libraries due to financial constraints and school managements' prioritisation of learning and teaching resources. Therefore, unlike the other empirical reviewed studies, Mwathwana et al.'s (2014) attributed unsatisfactory performance of History learners in public examinations to the limited supply of resources.

Limene (2018) also conducted a mixed method study on examining factors influencing academic performance of grade 12 learners in English Language. The study showed that all interviewed teachers were young, aged 25-36, with one teacher being 37 or older. Despite the young and energetic teachers, there was no significant improvement in the performance of grade 12 learners. These teachers could have improved performance of grade 12 learners because according to Wanyama (2013), young teachers in most of the schools contribute positively to the performance of their learners.

Mani et al. (2020) carried out a qualitative study about assessing the factors affecting learners' academic performance in secondary schools in Kenema City. The participants were different teachers from different subjects including history. Differently from the other empirical reviewed

studies, the findings of Mani et al. (2020) demonstrated that teachers were using and mastering English as a language of instruction. However, the study revealed that despite teachers' mastery of English and school efforts to improve the English proficiency of learners, most learners struggle with English as a medium of instruction, as they are unable to speak and write English effectively. Therefore, learners' inability to master English led to significant loss of concepts in their lessons. For instance, one of the History teachers claimed that learners struggle to distinguish between the effects and reasons of the scramble for Africa due to their lack of English proficiency.

Fisher's (2023) qualitative study in the United States of America utilised semi-structured interviews with eight teachers, employing phenomenological design and thematic analysis for data analysis. The study was on the teachers' perceptions of learner performance on the Advanced English Language and Composition exam in Department of Defense Schools. The study revealed that various instructional and population factors affecting learners learning include reduced instructional time, lack of preparation, absenteeism, and reliance on computer-assisted software, COVID-19, and learners' lack of material knowledge.

2.3.1 Justification of gap for this study

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in five high schools. For that matter, the study aimed to address three types of gaps identified in the empirical review which are knowledge gap, empirical gap, and theoretical gap. The studies reviewed lacked a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives of teachers regarding the public examinations' performance of History learners in Lesotho. Most studies reviewed were not specifically focused on the History subject, instead, they were about factors affecting learners' internal performance and were conducted outside the context of Lesotho. However, Ntabeni (2006) and (2007) conducted similar studies on performance in public examinations of History learners, focusing on the status of History teaching and learning.

Even though Lekhetho's (2013) study did not directly address History but instead concentrated on how learners' poor performance on public examinations may be improved, it is nonetheless comparable to this current study. Besides, the majority of the reviewed studies on performance in public examinations were attributed to other subjects such as commercial subjects and English Language, while some were not subject specific but general. A typical example includes the studies of Lekhetho (2013), Mhonyiwa (2014), Limene (2018) and Fisher (2023).

More importantly, most of the participants from the reviewed studies were parents, teachers, learners, and head of departments, deputy principals and principals. It is noted that previous reviewed studies did not employ Expectancy Theory and this implies that there are inconsistencies, limitations, and gaps regarding teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in Lesotho as highlighted in the above paragraphs. Therefore, Expectancy Theory was employed in this study to help in addressing the identified gaps from the reviewed studies.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter described the status of History in the national curriculum regarding the performance of learners. The chapter further explained the factors influencing the performance of History learners in public examinations. The factors were explained in detail on how they affected the performance of History learners both negatively and positively. Furthermore, the chapter provided information on how performance of History learners can be mitigated. Finally, the chapter reviewed empirical studies and was able to provide justification for the gap in the earlier studies.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. The focus of this chapter is on the detailed elaboration of research methodology with reference to research paradigm, research approach, research design and population and sampling procedure in this study. The chapter further focuses on the research instruments used in this study, and how they were used to generate data. Apart from that, the chapter explains the process of data analysis in this study with the use of both inductive and deductive thematic analysis. Finally, the chapter discusses the trustworthiness of this study and its research ethics employed in the process of data generation.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The philosophical lens of this study was interpretivism paradigm. The central purpose of this paradigm in this study was to understand the subjective world of human experience (Gemma, 2018). Therefore, the paradigm in this study was used to help me to make meaning of data through intellectual and cognitive processing which were informed by my interaction with History teachers (Shard, 2018). This paradigm enabled me to interact with History teachers as my participants and hear their views about the performance of History learners in public examinations. Borrowing the views of Creswell (2018), this paradigm was used to help me understand and interpret the views and contextual meaning of the participants on performance in History public examinations. Therefore, interpretivism paradigm was used to understand teachers' viewpoints as well as their interpretations on performance of History learners in their public examinations.

Furthermore, the ontological assumption of this paradigm is that there are multiple perspectives on one incident and social reality, that is, people interpret and make their own meaning differently (Scotland, 2012). In this study, the paradigm was used to help me to acquire multiple views from the History teachers on the performance of History learners in public examinations with the focus on the status of History in national curriculum, factors influencing performance of History learners in their public examinations and mitigation on performance of History learners. It is for this reason that different History teachers from different high schools were selected to hear their different perspectives.

Fundamentally, I was engaged with teachers through dialogue, recording, questions, and listening during the data generation period. The adoption of the interpretivist paradigm helped me gain a thorough understanding of how History teachers perceive performance in History public examinations through their facial expressions, behaviours emotions and differing opinions. I was able to note down all these in my field notes to be used during interpretation. This enabled me to describe the reality of what actually happened and ultimately gain deep insight of the phenomenon. Again, it allowed me to reach conclusion regarding teachers' perceptions on the real status of History in national curriculum considering performance of History learners, major factors influencing performance of History learners and how poor performance of History learners in public examinations could be mitigated. However, the data generated by this paradigm is less likely to be generalised due to its independence on specific context and viewpoints.

3.3 Research approach

The study employed the qualitative approach. Qualitative research may be defined as a researcher's position and interpretive practices, aiming to make the world visible through their observations (Dentin & Lincoln, 2011). Further, Hamersley (2018) highlights that qualitative research involves generating and analysing non-numerical and unstructured data, emphasising the role of subjectivity in understanding concepts, opinions, or experiences about various naturally occurring cases. The study explored the differing perspectives of teachers across five schools regarding the performance of History learners in their public examinations, requiring interpretation by both participants and me and which is in support of Cohen et al. (2018) ideas that highlight ontological multiple realities in interpreting a situation by all parties involved in qualitative research.

Epistemologically, Creswell (2013) accentuates that qualitative research behaviour and data are socially situated, context-related, context-dependent, and context-rich, all influenced by the context in which they are conducted. In support, Cohen et al. (2018) assert that qualitative research consists of assumptions and interpretive contexts that inform the study of research problem in order to address the meaning which individuals assign to a social problem. As a result, in this study, I utilised a qualitative approach in order to understand, describe, and explain the multiple differing interpretations on the status of History in national curriculum regarding performance of History learners in their public examinations, its sources, consequences as well as its mitigation from the perspectives of different teachers from five high schools in Maseru district. This aligns with the

words of Cohen et al. (2018) which indicate that qualitative researchers concentrate on the subjective explanations, opinions, and interpretations of phenomena by participants.

Eventually, this study incorporated teachers' voices, researcher's reflection, a comprehensive description of History learners' performance in public examinations, a call for change, and a contribution to literature on the problem. In addition, the qualitative approach was used to gain a comprehensive understanding of performance in History public examinations from the perspectives of both the participants and myself. Cohen et al. (2018) emphasise the importance of qualitative approach in providing in-depth understanding of meanings, actions, non-observable and observable phenomena, attitudes, intentions, and behaviours. Therefore, qualitative approach assisted me to gain in-depth understanding of performance in History public examinations through History teachers' meanings, actions, behaviours, attitudes, intentions, and non-observable and observable sensations.

3.4 Research design

This study used the case study design which is defined as a design that enables investigation of a phenomenon in its environmental context using a diversity of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2010). Similarly, McCombie's (2023) adds that the case study design is a detailed study of a specific subject, such as a person, group, place, event, organisation or phenomenon in order to describe, compare, evaluate and understand different aspects of a research problem.

Essentially, the five schools in Maseru district of Lesotho were used as multiple case studies in their multiple different experiences on performance in History public examinations. These cases were used in order to gain concrete, contextual and in-depth knowledge from the perspectives of teachers on performance of History learners in their public examinations as a problem in those five environments. The use of these five schools aimed to comprehend the variations and similarities among these cases, thereby enabling the discovery of contrasting outcomes. This helped me to gain a comprehensive understanding of teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations.

However, the process of generating data using the case study design was time-consuming for me due to the large amount of data that required sifting. By giving me erroneous and incomplete answers to the questions I asked, the participants also impacted the results. It took me a long time to confirm the information they gave me and had to ask them to provide it again. Notwithstanding

several constraints of the case study design the design enabled me to thoroughly delve into perceptions of History teachers on performance in History public examinations. The use of case study design further helped me to provide rich insights into the underlying factors influencing performance of History learners from the perspectives of different teachers from different schools.

3.5 Population and sampling procedure

Population refers to the entire group that a researcher needs to draw conclusions from whereas the sampling technique may be defined as the actual list of individuals that the sample will be drawn from (McCombie's, 2023). The target population of this study was seven secondary school History teachers and it was selected using purposive non-probability sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique whereby participants are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices (Taherdoost, 2020).

Therefore, in this study, History teachers were purposively selected because they have in-depth knowledge about public examinations performance of History learners as Cohen et al. (2018) state that purposive sampling is used to access knowledgeable people. Additionally, satisfactory and unsatisfactory performing schools were also purposively selected to compare their performance in public examinations of History learners. The study aimed to examine factors behind these performances, teaching and learning approaches, and how these approaches affect learners' performance and potential mitigation strategies on performance of History learners in public examinations. Purposive sampling, being qualitative in nature, helped me to explore the nuances of History teachers' experiences, opinions, and actions. Consequently, it enhanced my comprehension of how well History learners perform in public examinations as perceived by experienced and knowledgeable History teachers.

3.6 Research instruments

Data generation instruments are the tools that are used to measure, generate and analyse data related to the interests of the researcher's study (Duke University Libraries, 2023). In alignment with this, Insight (2022) affirms that research instruments are the tools used to measure, acquire and analyse data from subject around the research topic. This study used open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and field notes to gather data on teachers' perspectives on the performance of History learners in their public examinations. The instruments are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs, respectively.

3.6.1 Open-ended questionnaires

Questioner Software (2022) defines open-ended questionnaires as free-form surveys that allow respondents to answer in open-text format, based on their complete knowledge and understanding. In addition, Shout (2020) adds that open-ended questionnaires are questions that allow participants to provide free-form responses in their own words, drawing on their own experiences. In this study, History teachers were freely responded to the questions about the status of History in the national curriculum and how History learners perform in public examinations based on their experience, knowledge and comprehension. Thus, as a consequence of the public examination performance of History learners, open-ended questionnaires were used to allow History teachers to express their thoughts, feelings and experiences in detail (Gharehbagh et al., 2022). This research generation tool was addressing research question one which was “What are the History teachers’ views on the status of History in the national curriculum considering learners’ performance in public examinations?”

In this study, open-ended questionnaires helped me to gather deep insights of data about the status of History from participants because participants elaborated on their experiences, thoughts, and feelings with provision of more examples. This was strengthened by my probing of participants through asking more questions so that they could elaborate more on the targeted responses especially where they provided short answers on the questions asked. On the other hand, this became a disadvantage to me because some of the responses of my participants deviated from the primary focus as some of the participants provided irrelevant information to the questions asked due to the freedom in answering with own words.

3.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

Cho (2018) defines semi-structured interviews as a qualitative data collection tool that combines pre-determined open questions for speedy discussion, allowing interviewers to explore specific themes and responses further. In addition, George (2023) adds that semi-structured interviews are a data collection technique that consistently asks questions that are not arranged within a pre-determined thematic framework. Therefore, in order to guide the conversation with the participants, I prepared a set of predetermined questions on the factors influencing performance of History learners in their public examinations and on the mitigation of poor performance of History learners in their public examinations.

The purpose of using semi-structured interviews in this study was to uncover teachers' perceptions, beliefs, values and emotions about performance in History public examinations and providing valuable insights into their subjective experiences. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study because they give comparable and reliable data as well as a room to ask follow-up questions because of the combination of structured and unstructured questions (Ruslin et al., 2022). In doing so, I was able to acquire in-depth information on research question 2 which was about perceptions of teachers on the factors influencing History learners' performance in public examinations and research question 3 which focused on the suggestions on mitigation of History learners' poor performance in public examinations.

More importantly, semi-structured interviews assisted me to explore specific areas of interest which in this case was teachers' perceptions on factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations and mitigation of History learners' poor performance in public examinations. Therefore, due to its adaptability and flexibility, semi-structured interviews also assisted me in exploring unanticipated information and capturing intricate information. With relation to the performance of History learners in public examinations, the instrument also assisted me in facilitating a cooperative and co-constructive knowledge-building process by reflecting the complexity of teachers' lived experiences in the process of teaching.

I was able to probe History teachers further and go deeper into their narratives by using semi-structured interviews, which enabled me to uncover hidden meanings and intricate details about performance of History learners in public examinations. This is because the open-ended format of these interviews encouraged detailed explanations, first-hand accounts, and contextual insights, which helped me to fully comprehend how teachers felt about performance in History public examinations. With that being said, I did not only hear teachers' thoughts about the performance of History learners in public examinations, but I also perceived their expressions, observed their feelings, and I was able to draw conclusions about their perceptions.

Probing participants, however, became disadvantageous to me as it took up a lot of time, and some of them ended up getting upset at me because they felt I had taken too much of their time and hindered some of their commitments. Some of the participants provided short answers because they seemed tired of being probed. For that reason, I ultimately decided to omit some of the

insightful probing questions in order to save participants from being held for an extended amount of time.

3.6.3 The field notes

According to Creswell (2013), the qualitative research method encourages researchers to take field notes to enhance data and provide rich context for analysis. Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) define field notes as researcher's private, personal thoughts, ideas and queries regarding their observations and interviews. Additionally, field notes may also be defined as a record of activities observed and informal discussion from the field (Deggs & Hernandez, 2018). Further, the University of Southern California (2024) defines field notes as a researcher's note-taking during a field study, recording observations, behaviours, activities, and other features. Therefore, this study utilised field notes to document emerging issues, ideas, questions, and potential challenges encountered during data generation.

