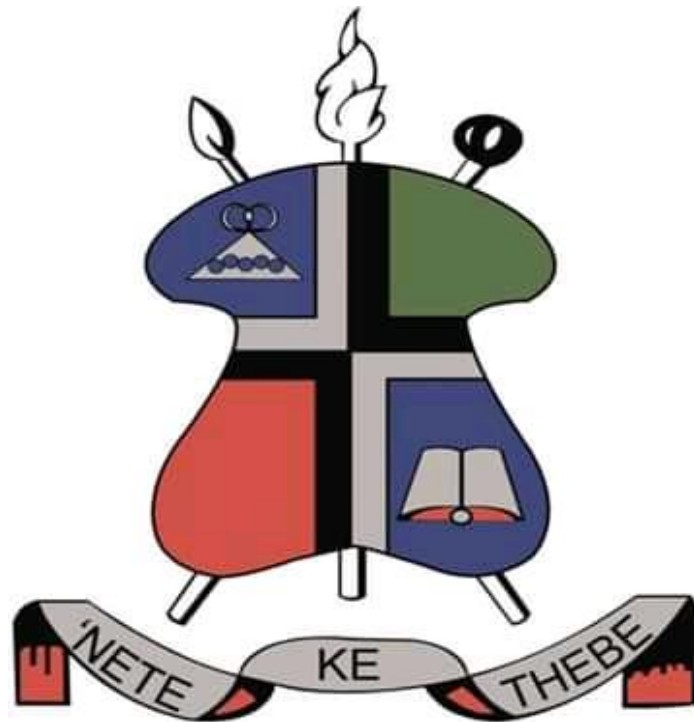


**Exploring Grade 10 Learners' Behavioural Attitudes Towards History: A Case of Three Secondary Schools in Maseru**



By

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**Submitted in attainment of the Master of Arts in Education (History Education)**

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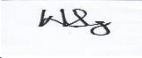
## DECLARATION

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, my thesis does not violate anyone's copyright and that any ideas, quotations and other works which have been derived from different authors' publications have been considerably acknowledged. I confirm that appropriate credit has been given within this thesis where reference has been made to the work of others because I understand the National University of Lesotho's policy on plagiarism, hence declaring that this thesis is my own work except where it is indicated by referencing. I declare also that this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Researcher: Lerato Raleting      Date: 11. 09. 2024

## SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ 

Date\_\_\_\_\_ 12/09/24

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the esteemed supervisor Dr Sengai, for the steadfast and unwavering guidance throughout this journey. Your constant encouragement and belief in me fuelled my determination to finish this thesis.

## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to explore the behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners in three secondary schools in Maseru. The participants were identified using purposive sampling based on a strategy in which specific people are deliberately chosen to give necessary information that cannot be obtained from other choices. The study's targeted population were twelve Grade 10 learners from three different secondary schools of whom five were males and seven females. The study employed qualitative research approach, case study design, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to generate data. Data was generated using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions which were both recorded and transcribed manually. The results from both semi-structured and focus group discussions revealed the most significant factors which influence the learners' behavioural attitudes towards History. These included the improper teaching strategies that are used by History teachers, lack of instructional materials, unqualified History teachers and peer pressure influence, among others. Therefore, the study recommends that attempts should be made by the Lesotho curriculum designers and planners in order to ensure accessibility of resources in secondary schools so that learners do not struggle with scarce learning materials like textbooks, computers and libraries. Furthermore, the study recommends that schools should be supplied with a large number of qualified teachers and sufficient instructional materials in order to make History more interesting. Future researches should be done in many secondary schools to explore the similar issue to the current study and to do action researches aiming at bringing solutions in the classrooms in order to make History subject more interesting to all History learners.*

**Keywords:** learners; behavioural attitudes; influence; History; teachers

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LBCEP	Lesotho Basic Curriculum Education Policy
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
GCE	General Certificate Examination
ECOL	Examination Council of Lesotho
NAEP	National Assessment of Education Progress
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
ARC	Australia Research Council

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 Introduction

There has been an ongoing debate concerning the traditional subjects that are taught in secondary schools, particularly in early 1950s. Those subjects included History, among others. In Europe, for instance, there was a development of the new curriculum where History among other subjects was being questioned as to whether it is important or not (Price, 1968). This problem went on in different parts of the world with Lesotho as not being an exceptional. The result of History being questioned, led to many challenges such as being disliked by both teachers and learners in secondary schools. This study is therefore set out to explore the behavioural attitudes of Grade10 learners towards History and to make recommendations which may bring positive solutions for the subject. The study followed the highlighted headings below.

## 1.2 Background to the study

Secondary education is considered as an essential stage in every individual's life due to its provision of knowledge to everyone. In this world, evolution, global warming and people's lack of knowledge about cultures are doubted. But if secondary education system could be that which appreciate the importance of History learning, then it would provide a panacea against further ignorance. Furthermore, in junior secondary education, History formed very small amount of an integrated subject called social studies. It appears that it is negative at all levels of education, particularly as seen in various secondary schools (Amengor, 2007). For instance, Andrews et al. (2008) conducted a survey study in North West England about exploring first year students' attitudes towards History and sources of national pride where they discovered that most of the learners did not like History due to the perception that it is not relevant to their daily life experiences, it is difficult and a teacher talks all the time making them not being interested in History as a subject.

On the other hand, Cendek and Akengin (2017) stestablished that in Insabul most learners liked History saying that it provokes their curiosity. The only factor that was found to be boring learners in History learning in Istanbul was the same teaching methods that teachers used in History classroom. In Pakistan, Ahmad and Maryam (2016) assert that attitudes of learners towards History were negative as learners seemed to be more interested in natural science subjects because they could attract them to better paying jobs whereas History is believed to have no job opportunities. In other words, learners mentioned factors that led to

their negative attitudes towards History as being a difficult subject containing a lot of dates and times of events that needed to be read and memorised. It appears that there are learners who dislike History because of the perceptions that it is boring and useless while others still believe that History is interesting more especially if it is taught using different methods of teaching.

Furthermore, Ganj and Issar (2020) postulate that in Delhi (India) about students' attitude towards History seem to be negative because it is burdensome and too loaded with events. Similarly, Boadu (2016) alludes that both teachers and learners dislike History because of the overloaded syllabus in Ghanaian senior high schools. This suggests that the above authors discovered that learners show no interest in History due to infobesity content of historical events. In addition, Alabi (2017) argues that learners that the negative attitudes of both teachers and learners towards History in Nigeria were caused by the fact that History was once removed from the secondary school curriculum and later re-introduced. Alabi (2017), Agwanda (2019) and Olukaju (2021) indicate that by the time History was re-introduced in secondary schools in Nigeria, both teachers and learners showed no interest in it. It seems that History lacks consistency in the curriculum as it could be removed and reinstated. With that being the case, both History teachers and learners lose interest in it because when History is being removed learners choose other subjects such as Geography. This means that when History is being reintroduced, learners seem to be no longer interested in studying History.

More importantly, Amengor (2007) indicates that in other secondary schools in Nigeria, when learners were asked to rank their favourite subjects in order of preference from the most favourite to the least favourite, History was ranked the least favourite subject. The implication here was that learners did not like History as the majority of learners held the misconception that History is dull, useless, too much memorising and lack of continuity in the subject matter. Amukowa (2013) points out that History as a school subject has been disliked by learners since it has been considered uninteresting and containing biased collection of facts and information; consequently, it should not be made compulsory in schools. Therefore, it appears that History one of the most unpopular subjects among the learners, both in primary and secondary schools. Due to little attention that was given to History, the attitudes of parents, learners, and History teachers seemed to be negative towards the subject.

In Kenya, there was establishment of vocational schools whereby much emphasis was put on the practical and vocational approach of the curriculum (Amukowa, 2013). Therefore,

History was regarded as an elective subject whereby learners had to choose to do or not to do because it was not a vocational subject (Amukowa, 2013). Moreover, Kiio (2012); David and Cheruiyot (2016) and highlight that learners have been developing little or no interest in History subject over many years because they perceived it as marginal as compared to science subjects. However, Nasibi (2015) postulates that in Nairobi, the majority of learners have positive attitudes towards History. It seems that the above-mentioned authors indicate the reasons why History ended up being regarded as unimportant because it was not practical and not offering learners jobs.

Namamba and Rao (2017) argue that in Tanzania, some learners have negative attitudes towards History because they do not have enough resources such as textbooks to assist their learning of History making it difficult because the nature of History as a subject needs a lot of reading. Furthermore, the problem of History is encountered in South Africa where learners seem to be reluctant to study History as a subject. Wassermann et al. (2018) assert that in South Africa, learners are reluctant to take History as their major due to fear of not getting jobs and remaining in poverty forever and due to the fact that there seems to be no sponsorships for History student majors. Fru (2015) maintains that students were forced to replace the subject with vocational subjects like science and mathematics. He further states that in Lesotho, it seems the subject faces similar problems of being considered less important. Equally important, it seems that teachers' lack of knowledge to interpret curriculum and failure to use varying teaching techniques are very critical in the instruction of History subject. In Lesotho, societies seem to focus on the subjects that offer jobs after studying them; therefore, they decide to eliminate History as the belief is that it is not a paying job (Mhlongo, 2013).