As identified by Neuman (2011), the type of field notes used in qualitative data collection consists of jotted data and direct observation written immediately after leaving the field. Field notes also consists of inference which involve reflecting social relationships, emotions and meanings, analysis which includes methodological strategies and theoretical notes, interview notes which involves the information about interview location and interviewee and personal journal which includes personal feelings and emotional reactions. Therefore, with the use of field notes, I wrote what I observed which is related to the performance of History learners at the five schools and what I observed during interviews. The observation that I included in the field notes was the matter of four selected schools having computer laboratories and one school having no computer laboratory.

In the field notes, I also recorded the expressions of teachers when talking about lack of History resources in their schools. One of the teachers even cried as she emphasised the issue of how difficult it is to be a one History teacher teaching all learners from grade 8 to grade 11. This crying implies that the participant was really overwhelmed with the workload and that affects her negatively. Therefore, scarcity of History teachers may result into overloading of work to some teachers and this may affect the performance of History learners negatively in public examinations.

According to Deggs and Hernandez (2018), field notes help in the creation of reasoned records and bring forth insightful qualitative data to ensure a complete understanding of the research

settings and phenomenon. In support, Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) assert that field notes aid in creating a comprehensive, auditory, and detailed description of interviews' data, thereby enhancing participants' comprehension of the phenomenon. Therefore, using field notes helped me to attain complete understanding of the location of the five schools where data was generated and I also attained complete understanding about the perceptions of teachers on performance in History public examinations.

3.7 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data in this study. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a credible method for identifying and reporting themes (patterns), experiences, meanings and the realities of participants in data. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2012) define thematic analysis as a systematic method for identifying, organising, and providing insight into patterns of meaning across a dataset. In support, Crosley (2021) defines thematic analysis as the study of analysing the patterns and themes in dataset to uncover the underlying meaning. Similarly, Caulfield (2023) explains thematic analysis as a method of qualitative data analysis that involves closely examining data to identify common themes, ideas, topics, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. Therefore, in the context of this study, manual thematic analysis was used to analyse data on teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. The analysis was aimed to uncover underlying meaning about the status of History in national curriculum concerning the performance of History learners, factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations and mitigation on poor performance of History learners.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there are two approaches to thematic analysis which are inductive and deductive approaches. Inductive analysis is defined as a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into the analytic pre-conditions of the researcher whereas deductive thematic analysis is driven by the researcher's theoretical or existing knowledge (analytical interest) and the researcher comes to the data with some preconceived expected themes to be found reflected there Caulfield (2023).

In contrast to deductive thematic analysis, which is guided by the researcher's theoretical or prior knowledge and proceeds with the assumption that certain themes will be reflected on data, inductive thematic analysis is the process of coding the data and extract themes from participants' responses (Caulfield, 2023). Therefore, in this study, I employed both a manual inductive and

deductive thematic analysis because themes were derived from the existing knowledge and the responses of the participants by grouping the identical themes together. In other words, themes were not only derived from existing knowledge but they were also derived from the emerging responses of participants. I used a manual thematic analysis because it was accessible to me unlike software analysis which was difficult for me to access.

In this study, using both deductive and inductive thematic analysis was beneficial. Deductive approach helped me with a structured approach to analyse data about teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. It also helped me to compare similar findings across studies that used similar codes on the literature. Using it helped me with the reduction of bias because the codes used are pre-determined. On the other hand, using inductive thematic analysis helped me to develop deep understanding of the data on the teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. It also helped me with the identification of the new emerging themes that were not considered initially.

As identified by Brawn and Clarke (2006) and Caulfield (2023), thematic analysis comprises six stages namely: familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing up. In this study, I used and followed these processes manually to analyse data on teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. Familiarisation is the initial stage of data analysis where I thoroughly understood and engaged with the data through active and frequent reading and transcription of verbal data into written form. The second stage is coding data whereby I highlighted sections of texts such as phrases or sentences and come up with written labels to describe their content.

Additionally, the third stage is generating themes which consist of sorting the varied codes into prospective themes and arranging all the relevant coded data extracts in the identified themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Here, I started analysing codes and examining how different they could combine to form a main single theme by examining the relationship between codes, themes, and different levels of themes. Here the initial codes may form main themes, whereas others may form sub-theme and others may be discarded (Caulfield, 2023).

The fourth stage of data thematic analysis involves reviewing themes, which involves re-reading the entire dataset for two purposes (Braun & Clark, 2012), firstly, for ascertaining whether the themes work in relation to the dataset or not and secondly, in order to code any additional data that

has been missed in earlier stages within themes. Therefore, here I reviewed identified themes by re-reading the entire data in order to see whether the themes are in line with the entire data or not and to code any missed data. Equally important, another phase is defining and naming themes in which the researcher identifies the core of each theme and the specific feature of the data that each theme captures (Braun & Clark, 2006). At this stage, I identified whether a theme contains any subtheme or not. The final stage is writing up which involves the final analysis and write up of the report (Caulfield, 2023). This analysis should provide a conscience, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting account of the story the data tell within and across themes. This is where I wrote a report of what I found in the field about teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations.

Thematic analysis is appropriate for any study that seeks to discover using interpretations in order to provide a researcher with analytic tools to make sense of data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis was employed in this study to discover in-depth understanding of teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations through careful reading and re-reading as well as interpretation of transcribed data from the aforementioned research questions in chapter one.

Principally, Crosley (2021) emphasises the importance of thematic analysis in examining participants' experiences, views and opinions using data derived from interviews, conversations, open-ended survey responses and social media posts. Therefore, in the context of this study, thematic analysis was used to explore teachers' views and opinions on the status of History in national curriculum, factors influencing History learners' performance in public examinations and how performance of History learners in public examinations should be mitigated. This was performed using semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires. Principally, by using this analysis, I had an opportunity to link generated data from field notes with the opinions of teachers through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires about teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations specifically factors influencing performance of History learners. This supports the ideas of Ibrahim (2012) when he indicates that thematic analysis is capable of detecting and identifying factors that influence any issue generated by the researcher. Moreover, thematic analysis was used because it offers flexibility in data interpretation and easy approach to large datasets by sorting them into broad themes (Caulfield, 2023). Despite its

flexibility, thematic analysis was time consuming and monotonous due to sifting through large volumes of text and manually assigning codes. However, I was urged to be patient and exercise caution in using thematic analysis to interpret teachers' responses on performance in History public examinations, as it is often subjective and based on the researcher's judgment. As a result, if I could not thoroughly consider data, I could miss its inference. For that reason, if not reflected very carefully, I may miss the inference in data. Contrary to this, I risked missing inference in data as thematic analysis enabled me to gain contextual understanding and in-depth exploration on performance in public examinations which enabled me to gain accurate interpretation and meaningful insights.

3.8 Trustworthiness of the research

As identified by Ghafouri and Ofoghi (2016), trustworthiness of the research refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation and methods used to ensure the quality of the study. As stated by Middleton (2023), trustworthiness is a very important aspect which is used to measure the quality of the research and how well the method and techniques will measure something. In this study, trustworthiness was used to determine how well open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and field-notes instruments measured perceptions of teachers on performance in History public examinations. In qualitative research like this one, trustworthiness consists of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the data and interpretations. Below are the detailed descriptions of four types of trustworthiness and how they were applied in this study.

3.8.1 Credibility

Ghafourri and Ofoghi (2016) define credibility as the extent to which the findings accurately represent the participants' experiences or views. Moreover, Connelly (2016) adds that credibility is the true value of qualitative research, indicating the accuracy and the correctness of the study's findings. Considering that, credibility can be enhanced through several strategies such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, member checking and triangulation (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016). Based on the ideas of Connelly (2016), prolonged engagement and persistent observation involve spending a significant amount of time in the field to allow the researcher to develop a deep understanding of the research context. In this study, I enhanced credibility by visiting the selected schools a month before I interviewed the participants

just to be familiar with them together with their working environment and build my trustworthiness with them. Then after that, I went to the field to generate data in the following month.

Peer debriefing consists of consulting and seeking feedback from fellow researchers who will review and assess transcripts, methodology and findings to gain different perspectives and reduce bias (Delve & Limpaecher, 2021). In order to do peer debriefing, I consulted my supervisor with my entire manuscript to check and review research methodology, and findings of the study and correct me. Not only that, I also consulted my classmates to check everything in methodology and findings and discussed with them. This helped me to gain different perspectives from different people and made a comprehensive conclusion in research methodology and findings and this helped me to reduce bias.

As per McKim (2023), member checking involves participants' evaluation of the researcher's interpretation to promote participants' validation whereas triangulation entails employing using several sources of data (data triangulation) or multiple researchers (investigator triangulation) to confirm findings. For member checking, I returned to the participants after transcribing data so that they could see whether I interpreted data as exactly as they answered the interviews. I even showed participants the findings of the study to see whether I interpreted their opinions on performance of History learners in public examinations as intended. In this study, to ensure trustworthiness through triangulation, I used several sources from the literature about performance of History learners in public examinations to see whether my findings would agree or disagree with the literature. The results were interpreted accurately and transparently without bias with the help of member triangulation, peer debriefing, and checking whereby the participants reviewed the researcher's interpretations. I also ensured credibility by sharing my ideas with other colleagues to gain different perspectives and I addressed any limitations and implications of this study.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to how much the results of the study are applicable in other contexts, circumstances and settings (Connelly, 2016). In alignment with this, Ghafouri and Ofoghi (2016) assert that transferability symbolises that findings of the present research will be the same as findings in the same situations hence their suitability for use in future. That is, it provides sufficient details on the site, participants and methods or procedures used to collect data and this may be

achieved through comprehensive description of the findings from multiple data generation techniques (The Farnsworth Group, 2023). In this study, transferability was ensured by comprehensive description of the findings from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and the field notes on the teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. I also ensured transferability by carefully and contextually defining the research questions before generating data, chose data generation methods and tools and piloted the research instruments to ensure their effectiveness.

3.8.3 Dependability

According to Elo et al., (2014), dependability refers to the stability of data over time and under various circumstances. Additionally, the Farnsworth Group (2023) adds that dependability is the measure of the consistency and reliability of the results of the study. In line with the above authors, Nguyen et al. (2021) confirm that dependability refers to the degree to which data generation and analysis are consistent. According to The Farnsworth Group (2023), dependability can be guaranteed by documenting the exact procedures followed for data generation, analysis, and interpretation as well as by providing enough relevant information to enable other researchers to repeat the study in an academic setting and produce consistent results. In order to ensure dependability, I wrote precise procedures which I followed in generating data in this study. I started with the paradigm, research approach, design, population sampling procedure, research instruments, data analysis procedures through six manual step processes. Trustworthiness of the research and research ethics protocols followed.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Shenton (2004) defines confirmability as the degree to which the research findings are objective and not influenced by the bias and beliefs of the researcher. Similarly, the Farnsworth Group (2023) affirms that confirmability is a proof that qualitative research is neutral without being influenced by the assumptions or prejudices of the researchers. Bearing that in mind, confirmability in this study was ensured through my justification of theoretical, methodological and analytical choices throughout the study to provide an understanding of how and why decisions were taken (Alele & Malau-Aduli, 2023). In other words, I ensured confirmability of this study by providing justification of why I used Expectancy Theory, interpretivism paradigm, qualitative approach, case study design, open-ended questioners, semi-structured interviews, filed notes and

thematic analysis in this study. Furthermore, justification of trustworthiness and research ethics also ensured confirmability of the study.

Additionally, Applied Doctoral Centrer (2024) concurs that confirmability is assured through audit trail, triangulation, reflexivity, member checking, data checking and re-checking during data generation and analysis. An audit trail is a clear coding schema that defines the codes and patterns found in analysis. I also ensured confirmability through submission of data to my participants to check it and see whether I presented it as exactly as what they had said. I also checked and re-checked data during the data generation process and I ultimately ensured confirmability of this study by providing clear coding schema through detailed explanation of codes and patterns found during thematic analysis process.

3. 9 Research ethics

Research ethics are the set of principles and guidelines that shape and guide researchers on how scientific research should be designed, conducted, managed, used and disseminated (Wagle, 2020). In addition, Davis and Lachlan (2017) define research ethics as the scientific principles, rules, guidelines and norms of research-related behaviour that a research community has decided are proper, fair and appropriate. Therefore, I followed all the ethical protocols in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the research, maintain scientific academic integrity and protect the rights of the History teachers as the participants of this study and to conduct a valid, reliable, legitimate and representative research (Bhandari, 2021). Following all the research protocols helped me to expand knowledge on the main objective of this research which is exploring teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in three high schools in Maseru.

First and foremost, I collected an introductory letter from the Faculty of Education and submitted it to the management of the targeted schools in order to seek permission to be allowed to generate data from those targeted schools. I also designed my own consent forms and gave them to participants before participating in this study. After that, ethical issues such as voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm and result communication were considered (Cohen et al., 2018). Below is the detail explanation of each ethical principle and how they were used in this study.

3.9.1 Voluntary participation

According to Bhandari (2023), voluntary participation implies that all participants choose to participate without any pressure and they are free to withdraw from the participation at any point without feeling an obligation to continue to participate. Putting that into consideration, I respected the decisions of the participants by not pressurising them to participate in the study and by allowing them to withdraw from participating at any time without providing any valid reason if they wish to withdraw. As part of ensuring voluntary participation, I also conscientised the participants that there are no negative consequences to their refusal to participate in the study.

3.9.2 Informed consent

Informed consent is defined as a condition whereby all prospective participants obtain and understand all the information needed to decide whether they want to participate or not (Bhandari, 2023). According to Fleming (2018), there must be oral explanation of the informed consent to the participants before they participate whereby they are fully informed of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, benefits of the study, risks, funding, institutional approval and what could be the consequences of their participation. As a result, after teachers agreed to participate in this study, they were allowed to willingly sign a consent form before participating and this informed consent was used as a contract between me and the participants. After that, I explained to the participants the purpose of the study, benefits of the study, made them aware of the risks that may occur during data generation, I conscientised them that there would be no monetary benefits for their participation in this study.

3.9.3 Anonymity

Based on the ideas of Fleming (2018), anonymity in research refers to the idea that participants in the study should not be able to be identified personally when their data is analysed, and that researchers should not record any direct or indirect personal identifiers that can be connected to any research participant. In this study, I ensured the anonymity by not collecting any personally identifying teacher participants' information such as names, phone numbers, email addresses, physical characteristics, photos, and videos (Bhandari, 2023). Instead, I kept the names of all the participants anonymous and I replaced their real names with pseudonyms whereby I named them participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

3.9.4 Confidentiality

According to Evergreen State College (2024), confidentiality refers to the condition in which the researcher knows who the participants are but removes all the identifying information from his report to protect their rights of privacy from others. Oxfam International (2020) recognises that confidentiality entails careful management of data such as storing data securely and separating identifiable information from other data. In this study, the researcher ensured confidentiality by keeping the records of generated data secure through the use of password protected files. The information that was discussed between the research and participants was kept confidential by not allowing anybody besides the participants to access generated data. I also clearly elaborated to the participants how generated data would be used and I stored it in my personal computer which is locked with a password and nobody could access it.

3.9.5 Potential for harm

This is whereby the researcher considers every possible source of harm to participants and concrete ways to mitigate them (Fleming, 2018). In the context of this study, I involved my supervisor to discuss steps that can be taken to reduce harm such as counselling services. According to Fleming (2018), harm can be in many different ways such as psychological, social, physical, legal harms, reputational, and resource loss (time). Psychological harm may occur when sensitive questions or tasks may initiate negative emotions such as shame or anxiety. Harm can also be social harm whereby participants can involve social risks and public embarrassment (stigma). Another essential harm to be considered is physical harm whereby pain or injury can result from the study procedures (Bhandari, 2023). In this study, I encountered psychological harm with one participant who became emotionally affected during interviews and had to provide counselling for her. She was bothered more about her working environment which seemed unconducive for her due to the principal ill-treating her while at the same time she was the only History teacher in that school.

3.9.6 Results communication

It involves good science communication as being honest, reliable, and credible in order to make the results transparent (Bhandari, 2023). This could be done through the avoidance of plagiarism and research misconduct. According to Bhandari (2023), plagiarism is defined as copying someone else's work without proper citation and reference while research misconduct refers to falsifying data, manipulating data analysis or misrepresenting results in research reports. Therefore, in this

study, I made the results to be transparent by ensuring that the study is free from plagiarism and by avoiding research misconduct through provision of proper citations and references.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research methodology employed was elaborated on throughout the entire study. Firstly, the chapter explained the research paradigm, research approach, research design, and population sampling. The interpretivism paradigm was used as a philosophical lens, a qualitative approach was employed, and a case study design was used. Basically, the research approach and design used in the study were judged pertinent to the purpose of the study because they effectively addressed the research questions, providing a deeper understanding of History teachers' perceptions of their learners on performance in History public examinations. The chapter further explained how open-ended questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and field notes as research instruments for this study were used in generating data. Apart from that, the study explained how the data was analysed using both inductive and deductive thematic analysis. Finally, the chapter explained the trustworthiness of this study and the research ethics addressed in it.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings on the teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in five high schools in Maseru. The findings are presented in three broad themes according to the three research questions. The themes are status of History in national curriculum, factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations and mitigation of History learners' poor performance in public examinations. Seven teachers provided their views through questionnaires on the status of History in the national curriculum considering learners' performance in public examinations. The same teachers were interviewed and they provided their perspectives on the factors influencing the performance of History learners in public examinations and how History learners' performance can be enhanced. The chapter starts with the demographic profile of participants. The data is presented using the tables from Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word.

4.2 Demographic profile of participants

This section presents the demographic profile of seven interviewed teachers. This includes data about the characteristics of each participant. This might help the reader to understand what kinds of participants were dealt with. The demographic profile could also help to shed light on particular characteristics that may help me to be able to analyse data by relating those unique qualities with the findings of the participants. In this study, demographic profile includes the age of the participants, their highest teaching qualification, teaching experiences and any other position besides teaching. More importantly, teaching qualifications and experiences of teachers were used as part of data analysis on factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants

Demographic variables	Participants	Frequency
Age	25-30	2
	31-35	1
	36-40	1
	41-45	1
	46-50	2
Total		7
Highest teaching qualifications	Bachelor's degree	5
	Postgraduate diploma	1
	Diploma	1
Total		7
Teaching experiences	1 year	1
	2 years	1
	3 years	1
	4 years	1
	10 years	1
	15 years	2
Total		7
Other position besides teaching	None	4
	Marker	1
	Administrative committee	1
	Examiner	1
Total		7

The data presentation in Table 1 above demonstrates the seven participants' responses regarding the benefits of History in Lesotho's national curriculum. The participants were asked the following question, *"What do you think could be some benefits of History in National curriculum of Lesotho?"* The above data shows that out of 7 participants, 5 were below 45 years old, whereas 2 were above 45 years old. The young participants' age ranged between 25 and 40, whereas the old participants' age ranged between 46 and 50.

Apart from that, five participants had the highest qualification of a bachelor's degree, while the other two had postgraduate diplomas and diplomas, respectively. Therefore, the findings of the study showed that the majority of the interviewed teachers were young and qualified. This could affect the performance of History learners positively because young teachers are more energetic and effective than old teachers. Besides, all the teachers were qualified to teach History to high school learners, although their qualifications differed, as the majority of teachers had the highest

qualification of degree, while one teacher had a postgraduate diploma and the remaining one had a diploma.

These various qualifications of History teachers may affect the performance of History learners differently, as postgraduate diploma holders are more advanced than bachelor's degree holders, whereas bachelor's degree holders are more advanced than diploma holders regarding knowledge impartation and implementation in the process of teaching and learning. The qualifications of all these teachers could have allowed them to improve the performance of History learners.

Further, four participants had less than five years of teaching experience, whereas two teachers had 15 years of teaching experience and one teacher has 10 years of teaching experience. The findings further revealed that among the interviewed teachers, there was a marker, an examiner, and a school committee administrator. The study demonstrated that the majority of the interviewed teachers had less than 5 years of teaching experience. On account of this, little teaching experience may influence the performance of high school History learners negatively because teachers with little teaching experience may not deliver History content as effectively as experienced teachers, and they still need to be monitored by the principals and experienced teachers.

On the other hand, more experienced History teachers may be able to help their learners perform better on History public examinations because they are more knowledgeable and competent in teaching historical content and are able to effectively and confidently impart it to learners. In doing so, they can improve the performance of History learners. Contrary to this, it may not always be the case, as in some schools, that less experienced teachers may affect the performance of History learners more positively than experienced teachers because they may work very hard. Some experienced History teachers may not put in enough preparation since they believe they already know everything and do not need to put in extra effort. Some may even miss classes frequently, which could have a detrimental impact on how well History learners perform in their public examinations.

4.3 Presentation of findings on the objectives

Data presentation and analysis on the objectives is categorised into two. The first part of analysis is from research question one and the data is retrieved from the open-ended questionnaires. The second part of data presentation and analysis is from research questions two and three as retrieved from semi-structured interviews.

4.4 Data presentation and analysis on open-ended questionnaires

This section presents the findings regarding the current status of History in the national curriculum of Lesotho considering learners' performance in public examinations. To put it in simpler words, this section presents the presentation and analysis on the views and opinions of participants from the questionnaires of research question 1. The research question read as follows: "What are the History teachers' views on the status of History in national curriculum considering learners' performance in public examinations?" The section starts with the benefits of History in national curriculum of Lesotho, the current number of History learners, general performance of History learners in 2023 and reasons for the poor performance of History learners in their public examinations.

4.4.1 Status of History in the national curriculum of Lesotho

This section presents the status of History in the national curriculum regarding learners' performance in public examinations. It is better to put the status of History in national curriculum into consideration because it is affected by the performance in History learners in public examinations. Since the subject seems to be performed poorly, this may result into bad and neglected status of the subject which may ultimately affect the attitude of both teachers and learners negatively. This negative attitude may further influence the performance of History learners hence the importance of highlighting the benefits of History subject in national curriculum as explained in detail in the following paragraph.

4.4.2 Benefits of History in national curriculum

Table 2: Benefits of History in National Curriculum

Participants	Category	Participant Quote
Participant 1	Moral values (empathy, and forgiveness), identity (genealogy), citizenship values, patriotism (nationalism), and community awareness.	“It teaches moral values, identity, citizenship values, patriotism and empathy, develops unity amongst the learners.”
Participant 2	Patriotism (nationalism, peace, unity, and nation development), and moral values (empathy, and forgiveness).	“Learners will develop patriotism, empathy and forgiveness values and this will help the country to develop peacefully.”
Participant 3	Patriotism (nationalism and nation development).	“...it could bring back our love for the country that will help learners to think on their country’s development.”
Participant 4	Patriotism	“It could potentially develop very much needed patriotism in Lesotho”
Participant 5	Global awareness (community, and national awareness), development of learners’ critical thinking skills, patriotism (collaboration, unity), moral values (appreciation of different cultures, values and norms).	“Learners know their History and History of other people, it teaches learners to know important current events in other countries such as the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Russia.... Learners learn and appreciate different cultures, values and norms....”
Participant 6	Patriotism	“It instils patriotism to the kids.”
Participant 7	Global awareness of events, learners’ critical thinking skills, reasoning skills (learners’ argumentative skills, and learners’ informed decisions).	“It teaches learners to be aware of the world-wide events.... It helps learners to develop reasoning skills...” “It helps learners to have their own views without being easily manipulated.”

From the two participants, as indicated in Table 2 above, it shows that History instils moral values like empathy, forgiveness, and appreciation for diverse cultures, norms, and values in learners. Participant 1 said, “*It teaches moral values, identity, citizenship values, patriotism, empathy, and unity among the learners as they grow up knowing where they come from.*” The other two participants mentioned that History improves the critical thinking skills of learners. Participant 5 emphasised, “*Learners will know their History and the History of others... develop critical*

thinking skills through essay writing... Learn and appreciate different cultures, values, and norms. develop values such as patriotism, collaboration, and unity.”

Participants further said that studying History is advantageous because it instils in learners’ citizenship values, identity awareness, enhances their reasoning and arguing skills, ability to make well-informed decisions, and awareness of community, national, and global events. Participant 7 further claimed:

History teaches learners to be aware of world-wide events and to note important current events in other countries, such as the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Russia. It also helps learners develop reasoning skills because the questions they are asked involve the argumentative essay section, where learners are asked to what extent a certain thing is beneficial to Basotho, for example.

Therefore, the majority of the participants showed the benefits of History in the Lesotho national curriculum, with patriotism receiving the most attention as they discussed and elaborated on it, with the exception of one participant who spoke about reasoning skills, critical thinking skills, and global awareness. It is for this reason that this study asserts that History is beneficial in the national curriculum of Lesotho as it helps learners develop moral values, citizenship values, patriotism, identity awareness, global awareness, critical thinking skills, and reasoning skills. This being the case, considering the benefits of History in the national curriculum of Lesotho can improve the status of the subject. Improving the status of History may result in a positive attitude of teachers and learners towards the subject; hence, teachers may work tirelessly to ensure that learners perform it well. Simultaneously, learners may have more time towards the subject; they may have an interest in learning; and they may work hard to ensure that they perform it well in their public examinations.

4.4.3 Current number of History learners

Table 3:Current Number of History learners

Participants	Number of learners	Decline/increase
Participant 1	20	Declining
Participant 2	15	Increasing
Participant 3	16	Declining
Participant 4	Less than 65	Increasing
Participant 5	22	Declining
Participant 6	20	Declining

The above data from Table 3 displays the number of grade 11 History learners who are expected to write their public examinations in 2024. Participants 1 and 6 were from the same school and participants 4 and 7 were also from the same school, while all the remaining participants were from different schools. Participants were asked the following question: “In comparison to prior years, what do you think could be the cause of the decreasing or increasing of the number of grade 11 learners?”

The data showed a decrease in grade 11 History learners expected to take the 2024 examinations, except for one school from participant 4 and participant 7, with less than 65 learners. The other schools have 20, 15, 16, and 22 grade 11 History learners, respectively. Therefore, the data and presentation from Table 3 show that, while the participants from two schools revealed an increase in grade 11 History learners, the majority of participants in three schools reported that the number of grade 11 History learners was declining in comparison to prior years. Therefore, the decline in the number of History learners implies that there are few learners who opt for history. This may be because of the consistently unsatisfactory performance of History learners and the false belief that History is a failing subject. This decrease may further contribute to the unsatisfactory status of History in the national curriculum of Lesotho.

On the question of the reasons that might have led to the decline in the number of History learners, participant 3 said, “*Learners are declining because there is a claim that the subject is not performing well.*” On a similar issue, participant 1 answered: “*To be honest, the numbers are decreasing year after year because the subject has not received any justice from the Ministry of Education and Training or government, so learners become reluctant to take the subject due to its poor performance.*” The injustice the participant is talking about may be the lack of employed qualified History teachers by the government, the lack of provision of History textbooks by the

government, and the exclusion of History teachers in setting History examination questions. Consequently, this injustice may affect the performance of History learners negatively in their public examinations if not considered.

On the other hand, participant 4 said, *“The number is increasing because History is compulsory in this institution I am teaching.”* It would seem that in institutions where History is compulsory, the number of learners who are doing History is higher than in schools where it is not compulsory. This is because in schools where History is compulsory, all grade 11 learners will have to do it whether they like it or not, while in schools where History is elective, most learners will not select it due to several reasons, such as its already unsatisfactory status due to its poor performance in public examinations. This implies that History being compulsory in schools can make the subject more popular and recognized in the national curriculum of Lesotho.