Over the past few years, concern was being raised about the high failing rate of History in secondary schools in Lesotho. History is the most unpopular subject in the group of social science subjects that comprise development studies, geography and religious studies in secondary schools in Lesotho (Fru, 2015). It seems that there are many reasons underlying History's sad record, with unsatisfactory results and a reduction in the number of schools that offer History. As a result, it is very important to identify the root cause why the subject loses interest day-by-day among learners. Some of the factors may be the improper presentation of the subject and methods of teaching used, the lack of content knowledge of the teachers, and many others (Ntabeni, 2006). It seems that the attitudes that learners have towards learning of subjects such as History are often displayed through their behaviour and in most instances

they appear to be negative at all levels of education, particularly as seen in various secondary schools (Amengor, 2007).

Results from examinations in Lesotho from 2019-2022, showed poor grades that learners obtained from History and this implies that some learners still consider it as a dull and difficult subject (Examinations Council of Lesotho, 2019-2022). In light of this, the current study intends to explore Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History and attempts to investigate the factors that lead to positive and negative attitudes in learners that affect their performance in History in three secondary schools in Maseru district.

### 1.3 Statement of the problem

Due to its significance, History should be given equal priority, just like any other subject. Some of the benefits of studying History are to introduce learners to their heritage, help them make reasonably-reliable estimates concerning the causes of present events in past developments, and also shed some possible light on the future (Amegor, 2007). More importantly, History also aims to develop the learners' values or good morals like tolerance, honesty, patriotism, courage, and forgiveness. History helps in the development of critical thinking skills in learners. It should be one of the subjects that are demanded within the school curriculum. Learners should enjoy studying the subject, and schools should treat the subject with care due to its relevance to the current state of rebuilding the national identity, patriotism, and togetherness within societies. In other words, studying of the past is essential because it may help learners to appreciate the current educational development and to plan better for the future.

However, due to unfavorable practices towards History, it seems that the attitudes of learners towards the study of History are increasingly alarming at all levels of education (Ntabeni, 2010; Fru, 2015). This seems to be the result of bad practices by teachers towards the subject and that the government no longer sees the value of History in the school curriculum (Amukowa, 2013). Negative attitudes of learners towards the subject seem to have translated into poor performance in the History to a greater extent because if the attitude of learners is negative towards studying History, their performance is likely to be poor. (Nyamwenbe et al. (2013) conducted studies where learners indicated that History should not be made compulsory in schools because it is not important. Results from public examinations in Lesotho from 2019-2022, showed poor grades that learners obtained from History and this implies that some learners still consider it as a dull and difficult subject (Examinations

Council of Lesotho, 2019-2022). In light of this, the current study intends to explore Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History and attempts to investigate the factors that lead to positive and negative attitudes in learners that affect their performance in History in three secondary schools in Maseru.

Most of the schools were investigated with 500-800 sample and data was generated through questionnaires and survey designs using mostly quantitative and mixed methods. In their studies of attitudes of students towards learning of History, Narasingapa and Laxmi (2016) also used questionnaires to generate their data. Hence the current study used qualitative method using case study design with the aim of obtaining in-depth and rich data from focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews.

#### 1.4 Research objectives

**The main** objective of this research is to explore Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History in three secondary schools in Maseru.

##### **Sub research objectives:**

- a) To examine the factors that influence Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History;
- b) To explore how Grade 10 learners behave towards History;
- c) To determine the reasons behind the Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History;

#### 1.5 Research questions

##### **The main research question**

What are Grade 10 learners' attitudes towards learning and teaching of History in three schools in Maseru?

##### **Sub research questions**

- a) What factors influence Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History?
- b) How do Grade 10 learners behave towards History and why?
- c) What do learners suggest to be done in order to make History an interesting subject?

## 1.6 The significance of the study

This research is important because it may enlighten the students' understanding of History and show them that History is neither difficult nor boring, so that they may change their negative attitude towards it. Besides, the significance of the study may also shed light on the erroneous impressions and perceptions held by learners with regards to History (Amengor, 2007). Another important thing is that it may motivate teachers and learners, which may bring good results in the end, and hopefully, the number of learners who study History will increase.

Additionally, the study may encourage teachers to emphasise to learners the importance of the subject, especially those careers that History offers, such as archaeologists, secondary school teachers, librarians, and so on. The school administrators may use the findings from the research in order to understand the prime factors in the learning of History in secondary school and make some positive changes regarding the subject. Furthermore, the study may also aid teachers in identifying deficiencies and constraints with regards to the teaching and learning of History.

Apart from that, the study may also raise awareness among the Lesotho curriculum designers to take into account the accessibility of resources in some marginalised schools so that learners do not struggle with scarce learning materials like textbooks and technology. The study may also aid educational administrators and curriculum planners to plan the curriculum and syllabus that may suit the needs and purposes of the learners, society, and the whole country. In other words, the contribution of this research will address factors that contribute to the negative attitudes of learners towards History, which may also develop the country with good results.

Hopefully, this research may wipe off the misinterpretations that learners make that History is useless, it does not give learners the knowledge that they need, it is considered as a subject that is full of dates, great names, and events, and it is a dull subject with uninteresting lessons. Therefore, I will try to highlight the importance of the subject, which may help learners to develop positive attitudes towards History as a subject. Further, it may enable secondary school principals to be able to plan systematically for staff retention to enhance learners' attitudes towards learning History.



## 1.7 Definition of terms

**Key terms in this study are as follows:** History, attitudes, behavioural attitudes and learners.

**History** has several definitions by different scholars. Issar (2021) defines History as an academic subject taught in schools that provides endless opportunities to develop analytical skills, value judgment, and expression of creativity. History is also defined by Sartika (2016) and Torman (2020) as an important subject that helps learners to develop values of nationalism and patriotism. Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Training (2020) postulates that History is the subject that is taught in schools aimed at promoting the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the complications of the world and provides knowledge of the past events to help learners to understand the problems and possibilities of the present and future.

According to Cham (2016), a term **attitude** refers to a tendency to move towards, against or away from a person, object or situation. Contrary to this, Bilgin (2018) argues that attitude is the predisposition of an individual to evaluate some symbol or object or aspect of his world in a favourable or unfavourable manner. Attitudes are central to education process. Attitudes sometimes elevate or prohibit learners' behaviour or even influence their choices to do, respond, value, participate or to carry out educational activities (Rollo & Dragomir, 2023).

Cherry (2023) asserts that attitudes can be negative or positive and play a crucial role in shaping human behaviour. Based on the discovery of Mejia (2016), attitudes can be positive or negative towards a certain idea, object, person or situation and thus claims that learners either have negative or positive feelings about History or they are neutral about it. The behavioural component of attitude refers to a way attitude influences how a person acts or behaves. People may have positive or negative attitude toward the same thing for different reasons (Cherry, 2023). Moreover, Cherry (2023) posits that attitude can also be defined as one's own view concerning a certain subject. Further, these scholars indicate that if learners have negative learning towards a certain subject, they will not take it seriously but will study hard if they are happy about learning that same subject. **Learners** refer to individuals who are engaged in the process of gaining knowledge by studying or being taught (Liu & Tlili, 2019).

## 1.8 Scope of the study

This research was about exploring behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners in three secondary schools in Maseru. The study used a total sample of thirteen History learners from Grade 10 only because they met the study's requirements as Grade 10 learners have

experienced learning and teaching of History at least for two years. They were introduced to the subject while they were in Grade 9 and I believe that they have a lot of information about it. I did not include Grade 11 learners because they have already started preparing for their final examinations. The selected schools are regarded as rural schools due to their geographical settings. I selected them due to convenience as they still have History subject and less costly in terms of transport charges. Further, the study used the Theory of Planned Behaviour as it was found appropriate for the behavioural attitudes of learners.

### 1.9 Limitations of the study

This study has limitations. This study used qualitative research approach that seeks to understand phenomena in in-depth and in real situations that it occurs. Employing qualitative research approach, I was able to explore rich and detailed experiences and behavioural attitudes of learners. However, these strengths also have certain limitations because it focused only on three selected secondary schools in Maseru district in Lesotho and total number of learners who participated in this study was twelve. Therefore, due to a number of three schools and a sample size of participants, the findings may not be generalised. I suggest that maybe future studies will build on my current work. Moreover, this study used case study design and one of its limitations is that the interpretation of the results is subjective; therefore, it might be difficult for other researchers to come up with similar results with the current work. The limitations will further be discussed in chapter five of this study.