4.4.4 General performance of History learners in public examinations of 2023

Table 4: General Performance of History learners in their Public Examinations of 2023

Participant s	Performance	Teachers’ feelings towards performance	of History
Participant 1	Poor	Not satisfied	<i>“This subject would be eliminated from the curriculum and learners will continue to hate the subject.”</i>
Participant 2	Poor	Not satisfied	<i>“It is completely going to be removed from the school curriculum.”</i>
Participant 3	Poor	Not satisfied	<i>“It shall lack learners.”</i>
Participant 4	Poor	Not satisfied	<i>“As is already happening, phasing out of the subject in secondary schools.”</i>
Participant 5	Good	Satisfied	<i>“Schools will exempt it from their curriculum since it is an elective subject.”</i>
Participant 6	Poor	Not satisfied	<i>“Schools will cancel the subject.”</i>

Participant	Poor	Not satisfied	<i>“It is already happening that many schools have deleted history, and it will end up being removed from the curriculum. I witnessed this happen while serving as president of the Lesotho History Teachers Association and from 2007 History topped being compulsory in schools.”</i>
7			

The data presentation from Table 4 above shows the participants’ views on the general performance of History learners in their public examinations in 2023. Firstly, the participants were asked the following question, *based on your opinions, is the performance of History in public examinations poor or good? Are you satisfied with your performance, and why?* Six participants from four schools, as indicated by the above table, reported poor performance by History learners in the 2023 final examinations as compared to previous years, while one participant rated their performance as good. Consequently, the analysis revealed that History learners consistently perform poorly in public examinations. Therefore, it seems that it is this consistent poor performance that might have contributed to the unsatisfactory status of History, as indicated by Ntabeni (2006) and Fru (2015a).

Concerning the questionnaires asking participants about their satisfaction with learners’ performance in their public examinations and the implication of the continuous poor performance of History learners in public examinations, the analysis revealed that six respondents expressed dissatisfaction, with the exception of one participant in a school that performed well. The majority of participants were therefore not satisfied with the performance, except for one participant, as mentioned above. Thus, it appears that the participant who was satisfied was motivated by the learners’ performance in his school, while the participants who were not satisfied were demotivated by the learners’ performance in their schools. This highlights the significance of Expectancy Theory as employed in this study. For the demotivation of History teachers, the theory guides them to encourage their learners to perform better in public examinations by making the best decisions that can inspire them as well as their learners even in times of unsatisfactory performance (Vroom, 1964).

Four participants expressed dissatisfaction with the way History learners perform in public examinations, fearing the removal of the subject from the curriculum. Participant 1 said, *“I am not satisfied because this may lead to the reluctance of learners to take the subject, and the poor performance puts the subject under the pressure of being eliminated from the curriculum.”*

Another participant expressed dissatisfaction, citing the demotivation that comes with poor performance by History learners in public examinations. Moreover, participant 3 said, *“I am not satisfied because most of the learners are failing, and this hinders my interest in teaching History.”* The demotivation of History teachers may affect their learners as well as their performance in History public examinations, hence the importance of motivation for both History teachers and their learners.

Additionally, participant 6 expressed dissatisfactions with the new curriculum. She claimed, *“I am not satisfied with the new curriculum because learners fail to handle the content delivered because they come to high school level young and not well prepared.”* Due to the introduction of automatic promotion in primary schools in Lesotho, it seems that most of the learners come to high school unprepared and without knowing how to write, and this affects the performance of History learners negatively in public examinations. This is because it may be difficult and time consuming for high school History teachers to train learners on how to write, and it may ultimately lead to teachers not covering historical content very well, hence the negative influence on History public examinations.

On the other hand, participant 5 said, *“I am good since History teachers receive content, methodology, and assessment training from the Lesotho History Teachers Association and Ministry of Education and Training annually.”* The implication here is that; this training might have resulted in the good performance of History learners in public examinations. However, this was in contradiction with most of the participants, who claimed a lack of training for History teachers. Although this participant expressed satisfaction with the performance of History learners in public examinations, he warned against removing the subject from the syllabus if it continued to be poorly performed. Concerning the implications of History if it consistently performs unsatisfactorily, this study revealed that all participants feared that the subject may be removed from the curriculum. It is understood that History was compulsory in some schools in previous years, but due to its higher failure rate, most of the schools started removing it from the curriculum, as indicated by participant 7 in the above table and Ntabeni’s (2007) study.

4.4.5 The reasons for the poor performance of History learners in public examinations

Table 5: Reasons for the Poor Performance of History learners in Public Examinations

Participant	Categories	Participants Quote
s		

Participant 1	Poor teaching strategies, the limited time slots allocated, lack of textbooks and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) targets.	<i>"...the poor teaching strategies employed by the teachers..., absence of resources such as textbooks and ICT targets to teach the subject."</i>
Participant 2	Shortage of History teachers, demotivation of History teachers, lack of technology, lack of content knowledge by History teachers, frequent shift in marking of history, lack of History textbooks, miscommunication between Examination Council of Lesotho (ECOL) and History teachers.	<i>"There is only one teacher teaching the subject, teachers are demotivated, lack of History textbooks, lack of technology in the teaching of History, lack of content knowledge by other History teachers and change in marking by ECOL."</i>
Participant 3	Learners' lack of interest in History.	<i>"Learners' lack of interest in History and they complain that it teaches only about the past which does not participate in the economic aspects."</i>
Participant 4	Incompetent teachers, new ways of marking History by ECOL, learners' struggle in answering the questions, the difficult introduction of answering History questions by ECOL	<i>"Incompetent teachers, learners would struggle to maintain balance in responses, vague mannerism of marking ECOL-based exams. "</i>
Participant 5	Problem in essay writing, lack of relevant textbooks, false belief that History is a failing subject.	<i>"...Essay writing due to poor linguistic ability in English Language..., lack of relevant textbooks...false belief that History is a failing subject."</i>
Participant 6	Misunderstanding of English Language by History learners, miscommunication between ECOL and History teachers, lack of History teachers training on marking by ECOL, the difficult introduction of answering History questions by ECOL.	<i>"They do not understand English Language and the new way of answering the questions is quite tricky. ECOL does not inform us before they introduce their new ways of marking...ECOL is not even sure that we are doing it right because of lack of training given on marking."</i>
Participant 7	The type of learners, the shift in marking by ECOL.	<i>"I think is the issue of the type of learners we are teaching. Another issue was the shift in marking by ECOL which resulted in new ways of teaching."</i>

The above presentation in Table 5 demonstrates the opinions of teachers on the reasons for the poor performance of History learners in public examinations. The question that was asked was, *“In your opinion, what could be this kind of performance?”* Participants 2 and 6 mentioned miscommunications between ECOL and History teachers. Miscommunication between ECOL and History teachers, as well as evolving marking standard by ECOL, may result in a misunderstanding of consensus in setting the History examinations based on the taught content by History teachers. This may result in learners being asked questions on topics they are not taught, resulting in their failure to answer those questions correctly, which may negatively affect their performance in public examinations.

Participant 2 also mentioned the demotivation of History teachers, the lack of History teachers, and relevant History textbooks. It would appear that a shortage of History teachers may affect the performance of History learners in public examinations because the few available teachers may be overloaded with the work and fail to deliver the historical content effectively to their learners.

Participant 3 further mentioned a lack of content knowledge and the demotivation of History teachers. History teachers with a lack of content knowledge mean that they cannot deliver historical content to their learners effectively; hence, this may affect performance in History public examinations. Besides, demotivated History teachers may also affect the performance of their learners negatively because they may not interact and relate well with their learners, other teachers, and the principals.

Participant 1 mentioned poor teaching strategies used by other teachers and limited time slots allocated for history. Participant 1 and participant 2 also mentioned a lack of ICT. Lack of technology and relevant History textbooks in the teaching of History may affect the performance of History learners in that teaching and learning without them may not be effective or engaging. Instead, it may become demotivating. Therefore, demotivated students may not work hard to achieve better performance in their public examinations. Further, participants 1, 2, and 5 mentioned a lack of relevant History textbooks. Aside from that, a lack of relevant History textbooks may result in a lack of instructional materials for the teaching and learning of History, leading to failure in retention and understanding by History learners, as emphasised by Sengai and Mokhele (2022).

Participants 2, 6, and 7 mentioned shifts in marking as one of the reasons for the poor performance of History learners. It would seem that this consistent shift in marking by ECOL may not only confuse History teachers; it may also affect the performance of History learners negatively in their public examinations because teachers are not even provided with proper training for these new ways of marking.

Additionally, participants 4 and 6 mentioned the difficult introduction of answering the questions by ECOL. This new way of answering the questions implies a shift in marking and teaching processes. It may shift the attention of History teachers in their teaching, and this may even demotivate them due to their exclusion. Participant 4 further echoed incompetent History teachers and learners' struggles in answering the questions. It is inferred that, incompetent History teachers in the teaching of History may not deliver historical content well to their learners, leading to failure for History learners and ultimately influencing their performance negatively in public examinations. Therefore, such kinds of teachers require training through several workshops. Learners who struggle with answering the questions may not be able to answer the questions correctly in their public examinations, hence the need for several provision of assessments for them.

Participant 5 further stated the problem of essay writing. Learners who struggle with writing essays in History may not perform well in their public examinations, and this requires serious attention because public examinations are written, not oral. Participant 6 stated misunderstandings of the English language by History learners and the lack of History teacher training on marking by ECOL. Misunderstanding of English by History learners means that they cannot understand the examination questions that are written in English; hence, this may result in their failure to understand the questions clearly. This may ultimately contribute negatively to their performance in public examinations.

Participant 7 also stated that the type of learners is one of the reasons for the poor performance of History learners in public examinations. By type of learners, participant was referring to slow and fast learners. It seems like nowadays learners are slow and lazy in doing their work. Therefore, these learners may not do well in their public examinations because they are always pushed to do their work. Even though these factors appear to be dominant than others, they were nevertheless responsible for the low performance of History learners in their public examinations.

4.5 Data presentation and analysis on semi-structured interviews

This section present data from semi-structured interviews for research questions two and three. The research question 2 was “*How do History teachers perceive the factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations?*” The research question 3 was: “*What are History teachers’ suggestions on mitigation of History learners’ poor performance in public examinations?*” For research question two, the section presents data from the perspectives of teachers about the factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations. Concerning research question three, the perceptions of teachers on the mitigation of History learners’ poor performance in public examinations was presented and analysed.

In this study, the several factors influencing the performance of History learners were presented and analysed. Such factors include motivation of History teachers, History teachers’ relationship with principals, other teachers and learners, lesson preparation (lesson planning and scheming), use of teaching aids, use of teaching strategies, assessment methods and immediate feedback. Apart from that, the section discussed the challenges encountered by History learners at school and in learning as well as their solutions. Finally, the opinions of teachers on the mitigation on the poor performance of History learners in public examinations were discussed.

4.5.1 Motivation of History teachers in the teaching of history

Table 6: Motivation of History teachers in the Teaching of History

Participants	Feelings Towards Teaching of History	Reasons
Participant 1	Motivated	<i>“I am motivated teaching learners about their identity, teaching them about where they come from and who they are is the interesting thing to do.”</i>
Participant 2	Motivated	<i>“In teaching History, I learn the stories of the different people from different countries and if I pass that knowledge to my learners I become motivated. I am also motivated when we take educational trips like school History fair because we meet other teachers and learners and we explore historical places.”</i>
Participant 3	Motivated	<i>“I am motivated when dealing with Lesotho History where we will be gaining knowledge on Moshoeshe I’s background and how he built Basotho nation and that bring brilliance in us.”</i>

Participant 4	Motivated	<i>"I am motivated because I love History and I am urging to instil needed patriotism in learners."</i>
Participant 5	Motivated	<i>"Passion for the subject and values such as peace, resilience, patriotism History inculcates."</i>
Participant 6	Motivated	<i>"I am motivated by patriotism."</i>
Participant 7	Motivated	<i>"I enjoy teaching of History because my learners also enjoy learning the subject."</i>

Table 6 exhibits data on the motivation of participants in the teaching of history, indicating whether they are motivated or not. All seven participants expressed their motivation for teaching history, but what motivated them varied. Participant 1 claimed that he is motivated by teaching learners their identity, which is where they come from and who they are. Therefore, if the teacher is motivated by that topic, it means some other topics demotivate him and may not be able to impart historical content on such topics very well to learners, hence affecting their performance in public examinations.

Secondly, participant 2 is motivated by learning and sharing with learners' diverse stories from various countries and participating in educational trips like the History fair, where they interact with other History teachers and learners. This participant is motivated by learning historical concepts and sharing them with her learners, and this may enhance her content knowledge and ultimately contribute to the positive performance of History learners in their public examinations. Apart from that, a teacher is motivated by interacting with other teachers and learners from other schools during educational trips. This may improve the performance of History learners in public examinations because education trips provide practical knowledge not only to the teachers but also to the learners as they learn through experience, where they perceive what they were taught as reality.

Participant 3 expressed motivation for understanding Lesotho history, particularly Moshoeshoe I's background and his role in building the Basotho nation. This participant is also motivated while teaching the topic of Moshoeshoe I, and this means that while he is teaching other topics such as the Cold War, he is not motivated. This implies that he may master and deliver content effectively for only one topic, while the ones that demotivate him may not teach them well, and this may ultimately affect their performance negatively in public examinations. Participant 4 expressed

motivation due to his love for History and the desire to instil necessary patriotism in his learners. Motivation that emanates from love may act as a transforming motivation that may have impacts on the performance of History in public examinations. This is because teachers with such a kind of motivation may teach the History subject with love and may select what is best for them and their learners for effective teaching and learning and this may eventually lead to good performance in public examinations.

Similarly, participant 6 stated that he is motivated by the love for History and values such as peace, patriotism, and resilience that History inculcates. Participant 7 expressed his motivation to teach history, as his learners also enjoy learning history. This implies that his motivation stems from learners' motivation to learn history, not from his enthusiasm for the subject. It follows that if the learners were unable to enjoy studying History, he would also become demotivated. This could have a detrimental impact on History learners' performance because it is not always the case that learners would always love studying History and there may be instances when they have a negative attitude towards learning it. Generally, the study revealed that three teachers are motivated by their love for the subject, while the remaining three are driven by specific History topics, with one being driven by learners' motivation. Therefore, the analysis reveals that all teachers were motivated to teach history.

4.5.2 Relationship with principals, other teachers and learners

Table 7: Relationships with Principals, other Teachers and Learners

Participants	Categories	Participant Quotes
Participant 1	Not friendly with principal, better with other teachers and cordial with learners.	<i>“Our principals tend to be our smaller gods. ...the relations will not be friendly as such. With the other teacher, the relationship is good and we tend to collaborate more often. Also, with my learners the relationship is very cordial.”</i>
Participant 2	Good with principal, other teachers and learners.	<i>“With my principal and other teachers, I make sure that our relationship is good at all times. Also with my learners because it makes work to become easier because good relations make me happy with my work.”</i>

Participant 3	Smooth with a principal and learners but not smooth with other teachers.	<i>"My relationship with my learners is very smooth except for other teachers who teach different subjects from History because they have a lot of discriminating attitude that History is a storytelling, old-fashion and biased subject. The relationship with the principal is very smooth because he is interested in my study."</i>
Participant 4	Good with a principal and teachers. Friendly with learners.	<i>"My relationship is good with teachers and principal for professionalism. Friendly with learners to reinforce conducive learning for learners."</i>
Participant 5	Healthy and collaborative with a principal, teachers and learners.	<i>"Healthy and collaborative because being societal focus and people-focused is one of the benefits of teaching history."</i>
Participant 6	Good with a principal, teachers and learners.	<i>"Good because I am a friendly person who knows how to deal with different people of different characters."</i>
Participant 7	Good with a principal, teachers and learners.	<i>"My relationship is good with them and I do not have problem with them."</i>

Table 7 shows data on the relationships of participants with their principals, other teachers, and their learners, indicating whether their relationships are friendly or not. The question that was asked was, *"How are your relationships with other teachers, your learners, and the principal, and why do you have such relationships?"* The findings revealed that five participants indicated that their relationships with their principals, other teachers, and their learners are smooth, collaborative, and cordial. They indicated that such relationships motivate them, help them make their work easier, and enhance a conducive environment, as emphasised by participant 4. Therefore, these kinds of relationships may motivate teachers to teach their learners well in order to enhance their performance in public examinations.

However, participant 1 reported unfriendly relationships with principals due to their perceived smaller god status, while his relationships with other teachers are collaborative and cordial with learners. Unlike friendly, smooth, and collaborative relationships, the unfriendly relationship of the principals to History teachers may demotivate them as well as their learners because a bad relationship between teachers and principals may also affect learners' emotions negatively, which

may ultimately affect their performance in public examinations negatively. Apart from that, teachers who have unfriendly relationships with the principals may not teach learners effectively due to stress, hence affecting learners negatively in their learning process and their performance in public examinations.

Besides, participant 3 said that his relationships with his principal and his learners are good. However, he said his relationships are not good with other teachers from other subjects due to their discriminatory attitudes towards history. Teaching requires collaboration among all the teachers, and failure to collaborate may result in conflicts that may affect teachers emotionally. This may also affect learners because emotionally-affected History teachers may not impart historical content well to History learners; hence, this may affect the performance of learners negatively. The instability itself may affect learners emotionally, and eventually, this may also affect the performance of History learners negatively.

4.5.3 Lesson preparation

Table 8: Lesson Planning and Scheming

Participants	Categories	Quote of Participant
Participant 1	Do not plan frequently but when needed.	<i>“Lesson planning helps me to focus, follow the steps and achieve what I want to achieve. My learners are also able to follow and connect with everything. It helps me with a blueprint of where I will start and finish.”</i>
Participant 2	Do not plan frequently because of overloading work but scheme quarterly	<i>“Lesson planning helps me to teach the planned topics with the allocated times.”</i>
Participant 3	Not interested in planning but scheming	<i>“Lesson planning does not benefit me. What benefit me is scheming because it shows me what aspects I have to teach and how and record of work done that helps me to see what I have achieved.”</i>
Participant 4	Frequently practice both planning and scheming	<i>“They benefit me in establishing plan of execution of work, hence logical teaching which likely benefit learners.”</i>
Participant 5	Frequently practice both planning and scheming	<i>“They help me to break content, easy teaching and planning, work done and easy supervision by school management and inspectorate.”</i>

Participant 6	Frequently practice both planning and scheming	<i>"They help me to be to be on the track e.g. what to teach and how to teach it."</i>
Participant 7	Frequently practice both planning and scheming.	<i>"You cannot go to class without planning. Record of scheme helps me to see what I have taught."</i>

Table 8 above presents data on lesson preparation, specifically lesson planning and scheming. The question that was asked was, *"As a History teacher, do you frequently practise lesson planning and scheming? Can you explain how they benefit you and your learners?"* The findings revealed that four teachers frequently practice lesson planning and scheming, while three teachers specified that they do not often practice lesson planning. Therefore, the findings of the study showed that the majority of the participants do not practice lesson planning and scheming frequently.

When the participants were asked whether they often practice lesson planning and scheming, they provided different answers. Participant 1 said, *"I do not practise lesson planning frequently, but I do it when it is needed."* This implies that teaching without lesson planning may be haphazard, and this kind of teaching may be ineffective and may not promote teaching and learning; rather, it may act as a barrier to effective teaching and learning as well as negatively affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations. On top of that, participant 2 claimed, *"But as for lesson planning, I do not follow lesson planning frequently due to overloading work."* It seems that some of the teachers fail to do lesson planning properly due to the overloading work of one teacher teaching learners from grade 8 to grade 11, hence the need for the government to hire qualified History teachers. Besides, participant 3 believes that scheming is more beneficial than lesson planning as it helps in determining the aspects to be taught, how to teach them, and the work to be done. He said, *"Lesson planning does not benefit me. What benefits me is scheming because it shows me what aspects I have to teach and how, and a record of work done that helps me see what I have achieved."*

However, all the participants, even the ones who said they do not practice lesson planning and scheming frequently, agreed that these strategies are crucial because they keep teachers on task, help them stay focused, plan ahead, follow instructions, break down content, facilitate teaching and learning, and provide guidance on what to teach and how to teach it. If that is the case, lesson planning and scheming may help teachers set their targets in the process of teaching and learning

and achieve them if done properly, and this may enable them to simply deliver historical content effectively to their learners.

Further, participants indicated that lesson plans and scheming aid in determining teacher work and simplifying supervision by school management and inspectorates. Therefore, lesson planning and scheming may not only act as guidelines for History teachers and their learners but may also act as guidelines for school management for easy supervision to see whether teachers are doing their work effectively or not, and if they are doing their work, how effective they are in doing their work. As a result, the data showed that although some of the participants did not practise lesson planning and scheming frequently, there are crucial tools for teachers to effectively teach and achieve their desired outcomes.

4.5.4 Use of teaching aids

Table 9: Use of Teaching Aids

Participants	Times of Using Teaching Aids	Participant Quotes
Participant 1	Not often	<i>"It is not often that we bring the teaching aids to the classrooms but we are forced by the topic we are teaching to bring something to the classroom that will help learners to understand."</i>
Participant 2	Rarely	<i>"I use simplified materials from History Association because currently History does not have textbooks. I also use my phone as my resource."</i>
Participant 3	Rarely	<i>"I rarely use teaching aids because there is lack of resources such as mere textbooks and internet. We do not have support of the issues of teaching resources and for me such resources need a lot of money."</i>
Participant 4	Rarely	<i>"I rarely use teaching aids because they are rarely limited."</i>
Participant 5	Weekly	<i>"Weekly because they enhance learning by learners' participation, concentration and class management."</i>
Participant 6	Rarely	<i>"I rarely use them because they are very limited."</i>

Participant 7	Use them often	<i>"I often use teaching aids because they help me to transmit information I want to transmit. For example, use of maps in demonstrating how European countries are located during my teaching of European Map. This simplifies the work when they see the countries on the map than when you teach them by mouth that Belgium is near Germany."</i>
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Table 9 above presents data on the use of teaching aids. The participants were asked whether they often use teaching aids or not and why. Five participants indicated that they rarely use teaching aids because they are very limited, some are very costly, and they are not able to afford them. However, one of the participants said she used simplified materials from the Lesotho History Teachers Association and her phone to solve this problem. Teaching aids attract learners' attention in the process of teaching and learning. For that reason, if History teachers are not using them due to their shortages, this may affect the learners negatively as they may not actively be engaged in the process of teaching and learning. As a consequence, this may not only affect their effective teaching but also their performance in public examinations since they will respond to questions on concepts which they failed to effectively grasp. Therefore, the data showed that the majority of teachers do not use teaching aids in their teaching due to their scarcity. Participant 4 said, *"I rarely use teaching aids because they are rarely limited."* To add on to that, participant 3 said, *"I rarely use teaching aids because there is a lack of resources, such as mere textbooks and the internet."*

On the other hand, participant 1 said that he uses teaching aids depending on the topic he is going to teach. Furthermore, participant 5 indicated that he uses teaching aids weekly because they enhance learners' participation, concentration, and class management. This means that through the use of teaching aids, History learners may concentrate on the topic being taught without making noise; hence, it may be easy for teachers to manage their learners in their classrooms. Participant 7 indicated that he frequently uses teaching aids to effectively convey desired information. Teaching aids are also important in helping teachers effectively transmit the planned historical knowledge they want to impart to learners, and this may enhance the performance of History learners because they may gain the required knowledge from their effective teachers.

4.5.5 Use of Teaching Strategies

Table 10: Use of Teaching Strategies

Participants	Kinds of teaching strategies used	Participant quotes

Teacher 1	Explanation, discovery and question and answers.	<i>"I use variety of teaching strategies depending on the topic that I am teaching. I use both teacher centred and learner centred depending on what I am going to teach and the nature of the topic."</i>
Teacher 2	Lecturing, role-play, presentations, field trips and group discussion.	<i>"Teaching methods for rural schools like mine is lecturing because there are no textbooks, no internet for them to search information for themselves. So, a teacher does all the work. Apart from that I use role-play, group discussion, presentations and field trip like History fair."</i>
Teacher 3	Lecturing, discovery, discussion and probing.	<i>In history, there is a lot of lecturing methods because learners are not aware of some information but I intertwine learner-centred ones whereby I give learners work to go and discover information from their elders particularly on both European and Lesotho History as some of their parents fought in the First-World war."</i>
Teacher 4	Learner-centred and teacher-centred.	<i>"I use learner-centred to enhance independence. I also use teacher centered as to enhance required speed needed to complete syllabus by end of the year."</i>
Teacher 5	Question and answer, discussion, debate, presentation, information finding and group work.	<i>"I use question and answer, discussion, debate, presentation, information finding and group discussion because they are learner-centred."</i>
Teacher 6	Discussion, explanation, question and answer, role-play and discovery.	<i>"I use discussion, explanation, question and answer, role-play and discovery."</i>
Teacher 7	Question and answer and lecturing.	<i>"I use question and answer method and lecturing."</i>

Table 10 above presents data on the teaching strategies used by participants in the teaching of history. The participants were asked the following question, *"What kinds of teaching strategies are you using in the process of teaching? Why are you using such teaching strategies?"* The findings revealed that most of the History teachers use learner-centred methods of teaching, such as question and answer, discovery, and discussion, while a few use role-play, field trips, presentations, debate, and probing. It is important to use these kinds of teaching strategies as they engage learners in learning and motivate them to learn. On account of this, effective use of these strategies may enhance the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

On the other hand, it seems that teacher-centred methods of teaching such as explanation and lecturing are also mostly used. Participant 4 indicated that they use teacher-centred methods to

enhance the required speed to complete the syllabus on time. Participant 2 added that she uses the lecturing method because there are no textbooks and no internet for learners to search for information for themselves. Therefore, it might be that History teachers are more teacher-centred than learner-centred in order to complete the syllabus on time because History has a lot of content. They may also use teacher-centred methods due to a shortage of teaching and learning resources. Hence, this may affect the performance of History learners negatively because teacher-centred instruction does not engage them in learning. Unlike learner-centred, which enables them to learn by doing, teacher-centred makes them passive receivers of knowledge and memorise information instead of understanding it profoundly.

Participant 4 indicated that he uses learner-centred methods to enhance the independent learning of learners, while participant 3 indicated that she uses them for learners to discover knowledge for themselves. Using teaching strategies with the purpose of instilling knowledge in learners through discovery may enhance the performance of History learners in public examinations. However, this requires closer supervision of History teachers and their facilitation.

Nonetheless, participant 6 indicated that she uses questions and answers, discussion, information-finding, debate, and presentation because they are learner-centred. This implies that some teachers use learner-centred methods of teaching just because they were encouraged to use them. They lack a clear understanding of how to use such methods to enhance the participation of learners and impart knowledge to them with the goal of achieving good performance in public examinations. This may affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations because such teachers may just teach because it is their duty without a clear vision of the outcomes they want to achieve with their learners.

4.5.6 Assessment methods

Table 11: Assignments and Weekly Tests

Participants	Times learners are given assignments and weekly tests	Participant Quote
Teacher 1	Often but with weekly test not often.	<i>"I often give my learners assignments but in terms of weekly tests, I do not. Weekly tests demand a lot of work for me because I am teaching grade 8 to 11."</i>

Teacher 2	Once a week for assignments and monthly for tests.	<i>"I give learners assignments once a week because History is overloaded in the syllabus and if I focus on giving learners assignments and weekly tests is challenging because marking History is not easy. I may be left behind by focusing on the assignments and tests. I give them tests monthly."</i>
Teacher 3	No longer give learners written assignments and weekly tests but give them oral ones.	<i>"I used to give them the assignments and weekly tests but I no longer do that because most of them fail to do their assignments because they live far from school and arrive at their homes at night-time. It is better to give them oral assignments where they should just discover the stories and narrate them in the class rather than writing because learners have a lot of challenges in writing. They like oral assignments and hate writing."</i>
Teacher 4	Repeatedly for both assignments and weekly tests.	<i>"Yes, I do repeatedly give my learners assignments and weekly tests to familiarise them with mannerism of questioning and encourage and enhance their studying frequency."</i>
Teacher 5	Fortnightly for both assignments and weekly tests.	<i>"Fortnightly to assess learners' knowledge on the topic and learners' progress in the learning and teaching of history."</i>
Teacher 6	Once a week both assignments and weekly tests.	<i>"Yes, once a week."</i>
Teacher 7	One test per week but assignment is for daily.	<i>"I give learners one test per week but assignment is for daily."</i>

Table 11 presents the times participants give their learners assignments and weekly tests. Participants were asked whether they were always giving their learners assignments and weekly tests or not. The findings revealed that 3 participants give learners their assignments repeatedly, while the other 3 participants indicated that they give learners assignments once a week, except one teacher, who indicated that he does not give learners written assignments. Participant 5 stated that he gives learners assignments fortnightly, which is once every two weeks. Assessment may play a very significant role in enhancing the performance of History learners in their public examinations because it helps learners become familiar with the structure of the questions that are asked in public examinations. Regarding the participant who does not give learners a written assessment, this is a very great challenge that may hinder learners' progress in their public

examinations because public examinations are written and not oral. Therefore, the analysis indicates that the majority of teachers do not assign assignments repeatedly to their learners, with one teacher not giving them due to challenges such as overloading work.