### 1.10 Summary

This chapter included background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study, scope, limitations and theoretical framework with the purpose of exploring Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History. The background discussed similar studies that are done to find attitudes of learners towards History. The next chapter is review of related literature to this research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights and reviews pertinent literature which provides the background to the justification of the research undertaken. Previous studies were reviewed in order to make connections in relation to the previous work. The reviewed literature formed a basis for this study to explore the behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners in three secondary schools in Maseru and identifies gaps from the previous studies that were conducted by different scholars. This chapter also includes the theoretical framework which informs this study. The key concepts which appear in this section will be defined.

#### 2.2 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework refers to the foundational review of existing theories that serves as a roadmap for developing the arguments a researcher will use in her own work. In other words, theories developed by researchers to explain phenomena draw connections and make predictions. In a theoretical framework, the researcher explains the existing theories that support her research, showing that their paper or dissertation topic is relevant and grounded in the established ideas (George, 2023).

This study was predicted on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which started as the theory of reasoned action in 1975 by Fishbein to predict individual's intention in order to engage in a behaviour at a specific time and place. The theory of planned behaviour succeeded the theory of reasoned action due to the discovery that it was not completely voluntary and cannot always be controlled (Ajzen, 1991). Therefore, perceived behavioural control was added hence, it was renamed theory of planned behaviour (LaMorte, 2022). This theory explains individual's behaviour as resulting from intentions which in turn are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control.

This study employed the theory of planned behaviour because it says that any action a person takes, is guided by three principles namely behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs. Behavioural beliefs usually result in favourable or unfavourable attitude toward a specific behaviour (Ajzen, 2020). The theory of planned behaviour predicts that planned behaviours are determined by behavioural intentions which are largely influenced by an individual's attitude towards a behaviour, the subjective norms surrounding the execution of the behaviour, and individual's perception of their control over the behaviour (Ajzen, 2020).

In other words, if learners believe that studying History will help them to be successful in future, it is more likely that learners will have positive attitudes towards History while on the contrary, if they have negative evaluation about History, they will decide not to do it.

Furthermore, for subjective norms, here the evaluation of History as a subject is based on what other people being families or friends of the learners think about History. That said, if people surrounding the Grade10 learners find History as being beneficial, then those learners are more likely to like the subject. On the other hand, learners may have negative attitudes if the evaluation of History from the peers is negative. For perceived behavioural controls, this theory simply implies that learners may decide to study or not to study History due to their capabilities of whether they can do it and whether there are enough tools that can support them. Ajzen (1991) asserts that the combination of the three evaluations will then lead to a desire or an intention to perform the behaviour being History in this study.

Ajzen's theory of planned behaviour has been used to predict any array of behaviours (Martin et al., 2010; Quine & Rubin, 1997; Stone et al., 2010). In their study to test the theory of planned behaviour for predicting academic misconduct, intentions and behaviour, Stone et al. (2010) consider the theory valuable for predicting cheating behaviours, hence the theory was also used in this study to predict the behavioural attitudes of learners in three secondary schools.

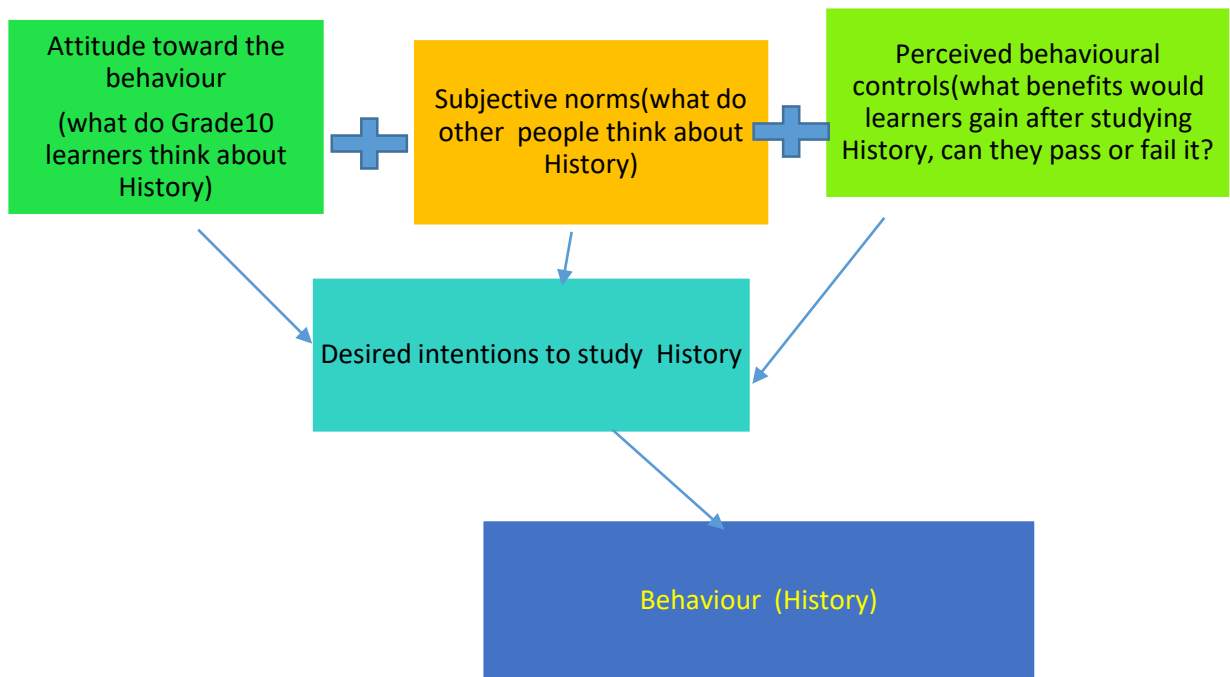
Furthermore, the theory of planned behaviour was appropriate in this study because the study intended to predict and explain the behavioural attitudes of Grade10 learners towards History in three secondary schools. The theory has successfully been used to predict array of behaviours in different areas (Ajzen, 2020). Therefore, in this study, it was also used to understand and predict how learners behave towards History in the selected schools as well as to locate where barriers were and to encourage change in behaviour. According to Ajzen (1991), the theory of planned behaviour views behaviours as being influenced by intentions, which are determined by three factors such as attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control.

Brookes (2023) stipulates that the theory of planned behaviour proposes that an individual's behaviour, such as studying or not studying History, can be predicted by their intentions to engage in that behaviour. In this study, on one hand, most of the findings from three schools showed that some learners did History with the intentions that they want to be archaeologists, lawyers, History teachers among others. On the other hand, other learners' intentions

revealed that other learners were influenced by factors such as peer pressure and the fact that they just liked the subject. As a matter of fact, intentions are assumed to capture motivational factors that influence behaviour. Ajzen (1991) generally concludes that, the stronger the intention to engage in a behaviour, the more likely will be its performance. Ajzen (2020), in his theory of planned behaviour, asserts that in general terms, subjective norms refer to what other people think about a certain behaviour. The implication here is that what they think about History may impact positively or negatively in the behavioural attitudes of Grade10 learners towards learning of History.

This figure summarises the elements of the theory of planned behaviour which are attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and the behaviour. These translate into what do Grade10 learners think about History, followed by what other people say to learners regarding History as a subject, whether it is good or bad, which according to TPB is the subjective norms. The third principle is the perceived behavioural control towards learning of History, which in this case makes the learners to ask themselves whether they will succeed after studying History or not and whether there are enough materials to help them perform well in it or not. According to Ajzen (1991), these principles result into what is called the desired intentions to perform the behaviour which in this study is History.

*Figure 1: Principles of the theory of planned behaviour*



### 2.3 Defining History concept

According to Boadu (2016), History is not a mere storytelling or a mere fabrication rather, it refers to a systemic account of what actually happened in the past in connection to what is happening at present and helps in planning or projecting for the future. In other words, History is about yesterday, today and tomorrow. Boadu (2016) adds that if learners have acquired knowledge from History, they can respect and acknowledge the backgrounds, cultures, beliefs as well as the traditions of other people. Therefore, as claimed by Amaele (2017), it could be suggested that History is a true picture of important persons, places, events of the past for the present and future generation.

Similarly, Carr (2020) stipulates that History refers to a fundamental dialogue between the past and the present which aims at fostering the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of human activities in the past, connecting it as appropriate with the present (Ministry of Education and Training [MoET], 2020). MoET (2020) further indicates that History aims at

promoting the obtainment of knowledge and comprehension of the complexity of the world and provides insights to help cope with the problems and possibilities of the present and future.

In addition, Issar (2021) asserts that History is an academic subject taught in schools that provides endless opportunities to develop analytical skills, value judgment, and expression of creativity. Additionally, Issar argues that the main aim of History teaching and learning in Africa is to put African children into the stream of History from which they have been absent for so long. History is also regarded as important because through learning it, learners would develop values of nationalism (Sartika, 2016; Torman, 2020).

Afolabi (2018) defines History as a bedrock on which society stands to build its future upon because History is beyond storytelling and collection of the past activities, but it is about facts which are based on the unbiased judgement of a historian analysis and interpretation of data collected in the field which help to preserve the past. That said, the past events may help the present members of the society to know how to avoid past mistakes and build on the past achievements and serve as a pointer for the future. Furthermore, other studies by Andrews and Mycock (2008) show that learners will be able to understand and appreciate how people in the past thought and why currently people think differently and live different lifestyles.

#### 2.4 Importance of learning History in secondary schools

The objectives of History education are to educate learners in order to become faithful, democratic, nation-oriented human beings, having a high spirit of nationalism and patriotism certainly can be achieved through historical learning (Ministry of Education and Training, 2020). Additionally, the Ministry of Education and Training (2020) asserts that the teaching of History aims to stimulate the learners' interest and passion of the study of the past in order to introduce awareness and feeling of nationalism and patriotism. This suggests History is an important subject which can help learners to become future leaders who love their own countries through the values of nationalism and patriotism.

Nationalism refers to one's love for his or her nation. Longley (2021) postulates that nationalism is the ideas of people who fervently believe that their nation is more superior than others. These ideas are often based on shared ethnicity, language, religion or social values. From political stand point, nationalism aims to defend the country's right to govern itself (Longley, 2021) while patriotism refers to devotion and loyalism for one's country as a whole. Burns (2023) describes patriotism as a deep sense of love, loyalty and devotion towards one's country. Gai (2023) adds that patriotism plays a crucial part in History learning

because if learners develop a sense of devotion towards their nation, they can contribute positively to the betterment of their own country as it advocates for justice, equality and freedom for all citizens as well as fostering unity in the country (Alabi, 2017).

Torman (2020) concurs that it is important to instil the values of nationalism in secondary schools through learning of History. The values include love for motherland or one's nation, self-sacrifice and showing acceptance for different cultures as well as maintaining the integrity and unity of the nation. In addition, other researchers such as Mestika Zed (2020) and Ulger et al. (2014) interpolate that learning of History subject raises awareness and understanding of the past for the future and could function as a foundation for developing the national identity, which is beneficial in building the nation now and in the future. These notions from the above authors seem to be having similar implications about the importance of History especially that of being good citizens who are loyal to their countries.

Furthermore, the study of History takes learners closer to the events of the past and how things have changed ever since and who were prominent figures who played major roles in those scenarios (Narasingappa & Laxmi, 2016; Afolabi, 2018). That said, nationalism and patriotism are believed to play a vital role in promoting love and loyalty for one's own country and can be developed through the study of History which may also enhance learners' positive attitudes towards History. They would understand why they are referred to as a Basotho nation founded by Moshoeshoe I as well as understanding other nations' different cultures, identities and lifestyles. This suggests that History is important as it reminds learners who they are, who their leaders are so that they can make informed decisions about their future.

To top this off, authors such as Adams (2020) after realising the importance of History, further claims that if a person does not know his or her own History, he or she appears to be lifeless because History has values that develop the mind and that there seems to be no discipline without its own History. History further helps learners to judge wisely because if they understand the past behaviours of their forefathers, then they can make unbiased interpretations. History appears to be beyond telling and collecting of the past activities but it is about facts based on unbiased judgement of historians on the past activities in relation to the present and its impact on the future (Narasingappa & Laxmi, 2016; Ministry of Education and Training [MoET], 2020; Cendek & Akengin, 2017).



According to Issar (2021), History is an academic subject taught in schools and provides endless opportunities to develop analytical skills, value judgment, and expression of creativity. Additionally, Sartika (2016) and Torman (2020) concur with the view that History is also important because through learning it, learners would develop values such as forgiveness, loyalty, respect, peace, leadership and love and skills such as creative thinking, analytical, problem solving, empathy and confidence skills. In other words, History as academic subject helps learners to think critically in order to make informed decisions and to judge fairly.

Furthermore, Nuun (2020) indicates that History does not only provide learners with reading and writing skills but also helps them understand the process of economic development because by studying History, they will learn about the historical roots of economic development in the nation. Nevertheless, Amukowa (2013), David and Cheruiyot (2016) and Issar (2021) reject these views as their different studies revealed that History is boring and difficult to connect it with their present-day experiences. They also claim that it does not offer white collar jobs. This suggests that there may be different views about whether History is important or not because the findings of different scholars vary.

Nevertheless, Fru (2015), Ghosh and Bairagya (2018) explain that History as a school subject is considered uninteresting and a biased collection of facts and information regarded as invaluable by different nations including Lesotho, hence most learners seem to dislike it. On the contrary, learning of History is important and interesting for learners who enjoy it because they can understand their roots and be more knowledgeable about the world that they live in, while there are those learners who do not like it, therefore, perceive it boring and irrelevant.

## 2.5 Behavioural attitudes of learners towards History

After discussing the concept of behavioural attitude in Chapter one, it was necessary to align it with the main research question which is: what are Grade 10 learners' attitudes towards History in three secondary schools in Maseru? Several related literatures from other studies concerning the same phenomena were reviewed. The main objective of the study was to determine the behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners towards History in three secondary schools in Maseru district. Therefore, a brief discussion of the concept attitude is done in this section.

Educationists, psychologists and sociologists have brought to the fore, numerous definitions of the concept attitude. Attitudes are referred to as evaluations because they involve

preference for or against a certain object which in this case is History subject. They are commonly expressed in terms such as prefer, like, dislike, hate and love (Ajzen, 2001; Albarracin et al., 2005). According to Cham (2016), attitude refers to a tendency to move towards, against or away from a person, object or situation. Though defined differently as shown above, attitudes can be either positive or negative depending on specific individuals. It appears that different learners have different attitudes towards History depending on the experiences that they have concerning History.

Cherry (2023) asserts that attitudes consist of meanings that are associated with a certain object or abstraction and that influence a person's acceptance of it. Attitude may also be defined as a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person or situation. Furthermore, Albarracin and Helper (2013) contend that some individuals hold positive attitudes towards a certain object while others have negative attitudes by hating a specific object. The theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) indicates that the attitudes towards the behaviour develop from individual's desirable or undesirable intentions to perform the behaviour.

It appears that the concept of attitude is generally explained as positive or negative emotions and thoughts related to a specific social object such as humans, objects, facts or events. Furthermore, attitudes refer to ways in which people view and evaluate something or someone. Therefore, it is believed that people's most intensely held attitudes in particular, are connected in nature. In other words, every individual person has either positive or negative behaviour towards a certain behaviour.

This study intends to explore the behaviours of the Grade10 learners hence using one of the components of attitude which is behavioural component of attitude. The behavioural component refers to a way attitude influences how a person acts or behaves (Cherry, 2023). According to Foxall (2005), behavioural attitudes refer to favourable or unfavourable evaluations of individuals toward a specific object. Behavioural attitudes could be influenced by factors such as competences, incentives or benefits and where individuals can be influenced by attitudes of others being social groups surrounding an individual as discussed earlier in the theory of planned behaviour (Foxall, 2005).

Nadeau and Long-Crowell (2023) assert that attitude has three components which include cognitive, affective and behavioural attitudes. The three components may be used together but generally Nadeau and Long-Crowell (2023) indicate that one component can be enough for a

specific study. In this study, I used the behavioural component of attitude to explore why and how Grade10 learners behave towards History as a subject and their intentions to study History because behavioural attitudes are often predictable as they are grounded by action towards the attitude object. After discussing the concept attitude, it was necessary to align it with the main research question reading as: what are Grade 10 learners' attitudes towards History in three secondary schools in Maseru? Below is the related literature from other studies concerning the same phenomena.

The three components maybe used together but generally, Nadeau and Long-Crowell (2023) indicate that one component can be enough for a specific study. In this study, I used the behavioural component of attitude to explore why and how Grade10 learners behave towards History as a subject and their intentions to study History because behavioural attitudes are often predictable as they are grounded by action towards the attitude object. In order to address the main research question as captioned above, considerable literature was reviewed and below is what was found to be relevant to the current study.

Andrews et al. (2008) conducted a survey study in North West England about exploring first year students' attitudes towards History and sources of national pride, found out that most of the learners when asked why they did not like History, responded that History is not relevant to their daily life experiences, it is difficult and a teacher talks all the time hence they are not interested in it. On the contrary, other learners who were taught effectively showed a positive attitude towards History. This is in line with Albarracin and Helper (2013) who content that some individuals hold positive attitudes towards a certain object while others have negative attitudes by hating a specific object. This suggests that different learners hold different attitudes towards History.

The U.S. History National Assessment of Education Progress [NAEP] (2018) concurs with the above findings by pointing out that learners do have negative attitudes towards History because for them it provides little scope of creativity, it contains overloaded information and does not raise literate youth. NAEP (2018) further outlines that History teaching provides little scope of creativity, imagination or self-expression to the learners who study it while these virtues are essential to help learners to adjust and develop as independent individuals. In other words, History seems to be regarded as useless, dull and difficult and does not develop creative learners hence most of them show negativity towards it as a subject.