Concerning the weekly tests, one participant indicated that he gives learners weekly tests repeatedly, while three participants indicated that they give their learners weekly tests once a week, including the one who gives them test once every two weeks. Providing History learners with weekly tests may benefit them in their public examinations because it enables them to identify their mistakes in learning and correct them before they write the examinations. Contrary to this, not providing History learners with weekly tests may result in poor performance in public examinations because learners may not even be familiar with the structure of examination questions. Participant 1, as quoted in the table above, specified that he does not give learners weekly tests often because it is demanding, while participant 3, as quoted in the table above, indicated that he no longer gives learners written weekly tests but provides them with surprise oral and presentation quizzes because learners hate writing.

Participant 6 indicated that she gives learners tests monthly, not weekly. Participant 4 mentioned that he assigns assignments and administers tests every week to help learners become familiar with the style of questioning and to promote and increase their frequency of learning. Participant 5 expressed that he administers weekly tests to evaluate learners' progress in teaching History and their comprehension of the subject matter. Therefore, this may help teachers to see whether learners are following or not in the process of teaching and learning, and if they are not following, they may be re-taught a certain topic that they do not understand. In doing so, repeatedly and passionately, this may improve the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

4.5.7 Immediate feedback

Table 12: Immediate Feedback on Assignments and Weekly Tests

Participants	Times of feedback	Participant quotes
Teacher 1	Same day they were given assignment or the following day and after a week for test.	<i>"In terms of assignment, I give learners feedback the very same day I gave them assignment or the following day. In terms of test, I give them feedback after a week."</i>

Teacher 2	In the following lesson or after week for both assignments and weekly tests.	<i>“During low workload, I give feedback in the following lesson for assignments to ensure no content is left behind, as History is difficult to understand due to its chronology of events.”</i>
Teacher 3	Within three days or two days for both assignments and weekly tests.	<i>“I give them feedback within three days or two days so that we can engage in errors they have committed.”</i>
Teacher 4	After three to ten days for both assignments and tests.	<i>“I give my learners feedback after 3-10 days depending on my schedule. The quicker the better so that I will be able to do corrections with them.”</i>
Teacher 5	The following day for assignment and after two days for the tests.	<i>“The following day for assignment and after two days for test in order for learners to know their progress in the learning of history.”</i>
Teacher 6	After marking.	<i>“As soon as I am done with marking.”</i>
Teacher 7	Friday test, its feedback is given every Monday.	<i>“I often give learners tests Friday and give them feedback on Monday.”</i>

Table 12 presents the status of participants' provision of immediate feedback on assignments and weekly tests to their learners. It shows whether participants provide their learners with immediate feedback or not. The findings showed that the majority of teachers provide their learners with immediate feedback on both assignments and weekly tests.

On the question of whether participants give learners immediate feedback or not, participant 1 indicated that he gives learners feedback the very same day he gave them an assignment or the following day, while he gives learners test feedback after a week. This shows that the participant gives learners immediate feedback so that they can work on the learners' mistakes and correct them on time in order to improve their performance. In addition, participant 5 stated that he gives learners feedback the following day for assignments and after two days for the test in order for learners to know their progress in the learning of history. Knowing the progress of learning for History learners may be beneficial in preparing them for their final examinations, as the identified mistakes may be corrected and learners may not repeat them while they are in their public examinations.

Concerning the weekly test, participant 7 indicated that he often gives learners tests on Friday and gives them feedback on Monday. Giving learners tests on Friday may benefit teachers as they may mark well during the weekend without being under pressure, and this may reduce the risks that

may occur during the week when there is too much work to do. Apart from that, the participant indicated that he gives learners feedback after 3–10 days, depending on his schedule. On the other hand, participant 6 indicated that she gives learners feedback as soon as she has finished marking. Ultimately, all participants agreed that the purpose of giving learners immediate feedback is to help them make corrections to the mistakes they make. However, all the details of the reasons for the provision of immediate feedback are given in Table 14 below.

4.5.8 Correction from feedback

Table 13: Ways in Which Corrections from Feedback can Improve the Performance of History learners

Participants	Categories	Quote from participants
Teacher 1	Help them to see where they were wrong and avoid the very similar mistakes they did.	<i>“They help learners see where they were wrong, how they should have answered the questions. This helps to avoid very same mistakes they did in future.”</i>
Teacher 2	Help learners to correct their mistakes and understand the topic being taught.	<i>“They help learners to correct their mistakes. They help learners to understand the topic being taught.”</i>
Teacher 3	Help learners to study further but it depends on the motives of learners.	<i>“This engages them to study further and look what they have missed but in some cases, it depends on how learners are motivated and their desires in history. There are some learners who are still demotivated and get the same results even after doing corrections.”</i>
Teacher 4	Help learners to identify challenges.	<i>“They help learners to identify challenges and address them during revision.”</i>
Teacher 5	Prune learners’ weaknesses and build their self-confidence.	<i>“Learners’ weaknesses and boost their self-confidence and self-awareness in the learning and performance of history.”</i>
Teacher 6	Awareness of mistakes.	<i>“They help learners to be aware of their mistakes.”</i>
Teacher 7	Help learners to know where they failed.	<i>“They help learners to know where they failed the questions.”</i>

Table 13 above presents data on ways in which corrections from feedback can improve the performance of History learners. Participants were asked how corrections from feedback can benefit learners. According to the analysis of this study, the majority of participants said feedback corrections assist learners in identifying their challenges, recognising their errors, and avoiding them in the upcoming tests, assignments, and final examinations. This may improve the

performance of History learners because recognising learners' errors through formative assessments and correcting them is part of their preparation for final examinations.

The findings further showed that feedback corrections strengthen learners' weaknesses and build their self-confidence and self-awareness. This implies that corrections from constructive feedback may act as a motivational tool for History learners, as they may make them aware of their mistakes and correct them. Participant 5 indicated that learners are able to identify challenges where they were wrong, prune learners' weaknesses, and boost their self-confidence and self-awareness in the learning and performance of History.

On the other hand, participant 3 argued that feedback corrections help learners to study further, depending on their motives. He claimed, *"This engages them to study further and look for what they have missed, but in some cases, it depends on how motivated learners are and their desires in history. There are some learners who are still demotivated and get the same results even after making corrections."* This may seem true, as some learners may be demotivated by personal factors they encounter, and sometimes even if they are provided with corrections, they are still getting the answers wrong, hence the importance of counselling sessions in high schools for the personal issues of learners to reduce any stress for better performance in public examinations. Participant 2 stated that corrections help learners understand the topic being taught. By providing learners with constructive corrections, the more they learn the taught topic.

4.5.9 Challenges encountered by History learners at school and in learning

Table 14: Challenges Encountered by History learners at School and in Learning

Participants	Challenges	Participant quotes
Teacher 1	Learners are mocked for studying history, demotivation of learners, lack of textbooks, lack of support from the Ministry of Education and Training, lack of ICT resources, lack of regular training in teaching of History and traditional ways of teaching.	<i>"Learners are being mocked in doing History. It demotivates them from studying history. ...there are no teaching resources such as textbooks and ICT resources...the response from the Ministry of Education and Training is very weak in terms of providing our schools with the resources...the teachers are also not given regular training in teaching of the subject. History relies on traditional ways of teaching."</i>
Teacher 2	Lack of support from the school management, lack of textbooks, no technology.	<i>"There are no textbooks and no technology. Learners do not have enough materials and resources and learners become tired of listening to the teachers only. ...It is impossible to make them copies due to lack of money because school management do not help."</i>
Teacher 3	Demotivation of teachers, failure of learners to conceptualise content, interpret and express their knowledge.	<i>"Learners fail to put the taught content according to their understanding. ...I become demotivated by the poor results of my learners..."</i>

Teacher 4	Lack of resources, overloaded syllabus and struggle of learners in answering the questions.	<i>"Avoiding bias by learners, lack of resources and overloaded syllabus."</i>
Teacher 5	Problem in essay writing, English Language proficiency, lack of relevant textbooks and false belief that History is a failing subject.	<i>"...Essay writing due to poor linguistic ability in English Language acquisition, lack of relevant textbooks...false belief that History is a failing subject."</i>
Teacher 6	Learners' difficult understanding of English, difficult in reading skills and lack of text books.	<i>"Difficulty of understanding in English Language, reading skills and lack resources such as textbooks."</i>
Teacher 7	Learners forget the years.	<i>"Because History is about chronology and sequence of events, learners sometimes forget the years."</i>

Table 14 above shows the challenges encountered by History learners at school and in their learning. As found by this study, the majority of teachers highlighted the most challenges as a lack of teaching resources such as textbooks and technology, criticism towards History learners' traditional ways of teaching, and learners' lack of English proficiency. It is in this regard that participant 1 highlighted the lack of teaching resources such as textbooks and ICT. On the similar issue, participant 2 claimed that there is no technology or teaching resources. Teaching resources such as technology and textbooks are needed for instructional guides and effective transmission of content, and their unavailability may result in ineffective teaching and ultimately affect the performance of History learners negatively.

In regard to criticism towards History and traditional ways of teaching, participant 1 stated that learners are being mocked for doing history. It seems that this mocking developed a bad attitude in learners towards History. Traditional ways of teaching seem to be employed by History teachers to finish the syllabus on time and to address the challenge of lack of resources and this may ultimately affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations. To add on this point, participant 5 claimed that the false belief that History is a failing subject is a challenge. participant 6 further stated reading skills as a major challenge. Participant 5 further stated that essay writing due to poor linguistic ability in English and acquisition is a challenge. The challenge of English proficiency may affect the performance of History learners in public examinations because they fail to understand what is being taught in the classrooms.

The study further discovered a lack of support from the Ministry of Education and Training, learners' failure to conceptualise content, and a lack of History teachers' regular training. It seems

that lack of support from the Ministry of Education and Training may emanate from failure to provide schools with teaching resources and failure to provide teachers with regular training and this may affect the performance of History learners negatively.

Some identified challenges include a lack of school management support, difficulty in learners' reading skills, demotivation of teachers and learners, an overloaded syllabus, and the struggle of learners in answering the questions. Failure for school management to help History teachers with teaching and learning resources, failure for school management to motivate History teachers and learners, and autocratic management may affect the school environment negatively and ultimately affect the performance of History learners negatively. An overloaded syllabus also appears to limit History teachers' ability to deliver historical content effectively, affecting the performance of History learners negatively. However, in Table 16 below are how these challenges could be mitigated in order to improve the performance of History learners in their public examinations.

4.5.10 Mitigation on performance of History learners in public examinations

Table 15: Solutions to the Challenges

Participants	Categories	Participant Quote
Participant1	The Ministry of Education and Training must provide schools with History teaching resources, Teachers should be provided with regular training on how to teach history, and learners must be allowed to come at schools with their cellphones.	<i>"The Ministry of Education and Training must provide the schools with History teaching resources. ...teachers need regular training because we cannot expect the teachers who were trained 20 years ago to be as effective as now as there are changes in the teaching and learning. ...the schools must eradicate the policies whereby learners are prohibited from coming with their cellphones at schools."</i>
Participant2	Learners should take school trips, incorporation of technology in the teaching of history, regular training of teachers and the government should employ History teachers.	<i>"To confirm the reality of historical events requires technology..., they need the books and pictures. They need to take the trips to visit historical places. Government should really employ History teachers."</i>
Participant3	Incorporating technology into the classrooms (Wi-Fi and allowing learners to use their cellphones in schools).	<i>"...if we bring technology in the classroom, let us allow learners to come with their cellphones at schools, provide Wi-Fi for them so that they can use those cellphones for their productivity..."</i>
Participant4	ECOL must provide clear marking system.	<i>"...vivid ECOL marking scheme."</i>

Participant5	Provision of relevant History textbooks by Ministry of Education and Training, making History core subject, including teachers in ECOL marking panel, using online learning, using technology in the classrooms and employing qualified History examiners.	<i>“The Ministry of Education and Training must provide relevant textbooks to stop learners’ reliance on teachers as their mobile textbooks. Making History core subject...having online learning through the utilisation of technology to enhance research skills. Teachers should be included in the ECOL setting panel as the current examiners are not class practitioners...”</i>
Participant6	Provision of textbooks by the government, Daily use of English Language by learners and they must read to understand, questions should be put to the standard of learners.	<i>“Learners must make English their daily language, read to understand and the government must provide the schools with the textbooks.”</i>
Participant7	The principals must support history. Learners must be given more assignments, practice of discovery learning and the school’s quick response to the shortage of History textbooks.	<i>“Learners must be given more assignments and tests so that they will be used to historical content...also learn through discovery...in other subjects when the teachers report about the shortage of textbooks, the principal respond quickly and such teachers get the books. This is not the case with History where it is not easy to get books.”</i>

Table 15 above presents solutions to the challenges encountered by History learners at school and during teaching and learning. These solutions provide ways in which performance of History learners could be improved in their public examinations. Based on the findings of this study, the majority of participants specified that the Ministry of Education and Training should provide the schools with textbooks. This could help in enhancing the performance of History learners as textbooks may help learners to read on their own to develop their prior knowledge and this may ease their understanding.