A similar study was conducted in Pakistan by Ahmad and Maryam (2016) which revealed that attitudes of learners towards History were negative. Their results showed that learners were more interested in natural science subjects because it could attract them to better paying jobs whereas History did not have job opportunities. The results were that learners considered History as dull, difficult, teacher-centred, too much reading and too many events including names and dates. In other words, learners mentioned factors that led to their negative attitudes towards History as being a difficult subject containing a lot of dates and times of events that needed to be read and memorised. However, Cendek and Akengin (2017) carried out a study about students' opinions about History subjects in the social studies curriculum in Istanbul and established that most learners liked History saying that it provokes their curiosity. The only factor that was found to be boring learners in History learning in Istanbul was the same teaching methods that teachers used in History classroom. It appears that there are some learners who still acknowledge History as important subject as long as it could be taught well using different strategies.

Another study was carried out in India by Issar and Ganj (2020) who used observation classrooms and practices to study the attitudes of students towards studying of History. The findings matched with the above by showing that History is burdensome and too loaded with events. According to Issar and Ganj (2020), learners also revealed that the way History is taught depends much on the use of text books which was too linear, making the subject boring. The above studies seemed to agree on the observation that learners regarded History as a dull and difficult subject. They further claimed that History classrooms were often teacher-centred whereby teachers were the only ones who talk and that led to History being monotonous to learners hence disliked it.

Furthermore, researches were done in Kenya by David and Cheruiyot (2016) and Kiio (2012) who demonstrated that learners have been developing little or no interest in History subject over many years because they perceived it as marginal as compared to science subjects. In addition, Amukowa (2013) purports that the issue of marketability of subjects in relation to the job market may relegate History to the rank of lower importance subject. Narasingappa and Laxmi (2016) assert that for some learners, History seem to be monotonous but some learners enjoy it wholeheartedly as it them better individuals. The learners who study History understand both the past and the present and whether their forefathers did what is right or wrong.

Similarly, Nasibi (2015) conducted a survey study about attitudes of secondary school students towards History in Nairobi and the findings revealed that the majority of learners have positive attitudes towards History. However, the same study had significant shortcomings from the principals who were also the participants in the study who pointed out that History should not be made compulsory due to lack of History teachers to teach the subject. Namamba and Rao (2017) in Tanzania, used semi-structured interviews. Their findings were that there were insufficient teaching and learning materials; therefore, it is difficult to acquire necessary information and skills from learning of History. This suggests that some learners have negative attitudes towards History because they do not have enough resources such as textbooks to assist their learning of History making it difficult because the nature of History as a subject needs a lot of reading.

Alabi (2017) carried out a study about the challenges facing teaching and learning of History in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. He found out that learners have negative attitudes towards History. The study employed descriptive study design using questionnaires. The findings of the study revealed that the negative attitudes of both teachers and learners towards History were caused by the fact that History was once removed from the secondary school curriculum and later re-introduced. Alabi (2017), Agwanda (2019) and Olukuju (2021) indicate that by the time History was re-introduced in secondary schools in Nigeria, both teachers and learners showed no interest in it. It seems that History lacks consistency in the curriculum as it could be removed and reinstated. With that being the case, both History teachers and learners lose interest in it because when History is being removed learners choose other subjects such as geography. This means that when History is being reintroduced, learners seem no longer take it seriously.

In another study which was carried out by Amengor (2007) about senior secondary school students towards the study of History, the findings indicated that when learners were asked to rank their favourite subjects in order of preference from the most favourite to the least favourite, History was ranked the least favourite subject. The implication here was that learners did not like History as the majority of learners held the misconception that History is dull, useless, too much memorising and lack of continuity in the subject matter. Amukowa (2013) points out that History as a school subject has been disliked by learners since it has been considered uninteresting and containing biased collection of facts and information; consequently, it should not be made compulsory in schools. These findings also were an

indication that learners disliked History because for them, it seemed so inapplicable that learners did not know why it was even taught in schools.

Based on the above findings from different authors, it appears that learners from different parts of the world in most secondary schools, have negative behavioural attitudes towards History due to the perceptions that History is boring, difficult and useless for the learners. Musa (2023) in his study on attitudes of Lesotho secondary school learners towards learning of artificial intelligence (AI), posits that attitudes towards a specific phenomenon is due to learners' level of positive or negative appraisal. In other words, the above views from several scholars indicate that learners' attitudes towards History are due to their level of negative appraisal about History. In short, they perceive it as useless, dull and not developing in them the skills such as creative thinking and problem solving; therefore, they showed negative attitudes in most of the conducted studies.

Based on the definition given by Cherry (2023) attitudes can be positive or negative towards a certain idea, object, person or situation and thus claims that learners either have negative or positive feelings about History or they are neutral about it. This suggests that if Grade10 learners possess favourable evaluations about History as a subject, their attitudes towards it will be positive. On the other hand, if their evaluations are unfavourable, then they will show negative attitudes towards History. Therefore, exploring Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes is fundamental in this study in order to have a clear picture of their interpretations about History. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) by Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) indicates that the attitudes towards the behaviour develop from individual's desirable or undesirable intentions to perform the behaviour. According to TPB, intentions are determined by personal attitudes, which are people's underlying beliefs and values that are personal towards a certain phenomenon.

Similarly, Wassermann et al. (2018) assert that in South Africa, learners seem to be reluctant to take History as their major subject due to fear of not getting jobs and remaining in poverty forever. Thus, most learners have negative attitudes towards it and do not do it even if it is offered at secondary schools. From what the above-mentioned authors indicate, History ended up being regarded as unimportant because it was not practical and not offering learners jobs. That being the case, attitudes affect learners' choice of History subject and respond to challenges and influences that learners encounter in the learning of History in secondary schools in Maseru.

In addition, Boadu (2016) and Nuun (2020) assert that learning History is very important as it would give learners information from the past activities; therefore, they suggest that History worth to be taken seriously in schools. Likewise, Levstik and Borton (2015) remark that through learning of History, learners would gain different perspectives of significant figures in History which may help learners to interpret possible events that may happen in future and also help them understand the past, the present and the future. It appears that History is very important and can groom learners into being future nationalists with good analytical skills that are needed in this world.

## 2.6 Teacher characteristics

In this section, factors that influence the behavioural attitudes of Grade10 learners towards History are discussed in order to find out what other scholars say and whether these factors connect with the objectives of the current study or the research question one which is: what are factors influencing Grade10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History? Such factors include: unavailability of resources, teaching strategies, teacher characteristics and peer pressure influence. Many studies have been conducted to find out why History as a subject is considered as uninteresting by some learners in most secondary schools and their findings revealed some of the factors that relate with the current study.

Amongst the factors that influence the behavioural attitudes of learners towards History appeared to be teacher quality and quantity. This refers to whether History in most secondary schools have qualified History teachers or not and whether there are enough History teachers in secondary schools or not. This factor seems to play a major role in the behavioural attitude of learners towards learning of History in most secondary schools. Several scholars such as Alabi (2017) and Lawal (2019) both content that there are no enough qualified History teachers in most secondary schools in Nigeria and that makes History dull and difficult for learners. Lawal (2019) mentions that there is scarcity of History teachers and that contributes a lot in the negative attitudes of learners towards learning of History. This is so because History may be taught by someone who does not even have interest in the subject and then fail to deliver it in the manner that would make it interesting and exciting to learners.

Lamenting on the quality of teachers who teach History subject in Lesotho, Fru (2015) and Ntabeni (2010) made significant discoveries that History is being taught by any teachers whose major subjects may not include History. Fru (2015) points out that it appears easier to allocate History teaching to unqualified teachers under the impression that History is only a

collection of the stories of the past that everyone can possibly pass to the learners. Tamisoglu (2010) in the survey study with focus group discussions about students' opinions about school History, explains that learners were being taught by unqualified teachers. The findings revealed that learners were being taught by any teacher in that school whose area of specialisation is not History which implies that the teacher there also lacks historical knowledge of content. It appears that History is mostly being taught by teachers who are not trained in the discipline of History and that leads to learners who find History boring and difficult because of lack of content knowledge that is shown by unqualified History teachers.

Furthermore, Afolabi (2018) asserts that learning of History has not been encouraging in Nigeria because of lack of qualified teachers. Alabi (2017) suggests that other teachers teach History because there are no qualified History teachers available to teach the subject. He mentions that even those who are qualified, seem not to be interested in teaching their own subject. Hence the relevance of the subject is being questioned in most secondary schools which also leave negative impact on learners towards the subject. In other words, it is apparent that learners did not trust the teacher at all though they had no other option but to attend History lessons as usual. The findings indicated that they ended up having negative attitudes towards learning of History. Not having enough History teachers in secondary schools seems to be a challenge in many secondary schools. This suggests that there is scarcity of History teachers in these particular schools and that lead to learners losing interest in the subject.