The findings also showed that Examination Council of Lesotho could provide clear marking scheme. In this marking scheme, History teachers should be included so as to enable them in providing proper marking for their learners. The data also reflected that technology should be incorporated in the teaching (by allowing learners to come to schools with their cellphones, and providing Wi-Fi at schools) and providing History teachers with regular training. Participant 1 claimed, *“The schools must also eradicate the policies whereby learners are prohibited from coming with their cellphones at schools.”*

Moreover, participant 3 added that learners should be allowed to come with their cellphones at their respective schools. Use of these cellphones may enable History learners to do their discovery effectively and this may enhance their performance in their public examinations. Participant 5 suggested that History must be made a core subject not an elective subject as it is now. Making History a core subject may improve its status which may result into more learners. In regard to marking, the Examination Council of Lesotho should reconsider its marking process, by informing History teachers about the evolving marking before they are implemented, including History teachers in marking and implementing a clear marking system. This could help teachers as the implementers of curriculum to mark learners according to the standard of ECOL. ECOL should also train History teachers how to mark according to their standard in order to enhance the performance of History learners.

Participant 5 further suggested that the government should hire many History teachers and qualified examiners who are class practitioners. This was seconded by participant 2, who stated that the government should really hire History teachers. Hiring more qualified History teachers may improve the performance of History learners because the more the History teachers, the more effective their teaching and learning will be. In addition, as shown in the table above under the participant quote column, participant 7 suggested the need of regularly assessing learners in order to expose them to historical content and knowledge and provision of support from school management. Participant 6 further recommended that learners should use the English Language daily and should read to understand. Generally, most of the participants suggested the provision of History textbooks at schools, allowing learners to use their phones at school, regular training of teachers, and clear marking by ECOL, which were identified as the major challenges.

4.6 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the performance in History public examinations is a major concern for educational stakeholders. The findings of this study provided evidence of poor performance by History learners in the 2023 final examinations, where the majority of the schools performed poorly. This study demonstrated several factors contributing to this performance, not excluding a lack of resources such as textbooks and technological resources, improper training of History teachers, poor preparation by History teachers, incompetency of History teachers, and

improper use of assessment strategies by History teachers. This implies that the status of History is unsatisfactory due to the high failure rate of History learners in public examinations.

Bearing that in mind, despite the benefits provided by History to the national curriculum and the entire nation, the subject is in danger of being removed from the curriculum because of its poor performance in the public examinations. Hence, the study established that there is a need for involved educational stakeholders, such as the Ministry of Education and Training, to support the schools through the provision of funding for teaching and learning resources. Not only that, but History teachers also need to be properly trained on how to teach the subject and mark it.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study explores teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in five high schools in Maseru. This chapter is a presentation of the summary of the findings, discussion of the findings, conclusions of the findings, and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The findings are discussed based on the research questions of the study. The chapter further discusses the findings of the study based on the application of ideas from the theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter One and the relevant literature.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This section gives a brief summary of the research problem, the methodology used in this study, the limitations of the study, and the implications of the findings. The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in five high schools in Maseru district. The highlighted research problem in Chapter One reveals that History is underperformed in Lesotho's public examinations, particularly among grade 11 History learners from many schools. This claim was supported by the Examination Council of Lesotho reports and History Examiners' reports (ECOL, 2020; ECOL, 2021; ECOL, 2022; ECOL, 2023). Despite this problem, it appears that the studies on teachers' perceptions on why the majority of schools and grade 11 History learners perform poorly in public examinations seem to be limited, hence the significance of this study.

In addition, the study employed the interpretivism paradigm as the philosophical lens of the study to understand the subjective understanding of the teachers about their perceptions on performance in History public examinations. Besides, the study utilised the qualitative approach to understand, describe, and explain the various interpretations of teachers' perceptions on the status of History in the national curriculum with regard to learners' performance, as well as the factors influencing History learners' performance and mitigating their performance in public examinations.

In addition, the study used the study design of five different schools in order to obtain a detailed and tangible comprehension of teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. The study further employed purposive sampling to select five schools, including

both well-performing and unsatisfactory schools, and seven History teachers. Aside from that, field notes, open-ended questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews were used to gather valuable and in-depth data from teachers regarding performance of learners in History public examinations.

More importantly, the researcher applied credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to the data and interpretations to ensure the trustworthiness and quality of the study. This was done through member checking, peer debriefing, tracking the precise methods used for data generation, analysis, and interpretation, and providing sufficient related information from the literature. Also, the study ensured trustworthiness by justifying theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices, including Expectancy Theory, research paradigm, approach, design, instruments, and data analysis, respectively. In other words, the researcher provided the reasons for the selection of these choices. Apart from that, the researcher thoroughly reviewed and revised the data during the data generation process. The researcher also adhered to research protocols, including voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential harm, and result communication.

The limitation of this study lies in its focus on History teachers' perceptions, excluding their learners due to its focus on public examination performance; hence, there is a need to make future studies explore the areas left out of this study. Therefore, a similar study may focus on learners' perceptions in the future to enhance their understanding. However, in the future, the focus may also be on learners' perceptions on performance in History internal examinations. Another constraint was the lack of information regarding the effectiveness of History teachers' marking, as most of them expressed dissatisfaction with the regular changes in marking and the new approaches to examination-based History marking as major causes of the poor performance of History learners. Consequently, another future study may assess the effectiveness of History teachers marking.

The study revealed that History is consistently underperformed in public exams due to factors like insufficient resources, incompetent teachers, inadequate training, inadequate content coverage, and poor teacher preparation. Apart from that, poor performance of History learners in public examinations is also attributed to other factors, including lack of support from the Ministry of Education and Training, lack of support from school management, miscommunication between

History teachers and the Examination Council of Lesotho, learners' English proficiency, and frequent marking changes.

Equally important, the findings of this study further revealed that regular unsatisfactory performance of History could lead to its annulment from schools and complete removal from the syllabus. As a result, this highlights the significance of the study to all relevant educational stakeholders and helps them understand the advantages of having History included in the national curriculum of Lesotho. Therefore, there is a need to enhance the performance of History learners, which is why the current study aims to understand and inform policies and strategies to improve the performance of learners in public examinations of grade 11 History learners.

5.3 Discussion of findings

This section provides a discussion of the findings. The findings of this study were discussed per the research objective. The findings were also discussed according to the three main themes, which are classified according to the three objectives of the study. Aside from that, the discussion utilises the themes identified in Chapter 4. The main themes are followed by the sub-themes, which are the subtopics that appear under each sub-objective. The themes discussed are as follows:

5.3.1 Status of History in national curriculum

The performance of History in public examinations does not only affect History learners; it also affects its status in the national curriculum. The major finding was that History is beneficial in the national curriculum of Lesotho as it imparts moral values such as patriotism values, citizenship values, peace, unity, identity forgiveness, empathy, and collaboration. This performance contributed to its unsatisfactory status in public examinations due to the fact that History is perceived as a failing subject. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Wasserman (2010), who discovered that History introduces learners to their heritage by teaching them about their society's origins, development, functioning, and future state.

Apart from that, History may also instill learners with 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, arguing skills, and reasoning skills. This aligns with the findings of Eeden (2012), who discovered a similar situation. Even though History seems beneficial in the national curriculum, it is performed poorly in public examinations, contributing further to its unsatisfactory status. For that reason, the continuous poor performance of the subject is putting the subject at the risk of being

removed from the national curriculum. This supports the findings of Ntabeni (2006) and Fru (2015a), who found that History is performed poorly due to improper training of History learners.

5.3.1.1 The reasons for the poor performance of in public examinations

The major findings of the study were poor teaching strategies employed by History teachers. Apart from hearing from the participants, I observed demonstrations of incompetent teaching strategies during my interaction with teachers through interviews when most of them stated that they use teacher-centred strategies in order to complete the syllabus and when there is a shortage of textbooks. This means that teacher-centredness is often used because History has a lot of content to be covered and a shortage of resources in schools. Therefore, a learner-centred way of teaching, if used more often, may result in a higher failure rate for History learners in public examinations. This is because it does promote effective learning; hence, it may be difficult for History learners to grasp and understand the historical content due to high memorisation in the passive teacher-centered method of teaching, whereby a teacher dominates the classroom while learners are recipients of knowledge.

Furthermore, lack of textbooks, lack of technology, shortage of History teachers, demotivation of History teachers, and their learners are among the major findings of the study. It is apparent that a lack of textbooks, technology, and the demotivation of both teachers and learners are barriers to effective teaching and learning; hence, they may lead to a higher failure rate among History learners. The study further showed incompetent History teachers with a lack of content knowledge. Therefore, it would appear that it would be difficult for such teachers to deliver and impart historical content effectively to learners.

Frequent shift in the marking of History by ECOL, miscommunication between ECOL and History teachers, learners lack interest in history, and problems in essay writing are among the major findings of the study. Therefore, it seems that this frequent shift and miscommunication between ECOL and History teachers in marking of History may not only affect History teachers negatively but it may also affect the performance of History negatively in their public examinations. Not only that, learners lack of interest in History affect the status of History in national curriculum hence this may affect the enrolment of History learners negatively. Apart from that, the findings revealed incompetent teachers, learners struggling to answer the questions, the difficult introduction to

answering the History questions by ECOL, and a lack of History teacher training on marking by ECOL.

5.3.2 Factors influencing performance of History learners in public examinations

5.3.2.1 Motivation of Teachers in the Teaching of History

The major findings of the study revealed that all interviewed teachers were motivated to teach history. Therefore, their motivation may affect the performance of History learners positively in their public examinations. This is because if teachers are motivated, their learners may also be motivated. These findings support the findings of Thoka (2020), Wilkesmann et al. (2021), and Liu et al. (2022), who discovered similar situations about the motivation of teachers and learners.

It seems that motivated teachers are innovative, and they could work hard to find useful ways to foster effective teaching and learning in order to improve the performance of their learners in public examinations. In other words, they may even use locally available resources in the absence of textbooks and technological tools in the teaching of history. Consequently, the findings of this study are also in concurrence with the Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) underpinning this study, which highlights that an individual will always select the behaviour that may maximise their satisfaction and minimise their stress. It is for this reason that the motivation of teachers and their learners may minimise their stress in the process of teaching and learning, resulting in good performance by learners in their public examinations.

However, those teachers indicated that they are motivated when teaching certain topics. This means that they are demotivated while teaching some of the topics. Although the teachers claimed that they are motivated in the teaching of history, probing them and interacting with them helped to observe that they are not motivated at all due to challenges such as a lack of resources. Therefore, this implies that the teaching environment, job satisfaction, and career development may be the roots of the demotivation of History teachers. For that reason, this study is in line with the findings of Mruma (2013) and Mudongo (2017). Apart from their partial expression, it also showed me that they are not motivated. Therefore, their demotivation may affect the performance of History learners negatively in their public examinations because teaching with a discouragement motive may result in many errors, such as being angry at learners, incompetent teaching, and ineffective delivery of knowledge to learners by History teachers. This is because teachers have a significant influence on motivating learners.

5.3.2.2 Relationship with principals, other teachers, and learners

The findings of the study were that the majority of History teachers have smooth, good, and friendly relationships with principals, other teachers, and learners, while a few teachers indicated that their relationship is only cordial and friendly with the learners but not friendly with the principals and other teachers. Therefore, findings revealed that a good relationship between History teachers and the principals, other teachers, and learners may enhance the performance of learners since the relationship motivates teachers to do their work and reinforces conducive learning for History learners. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Edgeron (2006), Emosivwe (2023), and Edgbo (2024), which highlighted the importance of good relationships between teachers and principals, other teachers, and learners in enhancing the performance of learners due to a conducive working environment, while unfriendly relationships may affect the performance of History learners negatively.

5.3.2.3 Lesson preparation

The major findings of the study are that the majority of History teachers frequently practise lesson planning and scheming, while the other few teachers do not frequently practice lesson planning. Those who do not practise lesson planning and scheming claimed that they are overloaded with their school work due to the fact that they are the only History teachers in their schools. One of the teachers indicated that he is not interested in lesson planning because it does not benefit him, but what benefits him is scheming. Therefore, it may seem that teachers who practice lesson planning well may contribute to the positive performance of History learners in their public examinations because they may teach effectively due to their proper organisation of work, unlike the ones who do not make lesson preparation.

However, the findings of the study revealed that seven teachers, including those who do not plan and scheme, frequently listed the benefits of lesson planning and scheming. The findings revealed that lesson planning and scheming help teachers to plan well and easily, focus, logically teach, achieve what was planned, teach the planned topics, stay on track, break content, receive easy supervision by school management and inspectorate, and identify what they have taught. The findings are in concurrence with the findings of Ntabeni (2006), Straessel (2014), Mhonyiwa (2014), Mumba (2019), Aada (2020), Strong (2021), and Khan et al. (2024), who found similar findings on effective and ineffective lesson preparations that may affect the performance of History

learners positively and negatively, respectively. This is because this may result in poor content delivery from teachers to their learners, and some of the important topics may not be covered well.

5.3.3 Use of teaching aids and resources in the teaching of History

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of the interviewed History teachers rarely use teaching aids because they are limited. They also indicated that most of their teaching aids are limited History textbooks. For example, one of the teachers said, *“I rarely use teaching aids because there is a lack of resources, such as textbooks and the internet. We do not have support for the issues of the teaching resources, and for me to look for such resources, it takes a lot of money.”* Another teacher said, *“I rarely use teaching aids because they are very limited.”*

Therefore, lack of teaching aids which act as instructional guides in the process of teaching and learning may affect the performance of History learners in their public examinations. This is because their availability and effective usage may motivate History learners to learn and comprehend the content being taught hence enhancing their performance in public examinations. Even though the teaching aids are limited, the findings of this study discovered that teaching aids are very beneficial in the teaching and learning of History because they enhance learning through learners’ participation, concentration, and class management. The findings of this study support the findings from the reviewed literature (Munyaradzi, 2013; Limene, 2018; Ada, 2020; Sengai & Mokhele, 2022; Muhoza et al., 2023).