### 2.7 Unavailability of resources and instructional facilities

Resources and instructional facilities involve materials such as textbooks, computers, films, artefacts and accessibility of internet among others together with other resources that are taken from online, activity books that may help learners to develop literacy and creativity skills as well as materials that are provided by other sources of information. These resources are needed to make teaching and learning of History effective in order to enhance the behavioural attitudes of learners towards learning of History (Chacha, 2018). In addition to that, Sengai and Mokhele (2022) allude that instructional materials are regarded as essential tools throughout the syllabus reforms which can ease the work of teachers and learners. It appears that having enough instructional materials are not needed only to enhance the learning of History but also are said to be important in making the teaching of History easy for teachers in classrooms. This is so because History teaching should motivate learners and help them to understand the importance of History and that may be done by varying the



instructional materials and strategies. For example, teachers may interpret the same historical events differently to promote learners' willingness to evaluate historical occurrences critically (Yilmaz, 2008).

However, despite the benefits that enough instructional materials provide for teachers and learners in secondary schools, it was discovered by Salema and Wambiya (2016) that textbooks, computer facilities and libraries are insufficient in most secondary schools in Nigeria. Afolabi (2018) adds that "lack of good History textbooks makes learners to run away from History class and choose to do Geography or to focus on Mathematics and Science subjects" (p.17). According to Effiong et al. (2015), having enough instructional materials which are applied appropriately in classrooms, give the learners golden opportunities to learn differently according to their capabilities. In other words, learning becomes more real and fun. It appears that negative attitudes of learners can result from insufficient resources that seem to play a critical role in causing the misconceptions of learners that History is boring and difficult.

Similarly, in another study which was conducted by Gomez (2017) about teaching social studies in the elementary Grade Level in Philippines, the study findings revealed that social studies include asking questions such as what happened, when did it happen, who were involved, to name a few, which needs historical artefacts, textbooks and internet resources, among others. In other words, having such historical artefacts reduce the workload of teachers and makes learning interesting to learners because the importance of using more visual aids in social studies classes bring pleasure and wisdom to the learners. It appears that if schools can be supported by enough instructional materials to be used properly by both teachers and learners, History can be more interesting to learners.

Similarly, Boadu (2016) in the study on teachers' perceptions of the problems faced in teaching History in senior high schools discovered that insufficient materials, and the overloaded syllabus were the major factors that lead to dislike of History subject in Ghanaian senior high schools. David and Cheruiyot (2016) conducted a study on the assessment of inadequate textbooks and lack of interest of government in History education as well as the discrimination between Science subjects and History subject. Hence, learners believe that History is just old stories that cannot add any value to the industrialised society or societies that use technology to improve their economy (Afolabi, 2018). The above studies indicate further that indeed schools seem to lack sufficient materials such as computers, good History

textbooks, among others, which are believed to bring positive change in the teaching and learning of History subject in secondary schools.

In another study which was carried out in Nigeria by Adeyinka (2015), the results showed that in an attempt to catch up with the developing countries of the world in the areas of science and technology, the Nigerian government pays much attention to the teaching of science subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics at the expense of arts subjects such as History. This suggests that some of the attitudes of learners are related to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) because if History learners realise that History is being left behind when ICT is concerned, they may develop negative attitudes towards History and decide to focus on subjects that have interesting materials such as science subjects. It appears that if History learners could be exposed to ICT, the problems that hinder the successes of History studies would be reduced because ICT has the potential to arouse interest of learning History and to introduce learners to a lot of information sources and encourages effective learning.

Likewise, Salema and Wambiya (2016) assert that there are insufficient resources such as textbooks, libraries and particularly computer facilities which make learners to lose interest in the learning of History. This was supported by Bal (2011) who indicate that nowadays there is emergence of new pollution of information technology on the internet for modern teaching. In addition, Issar (2021) elaborates that ICT turns up to be improvising teaching by blending together the modern and the traditional tools to develop the minds of the learners to be practical. Therefore, these scholars suggest the use of ICT be incorporated in the teaching of History because it has the potential to change the way History is taught and learned because technology will help learners to explore many historical activities on their own.

Reeki (2021) indicates that during covid-19 pandemic, it was realised that teachers and learners that lack resources such as ICT gadgets made learning of History difficult as lessons had to move from traditional to online lessons. For those who managed to teach at that time, they had to read for learners for the whole lessons which discouraged learning and promoted negative attitudes of learners towards History (Atang & Rakoae, 2021). This suggests also that there is a need to incorporate ICT gadgets in the teaching and learning of History in secondary schools as it was seen as an important tool that could be used during covid-19 pandemic where direct teaching in classrooms was forbidden.

The scholars above indicate how difficult it was to teach in that period especially in secondary schools where the only option was to rely on reading for learners for the entire lessons. Agreeing with the above assertions, Issar (2021) indicates that if inflexible teaching methods such as text-book-centric is the only dominating method of teaching History in classrooms, that may also affect the behavioural attitudes of learners towards History negatively because it makes a lesson to be monotonous but also highlights that the attitudes of learners can be improved by blending together the modern and the traditional tools to develop the minds of the learners to be practical. In addition, Milo (2015) asserts that some learners do not like the use of textbooks due to the perception that textbooks often dismiss the humanity of the subject as they tend to focus more on specific stories with no main character. Therefore, relying on textbooks as a teaching strategy tends to bore learners especially if the teacher is not competent with the teaching of History as a subject.

In support of the fact that ICT is needed in History teaching and learning, LBECP (2021) encourages employment of ICT in all classroom activities in order to enhance effective learning environment that would develop learners who are responsible for their own learning. More importantly, Gomez (2017) posits that the integration of internet browser in social studies classrooms connects both teachers and learners to the global world. It appears that ICT integration in the History curriculum would be beneficial to both learners and teachers by making a History class to be democratic and interesting. This is on account that it also connects users with different people and information that may be useful to both teachers and learners leading to development of positive attitudes of learners towards History subject.

## 2.8 Peer pressure influence

Peer pressure is described as influence from other people especially from individual's social group to act in certain manner (Hartney, 2024). Hartney (2024) further argues that peer pressure could be positive or negative social influence on the individual's mental or physical health. Attitudes are often learned from other people in order to make individuals similar to members of their groups and they are influenced by social pressure and persuasion (Hartney, 2024). Peer pressure appears to be one of the factors and subjective norms that impact learners' behavioural attitudes towards History. According to Majeed (2010) and Okorodudu (2013), peers may influence their colleagues or learners to behave through imitation and followership. That is, they can do what their peers tell them to do or just follow what their

peers do or did before Peers seem to have a significant impact on other learners' attitude towards academics (Okorodudu, 2013).

Examples include, peer pressure, influence from families, friendships. It appears that learners may be influenced by their friends and families to like or dislike History depending on whether History is important or not. Following other people's choices or persuasions to act in a certain way may lead to positive or negative results. In this case where learners seem to be studying History because of peer pressure, it shows that they themselves already have no interest in the subject hence it is being failed. This shows that motivation in the form of career guidance for learners is needed so that they make informed choices when choosing the specific social science subject.

Wassermann et al. (2018) assert that in South Africa, learners are reluctant to take History as their major due to fear of not getting jobs and remaining in poverty forever as mentioned earlier in this study. In addition, Mhlongo (2013) indicate that another challenge encountered in South Africa concerning History as a subject is the fact that it is not sponsored. Fru (2015) also reveals that students were forced to replace the subject with vocational subjects like science and mathematics subjects in South Africa due to the perception that it is useless. The point here appears not to concern learners only but the whole society. This however, seems to have a negative impact to the learners because they are not even considered important by their own government if they study History hence it denies them the sponsorships.

In addition, Li and Qui (2018) argue that parents seem to be competing for better educational opportunities for their children; as a result, they play a vital role in influencing their children to choose subjects that are believed to be useful after completion such as science and technology. They further stipulate that peers have a significant impact on other learners' attitude towards academics and that could emerge from parental influence, family income and teacher effective support among others. Hence learners' less interest in History subject may be positive or negative depending on the influence that they get from parents. Furthermore, Agwanda (2019) postulates that subjects such as History are considered unresponsive to the needs of the societies hence it seems irrelevant to the rapid growth of the techno-driven world. The emphasis here seems to be the issue of getting better jobs after studying History which is perceived as unsatisfying according to most learners and causes fear among them when they have to make decision to study or not to study History.

Thomson (2021) points out that in some secondary schools, learners face social stigma for choosing other subjects such as History. It seems that peer pressure either from families, friends or atmosphere in schools may be another challenge facing the study of History in secondary schools. If they get negative peer pressure, they would have negative attitudes towards History while positive peer pressure may lead to positive attitudes.

Forxall (2005) also postulates that family members as close peers of the learners may influence their attitudes towards learning of History because if families do like History, they would influence their children to do it at school. Contrarily, if they talk negatively about it, their children will not like it because group dynamics play a vital role in attitude formation, individual behaviour and decision making in the process of learning.

However, Okoye (2021) states that some learners disagree that they get influence from families and friends regarding their perceptions about History subject. It appears that some learners could be influenced by their peers to have interest or not in studying History while other learners claim that their intentions to do or not do History are not due to peer pressure. Though the findings about peer pressure influence on the learners' behavioural attitudes towards History seemed to be limited, peer pressure seemed to be one of the factors that influence learners' like or dislike of History.

## 2.9 Poor teaching strategies

Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy (2021) highlights that pedagogical methods should be more learner-centred than teacher-centred in secondary schools in order to instil skills such as creativity, independence, attitudes, values as well as survival skills in the learners. Therefore, traditional methods should be modernised to facilitate learning. That being the case, learners would not be anticipated to memorise facts in order to apply them. In essence, learners would be more responsible for their learning processes from knowledge acquisition to development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (LBECP, 2021). Similarly, according to Fru (2015), "History teaching in schools should encourage learners to understand human experiences across time and space. It should be for students to develop historical reasoning skills by taking away the boredom from History" (p. 6). It appears that Fru (2015) agrees with LBECP (2021) that if History could be taught effectively, it would improve learners' listening skills, analytical skills, their reading and writing skills and they might as well be good at presenting.

However, scholars such as Ghosh and Bairagya (2018) in their study on problems of teaching History at secondary level found out that teachers encounter difficulties in implementing teaching strategies that are favourable to learners such as inquiry-based learning which is also learner-centred. This leads to negative attitudes of learners towards History. The U.S History National Assessment of Education Progress [NAEP] (2018) agrees with the above findings by pointing out that learners do have negative attitudes towards History. The blame is put on the poor teaching strategies that are used by History teachers and it is said to be too book-dependent and give learners useless information that does not link with everyday life experiences. Based on the views above, it appears that teachers struggle to teach History effectively leading to learners' loss of interest in History subject. This is in line with the findings by Andrews and Mycock (2008) who affirm that learners' attitudes are partially shaped by what is taught in schools. In other words, some of the factors that cause learners to have either negative or positive attitudes towards certain subjects such as History depends on the way that the teachers deliver the subject content to the learners.

Other researchers such as Cendek and Akengin (2017) indicate that learners claim that History bores them from time to time depending on how teachers deliver it to them. On the contrary, in the same study, these authors reveal that other learners liked History because they believed that it would increase their curiosity to learn about the past, and to wonder what will happen next. Again, they picture events in their minds, and that makes History become more interesting to them. It appears again that the emphasis is still on poor teaching strategies that do not enhance learners' motivation about learning of History in secondary schools though other learners seem to be satisfied about everything in relation to it.

Using the classroom observations, Issar (2021) further mentions that teachers use inflexible teaching methods such as text-book-centric and that affect the attitude of learners towards History negatively. Furthermore, Issar posits that the linear approach to teaching History makes the subject very dull, boring, and burdensome to some learners as it makes them to have negative behavioural attitudes. It provides little scope of creativity, yet there is loaded information. This suggests that teachers rely on a single method in History classrooms and that makes the subject dull and difficult because History is one of the subjects that need variation of strategies for it to be interesting and easy to understand.

This linear method could be merged to the traditional ways of teaching that do not liberate learners hence, the relevance of the subject is being questioned (Okoye, 2021). Derilioglu and Sar (2017) assert that due to use of traditional method of teaching that seems to be popular in

secondary schools, learners end up behaving negatively towards History and are consequently inattentive in class. Equally important, it seems that teachers' lack of knowledge to interpret curriculum and failure to use varying teaching techniques are very critical in the teaching and learning of History and could lead to learners' loss of interest in the subject.

In addition, Makunja (2015) points out that in most secondary schools in Tanzania, teachers rely much on traditional method which does not motivate learners because traditional methods may hinder active engagement and participation of learners leading to a passive learning experience (Mubireek & Jyothish, 2021; Mtitu, 2014; Makunja, 2015). Moreover, Amengor (2007) stipulates that in the older days, the main method used to introduce History to the learners was teacher-centred and it prevented learners' active engagement and participation leading to a passive learning experience and negative attitudes towards History. Amengor (2007) further indicates that learners were given very little opportunity to analyse the facts conferred before them critically, but they were expected to memorise dates, names, and places as they are considered important historical milestones significant to their examination preparation. The emphasis here again appears to be teaching History hurriedly in order to finish the syllabus before the examinations could start. In that manner, learners appear to be denied the opportunity to share their views in their own learning. Therefore, they develop unfavourable attitudes towards History as a subject.

Alabi (2017) suggests that other teachers may be incompetent when teaching History because they are not qualified. Subsequent to this, those teachers may not have a clear picture on how to teach History in the manner that it would interest learners. In the same manner, Fru (2015) points out that it appears easier to allocate History teaching to unqualified teachers under the impression that History is only a collection of the stories of the past that everyone can possibly pass to the learners. Hence the relevance of the subject is being questioned in most secondary schools. Moreover, Boadu (2016) adds that teachers and learners struggle through overloaded syllabus, lack of resources and lack of academics. He explains that in some secondary schools, History is presented as a compilation of events and dates which in return are expected to be memorised and recalled by learners making the subject more boring and difficult hence learners develop negative attitudes towards History.

Ntabeni (2010) and Fru (2015) together concur that History content seems to lack relevance to the teaching and learning leading to low level of motivation and negative attitudes of learners towards History. It was discovered that both teachers and learners claim that History curriculum is overloaded with content making it difficult to quickly grasp while the teacher

only focuses on finishing the curriculum. In support to this, Wineburg (2001) claims that “too much content in class without procedure and engagement results in a scenario where learners...sit mute and glassy eyed, a few scribbling notes but most yawning in boredom” (p. 217). This suggests that overloaded curriculum and methods that are being used to teach History do not only bore learners but also show lack of relevance of the syllabus. However, Adeyinka (2015) urges that it does not mean that lecture method cannot be used, it is just that it needs a competent teacher to make use of it. This means that all the teaching strategies are necessary in the teaching and learning of History as long as they are being varied in order to avoid boring learners with one strategy.

In addition, Harley (2015) posits that when employing new historical teaching methods, learners showed positive attitudes towards History than before. More importantly, Mohamad and Ambotang (2013) highlight that History teaching needs to develop a wide range of positive skills such as problem-solving skills, decision making skills, critical thinking skills and many others. Therefore, it needs effective teaching approaches. Seemingly, these scholars echo that one of the challenges that History faces is the way it is delivered to learners. It appears that teachers need to be empowered as to how they may incorporate new teachings when they deliver History content to learners so that it may encourage learners to develop a positive attitude towards the subject. The above factors were found to have played a crucial role in the behavioural attitudes of learners towards History. With this reviewed literature, the a priori themes for this study have emerged and will be linked with the findings of this study in chapters four and five in order to form the conclusions for this study.

## 2.10 Chapter summary

The main objective of the study was to explore behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners towards History in three secondary schools in Maseru. Considerable literature was used in support to the current study and the gap was seen in the methodological part where similar studies were conducted using quantitative approach and mixed methods with surveys and questionnaires mostly. Conversely, the current study only used qualitative approach, case study design and data generation methods such as semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Another gap that this study tried to fill was that most researches focused on the perceptions of teachers regarding learning and teaching of History subject, leaving out the challenges that learners themselves have concerning History subject. Therefore, it seems that



this study will further fill the knowledge gap because literature gives the impression that there is dearth of studies which were carried out about attitudes of learners towards History in Lesotho.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

Research methodology discusse and explains the data generation and analysis methods used in a study. That is what I did and how I carried out the whole process of exploring the behavioural attitudes of Grade10 learners in three secondary schools in Maseru (McCombes & George, 2023). In this study, the methodology includes research paradigm, research approach, research design, data generation techniques and procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness and the research ethics.

#### 3.2 Research paradigm

Research paradigm, according to Pervin and Mokhtar (2022), refers to a conceptual lens through which the researcher examines the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that would be used and how data would be analysed. Paradigm comprises four elements, namely: ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology (Lincoln & Guba,1985).

In this study, I employed the interpretivism paradigm based on Ryan (2018) which assumes that “truth and knowledge are subjective” (p. 9). That said, the main focus was on the subjectivism element of the paradigm which ontologically states that there is no such a thing called a single reality, hence I worked with three selected secondary schools which have difference in learners’ cultures, life experiences, and attitudes towards learning of History. Through this paradigm, I understood that learners' attitudes could be explored through experiences of what seemed to be the reality which might also be different from other learners’ historical or social perspectives. In other words, interpretivist researchers believe that reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed (Pham, 2018; Pring, 2015; Hamersley, 2013).