5.3.4 Use of teaching strategies in the teaching of History

This study shows that History teachers use both teacher-centred and learner-centred methods of teaching, depending on the nature of the topic they are going to teach. Although some teachers mentioned that they use other, learner-centered methods of teaching, they indicated that they use lecturing methods due to a lack of teaching resources and in order for them to complete the syllabus. For example, one of the teachers said, *“Teaching methods for rural schools like mine are lecturing because there are no textbooks and no internet for them to search for information for themselves.”* Apart from that, another teacher said, *“In History, there are a lot of lecturing methods because learners are not aware of the information.”*

Some of the teachers use learner-centred methods without understanding why they are using them. In other words, they use them just because they were told to use them. This shows that some History teachers may teach without clearly understanding what they are really doing, and this may

lead to ineffective delivery and impartation of content from History teachers to their learners. For example, one of the teachers said, *"I use question and answer, group, discussion, debate, presentation, and information finding because they are learner-centred."* Therefore, it seems that the lecturing method is used to complete the syllabus, and when there is a lack of resources, this means that it is used mostly in History because there is a lack of resources and there is too much content to be covered. If that is the case, the poor performance of History learners may also be attributed to rote learning, as indicated by the findings of Nyamwembe, Ondigi, and Kiio (2013), Chong and Yeo (2016), Samuelsson (2018), and Juliana (2020).

5.3.2.6 Assessment methods

The findings of the study showed that the majority of History teachers assess their learners frequently for assignments while the majority of teachers do not give their learners weekly tests frequently. Frequent assessments may be important in promoting the performance of History learners in public examinations. For that reason, the findings of this study support the findings of Atabek et al. (2014), Shin et al. (2017) and Haq et al. (2020). Teachers who do not regularly give their learners assessments claimed that they are overloaded with work as assessments demand a lot of work for them as they are the only History teachers in their schools. Therefore, this implies that although teachers claimed that they give their learners frequent assessment, it seems that this process is not operated properly due to challenges such as lack of History teachers.

5.3.2.7 Immediate feedback

Findings of the study showed that that most of the History teachers provide learners with the immediate feedback for both assignments and weekly tests. The teacher participants indicated that they provide their learners with the immediate feedback so that they can identify their errors, correct them, and know their progress in the in their learning of history. In doing so, teachers are doing the right thing by providing their learners with the immediate feedback. However, this feedback should not come as plain as it is but it should be accompanied by the constructive comments as recommended by the Lesotho educational frameworks of 2009 and 2021, respectively (MOET, 2009; MOET, 2021). Therefore, it would appear that the findings of the study align with findings of the literature (Moghaddam, 2013; Atabek et al., 2014; Djarfour, 2018; Haq et al., 2020).

5.3.2.8 Correction from feedback

The findings of this study revealed that corrections based on the feedback of learners are very beneficial and contribute positively to the performance of History learners in their public examinations. The findings discovered that correction from feedback helps learners to identify their mistakes, correct them, avoid repeating similar mistakes, understand the topic being taught, study further, prune learners' weaknesses, and build learners' confidence. Therefore, this may enable them to perform well in their public examinations. These findings align with the findings of Djarfour (2018) and Haq et al. (2020), who found similar results from the reviewed literature.

However, one of the participants contradicted the findings of the literature by emphasising that correction from the feedback may improve the performance of learners, depending on their motivation. For instance, he said, *"This engages learners to study further and look for what they have missed, but in some cases, it depends on how motivated learners are and their desires in History."* Therefore, this highlighted the importance of Expectancy Theory in this study, which may play a very significant role in the motivation of both teachers and learners through the stimulation of their expectations regarding the performance of learners in public examinations (Day, 2020). In this regard, good expectations may motivate teachers to encourage their learners to learn, and they may also motivate learners to learn, hence their successful learning which may result in good performance in their public examinations. This implies that the findings of this study are still aligned with Expectancy Theory underpinning this study.

5.3.2.9 Challenges encountered by History learners at school and in learning

Based on the findings of this study, the major challenges encountered by History learners are demotivation, a lack of textbooks, and a lack of technology in the teaching of history. It seems that History learners are demotivated to study History due to its status, which results from consistent poor performance and the false belief that History is a failing subject. This may result in the deterioration of the status of History in the national curriculum. Apart from that, a lack of textbooks and technology in schools appears to be a challenge for History learners. These challenges appear to be the main causes of History learners' poor performance and obstacles to their ability to learn effectively. The study also established that History learners struggle to communicate in English, thereby affecting their chances of doing well in public examinations that are set in English.

Other major challenges that affect History learners' performance in public examinations are their failure to conceptualise content and their struggle to answer the questions. If left unaddressed,

learners' inability to comprehend the historical material they were given in class could potentially prevent them from performing well on their public examinations. Overburdened curriculum is another challenge that might make it difficult for learners studying History to perform well in their public examinations due to the fact that a single teacher may be responsible for a large class and multiple grades. Teaching grades 8 to 11 by one History teacher leads to ineffective teaching due to an unmanageable large class and many grades.

The findings of the study also established that History learners struggle with writing essays, which could eventually have a negative impact on their performance in public examinations where the majority of the questions require an essay-style response. The findings of the study further proven that a lack of support from school management for the use of textbooks and technological tools is a foremost obstacle that could impede efficient teaching and learning and ultimately lead to poor performance in History in public examinations. Therefore, the findings of this study are in agreement with the findings from the literature, which discovered similar results (Nathen, 2000; Ntabeni, 2007; Boadu et al., 2014; Fru, 2015b; Annua-Sekyi, 2015; Monserate, 2018; Thoka, 2020; Rey, 2023). These challenges motivated the researcher to find solutions from the perspective of the participant. This resulted in the mitigation of the poor performance of History learners in public examinations, which will be discussed in Section 5.3.3 below.

5.3.3 Mitigation on performance of History learners in public examinations

The findings of this study established that History teachers should be provided with regular training on how to teach History as a way of improving performance of History learners in public examinations. The study also established the incorporation of technology in the teaching of History in order to enhance performance of History learners in their public examinations. Apart from that, the findings of the study revealed that it is important to allow learners to come with their smart phones at school to use them in doing their assignments as a way to improve the performance of History learners in public examinations. Moreover, the study revealed that it is beneficial for ECOL to provide History teachers with a clear marking system and train them on how to mark learners properly. The findings of the study also established that schools should be provided with History textbooks in order to improve the performance of History learners in their public examinations. Therefore, the findings of this study support the findings of the reviewed literature that discovered similar results (Ntabeni, 2006; Boadu et al., 2014; Johnson et al., 2014; Mhonyiwa, 2014; Fru, 2015a; Musau & Abebe, 2015; Meij & Mex, 2018; Monserate, 2018; Zeibell & Clarke,

2018; Lysaght et al., 2019; Dar, 2020; Johnson et al., 2021; Moea, 2022, Sengai & Mokhele, 2022; Peter et al., 2023).

5.4 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in five high schools in Maseru district. The study employed a qualitative approach and a case study design. The study was based on three objectives, which are to: explore the views of teachers on the status of History in the national curriculum considering learners' performance in public examinations; investigate how History teachers perceive the factors influencing the performance of History learners in public examinations; and explore History teachers' suggestions on mitigation of History learners' performance in public examinations.

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that History is very beneficial in the national curriculum of Lesotho as it instils moral values and citizenship values in learners. Apart from that, it seems that History is also beneficial in promoting patriotism, identity, critical thinking skills, reasoning skills, and educating learners about awareness of world-wide events. Although History seems beneficial in the national curriculum, it has been discovered that History is performed poorly in public examinations. Therefore, it is better to rectify this problem because, if not, the subject may be in danger of being completely removed from the curriculum, no matter its importance.

Looking at the findings of this study, the performance of learners in public examinations is not attributed to one factor; instead, it is attributed to several factors, including Improper training of History teachers, poor teaching strategies employed by History teachers, a lack of textbooks lack of technology, a shortage of History teachers, the demotivation of both History teachers and their learners, curriculum misalignment between curriculum designers and examiners, and miscommunication between examiners and History teachers. Although the participants claimed their motivation in the teaching of history, the researcher observed their demotivation due to a lack of resources and the higher failure rate of History learners. Therefore, it is important for teachers to be trained on how to teach history, including technology use, and how to mark it. It is also important for History teachers to be motivated at school and in their teaching in order to enhance the performance of their learners in public examinations.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The aim of the study was to explore teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations in five high schools in Maseru. The limitation of this study is that the data was generated from History teachers only, while learners were excluded. The problem with this is that teachers might have provided biased information regarding the performance of learners. A more balanced strategy would have been to generate data from both teachers and History learners, but the problem was that those learners were currently not at their respective schools, as some are at tertiaries while others did not manage to go to tertiaries.

Another limitation is that the data was generated using open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and field notes. Using these techniques with teachers and classroom observation was inadequate. It is believed that including classroom observation, whereby the researcher would have been observing the teachers while they were teaching, would have provided a researcher with a clearer insight into the perceptions of teachers on performance in History public examinations, especially on the factors influencing the performance of learners in their public examinations.

Another limitation is that in generating data, participants were not free to provide me with the information. Despite the clear explanation in the consent letters that the study was for educational purposes only and that the participants' responses would be kept confidential, some of the teachers still believed that their information might be exposed and believed that they had to respond in an unacceptable way. For that reason, they might have provided biased information. Another limitation is that the researcher delayed generating data due to several shifts in interviews with the participants. However, the researcher managed to generate data despite these challenges, including not being allowed to generate data for some of the schools and having to look for other schools.

5.6 Implication of the study

The results of this study on teachers' views of learners' performance in public examinations in history, which appear to be failing at a higher rate than previous years, suggest that learners in History are not gaining enough knowledge during the learning process. Apart from that, a shortage of resources such as textbooks and technology imply that effective teaching and learning may be hindered. Improper training of History teachers on how to teach the subject implies that History teachers may be incompetent in their teaching. Miscommunication between History teachers and examiners implies that there may be incompatibility in the public examination set, which may

ultimately affect the performance of History learners negatively. The benefits of including History in the national curriculum, as stated above, suggest that, given appropriate consideration and mitigation, learners' lives can be transformed by the knowledge they acquire from the subject.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions and the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made: Firstly, it may be important to provide History teachers with regular training on how to teach, assess, and mark History learners. Secondly, the government should provide the schools with History textbooks with lower subsidies. Thirdly, technology should be integrated into the teaching of history, and History teachers should be trained about the importance of technology and how to use technology in their teachings. Besides, the policy that allows learners to come to school with their cellphones must be introduced. Additionally, it may be important for the government to employ several professional and qualified History teachers in order to reduce the overload on in-service History teachers. There should be curriculum alignment between planned, implemented, and intended curriculum.

Further, it may be important for the Ministry of Education and Training, school management, and parents to support the education of History learners with relevant resources, guidance, and advice. Apart from that, there is a need for school management to motivate teachers through rewards and complements so that they can be effective in their work of teaching. Teachers should also be intrinsically motivated by their work, develop a passion for it, be patient with learners, and provide them with rewards and compliments in order to motivate them in the teaching and learning of history. Finally, it may also be important for History teachers to give their learners more assessments to familiarise them with examination questions and immediate feedback to identify their mistakes and correct them as some of the ways to improve their performance in public examinations.

5.8 Recommendation for future research

The fact that the study was based on the performance in History public examinations, it was difficult to access the learners to get their views. That is why the study ultimately focused on the teachers' perceptions on performance in History public examinations. However, in future, the researcher will conduct a study on the learners' perceptions on performance in History internal examinations so that History learners' views will be accessed. Apart from that, the findings of this

study revealed that the evolving marking by Examination Council of Lesotho plays a very significant role in poor performance of History learners in their public examinations due to the fact that History teachers are not even trained on how to mark History. Having considered that, another limitation was the difficulty in evaluating the effectiveness of History teachers in marking the subject hence there will be another future study to be conducted on this matter.

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APPENDIX A

Open-ended questionnaires (research question 1)

1. Background/general information

a) How old are

you?.....
.....

b) For how long have you been teaching History in this school or any other

school?.....
.....

c) What is your highest teaching

qualification?.....
.....

d) What are your subject

majors?.....
.....

e) Do you have another position besides your teaching role? If yes, state it.

2. How do you feel towards teaching of History and

why?.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How many grade 11 History learners do you have this

year?.....
.....

4. In comparison to prior years, what do you think could be the cause of decreasing or increasing of the number of grade 11

learners?.....

.....

.....

.....

5. (a) Based on your opinions, is the performance of History poor or good?.....

(b) Are you satisfied with the performance and why?.....

.....

.....

.....

6. In your opinions, what could be the reasons for this kind of performance?.....

.....

.....

.....

7. What do you think could happen with the subject if it is consistently performed poorly in public examinations?.....

.....

8. What do you think could be some benefits of History in national curriculum of Lesotho?.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX B

Semi-structured interviews (research questions 2 and 3)

1. What motivates you in the teaching of history, and why?
2. As a History teacher, do you practise lesson planning and scheming frequently? Can you explain how they benefit you and your learners?
3. How is your relationship with the principal, other teachers, and your learners? Why do you have such a relationship with them?
4. What kinds of teaching strategies are you using in the process of teaching, and why are you using such teaching strategies?
5. How often do you use teaching aids and teaching resources during teaching and learning? Can you explain why?
6. (a) Do you repeatedly give your learners assignments for weekly tests, and why? How often per week?
- (b) After how long do you give your learners feedback, and why?
- (c) Do you normally make corrections with your learners after giving them feedback? How do those corrections improve their performance?
7. (a) What are the challenges your learners encounter in the learning of History and at school?
- (b) What do you think could be the solutions for the above challenges?
8. (a) As a History teacher, what are the challenges you encounter in the teaching of History?
- (b) In your opinion, what do you think could be possible solutions for the above-mentioned challenges?
9. What do you think could be done to improve the performance of History learners in public examinations?
10. Is there any information you would like to add concerning the performance of History learners in public examinations?

APPENDIX C

Plagiarism report

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