Based on the notion above, I also believed that the participants in this study were going to share multiple interpretations about their behavioural attitudes towards History. First and foremost, using this paradigm was a success in this study because I was able to pursue the knowledge on the behavioural attitudes of Grade10 learners as well as how to investigate and generate data. Kuhn (1962) highlights that a paradigm is a way of pursuing knowledge on

the problem that is being explored and more importantly how to investigate such a phenomenon is informed by a chosen paradigm in research.

Another advantage of using interpretivism paradigm as stipulated by Pham (2018) is that its ontology allowed me to ask questions such as, is there reality out there in the social world, or is it a construction, created by one's own mind? What is the nature of the behavioural attitudes of Grade10 learners towards History? With that being the case, I was then able to determine whether learners had positive or negative attitudes towards History through multiple opinions and experiences shared by the participants.

More importantly, ontology seemed to be essential in the current study because it enabled me to determine the foundational concepts which constituted themes that were analysed to make sense of the responses that were discovered in the research data and then to have acceptable understanding on the nature of the phenomenon (Scott & Usher, 2004). Then, I was able to understand how to make meanings so as to broaden and deepen understanding out of the data that was generated in the research field.

When it comes to the epistemology, the paradigm helped me to think carefully about the methodologies which would guide me in answering the question of how do I know that there are behavioural attitudes towards History in secondary schools? For that reason, in considering the choice of research methodology in this study, I asked myself about how I would obtain the desired data in order to make contribution to knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Then I decided on the methods and instruments that would be applicable for the study. According to Fossey et al. (2016), paradigm in the research study represents different ways of investigating a phenomenon such as using semi-structure interviews, focus group discussions, among others.

This suggests that information that learners gave concerning their attitudes towards History, emerged from the interpretations of the responses that learners attached to their behavioural attitudes towards History subject. In addition, Berryman (2019) stipulates that “social construction, language, shared consciousness, and other social interactions are important means for interpretivism to invent facts” (p. 273). Therefore, in order to achieve this goal, as the researcher, I formulated the research questions in a way that focused on the “what, how and why” (Berryman, 2019). It was important to understand learners' interpretations, why they are interpreting and how they were interpreting the phenomenon of behavioural attitudes towards History (Carey, 2012).

Equally important, axiology as another element of a paradigm refers to the ethical issues which were also considered when planning the current research. In other words, I defined and evaluated the concepts of right and wrong behaviour of the research being the ethical considerations. Axiology simply addresses the questions, what is the nature of the ethics, what values guided the researcher when conducting the research, what was done to respect all participants' rights, how the researcher secured the informants' goodwill, how should the research be carried out in a socially just, respectful and peaceful manner and how any physical, psychological, legal, social or economic were reduced in order to avoid unnecessary harm to the participants. I followed this principle and the procedure will appear under the ethical considerations (Australian Research Council [ARC], 2015).

Interpretivism informed this study because through exploration of Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes in their real-life situations being their secondary schools, I was able to make interpretations as to whether learners have positive or negative attitudes towards History or not. According to Pervin and Makhtar (2022), when a paradigm establishes a researcher's worldview, it means that it contains the summary values and notions which shape how a researcher views and interprets the arena and act within it. In order to generate a rich and deep understanding of the behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners towards History, I decided to use interpretivism paradigm because it informed the choice of methodologies, appropriate data generation tools such as interviews and focus group discussions and more importantly, it is closely associated with qualitative methods of data generation and relies on questioning in order to generate a rich and deep understanding of a phenomenon being explored (Cohen, 2011).

Consequently, interpretivists believe that there is no one right path to knowledge, thus rejecting the idea that there is one methodology that will get at the truth of a phenomenon consistently (Rahman & Alaharti, 2016; Shar et al, 2013; Bhattachajee, 2012). Therefore, the central principle of interpretivism is to work with the subjective meanings that already exist within the social world. As the research paradigm, interpretivism research is based on the premise that social reality is shaped by way of human experience and social backdrop which are related, thereby making it well suited to do research on human behaviour which is related to the context of its socio-cultural issues.

### 3.3 Research Approach

I employed qualitative research approach in this study. Qualitative research approach can be defined as generating data and analysing it in the form of words rather than numbers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Busetto et al., 2020). Similarly, Bhandari (2020) and Yin (2014) asserts that qualitative approach involves generating data and analysing it non-numerically in order to understand concepts, opinions, experiences, attitudes, behaviour and interactions. I, therefore, used qualitative research approach to generate in-depth and comprehensive data about Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History using shared meanings and interpretations from the participants' responses (Streefkerk, 2023).

Additionally, I chose qualitative approach because it allowed data to be generated within a natural environment which in this study referred to three secondary schools in Maseru. Vaughan (2021) stipulates that data in qualitative research is generated through fieldwork which includes conducting observations, interviews and focus groups. I used qualitative research approach, because one of its advantage is that it involves usage of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. These methods helped me to understand meanings, interpretations and subjective experiences of the participants on how Grade 10 learners behave towards learning of History. Due to its flexibility, it helped me to retain rich meanings when interpreting data. Qualitative approach was flexible, open and responsive to the context that I was interested in and allowed new ideas to emerge during the process of the study through interactions and interpretations that the participants shared with me (McCombes & George, 2023).

Furthermore, I used qualitative approach because the main focus of the study was to obtain multiple interpretations that the participants would share regarding their attitudes towards History and to answer the research questions through patterns of interactions of different participants. Sugiyono (2015) further asserts that in qualitative approach, methods of generating data include interviews with open-ended questions, focus group discussions and literature review that explore concepts and theories. Qualitative research is a type of scientific research which consists of an investigation that seeks answers to a question. It systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the questions to generate evidence and to produce findings that are not determined in advance as well as producing findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

This is in accordance with Yildirim and Simsek (2013) who postulate that if the researcher needs multiple perspectives in order to understand the phenomenon deeper and to have a deep analysis, then qualitative study would be appropriate.

In addition, it was found appropriate for the study because it allowed me to answer the questions of why do Grade10 learners behave in the manner that they do towards History? I thus found it appropriate as it allowed the participants to share their experiences and opinions with the researcher (De Vos, 2005). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2014) note that qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations.

More importantly, the strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. In other words, it provides the information about the “human” side of an issue that is often contradictory behaviour, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Employing qualitative methods in exploratory research permitted me to use open-ended questions and probes which gave participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do (Creswell, 2014). Streefkerk (2023) asserts that qualitative is appropriately used when the researcher wants to understand something like concepts, thoughts or experiences of the participants.

### 3.4 Research design

I employed the case study design in this study which refers to a qualitative design that is used to generate an in-depth understanding of a contemporary issue in a bounded system conducted on an individual or group to gain an understanding of a real-life phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; McCombes, 2023). In a similar manner, Njie and Asimiran (2014) posit that qualitative research needs a direction which the researcher decides to use specifically if the aim of the study is to discover deep understanding of the phenomena which might be not possible to find using other means. Hence in this study, I chose case study design to unravel the attitudes of Grade 10 learners towards learning of History.

What is important, case study design was helpful because it enabled me to gain concrete, contextual and in-depth knowledge about Grade 10 learners’ attitudes towards History subject in three selected secondary schools in Maseru. This design allowed me to explore the key characteristics such as negative or positive attitudes of Grade10 learners towards History. Pryan (2020) postulates that a case study is one of most extensively used strategies of

qualitative research as it is good for describing, comparing, evaluating and understanding different aspects of a research problem.

More importantly, a good case study should have the potential to provide new insights to the subject, to challenge existing assumptions and theories, to propose practical courses of action to resolve a problem and to open up new directions for future research (McCombes, 2023). In this case, as I mentioned earlier that the significance of the study might be paving way to action researches which would bring solutions to the factors that seemed to be causing negative attitudes of Grade10 learners towards History, it permitted me with the opportunity to generate a lot of information and to develop hypotheses that can be explored in an experimental research in future. Using case study design was crucial because the questions that I intended to address in this study such as: what are learners' attitudes towards History, why do learners have attitudes towards History, and how do learners behave the way they do towards History were successfully dealt with during the interviews and focus group discussions. Yin (2018) and Vaughan (2021) assert that this design is preferred as a research strategy when "how," "why," and "what" questions are in the interest of the researcher.

According to Bearman (2019) the research question of why do learners behave negatively or positively towards learning of History could possibly be answered but how many learners behave negatively or positively towards History could not be answered under the qualitative research study. Hence, I followed the research questions that were applicable in qualitative research design. Denscombe (2014), Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier (2013) argue that case studies are featured in in-depth and rich data in a real-life environment. As it is the case with qualitative research approach, they often require researchers to spend more time in order to attain multiple perspectives from the participants.

With regard to this, case study design helped me to proceed in the right direction and to choose the methods of generating data that suited my objectives to make informed conclusions about the study. The function of the case study design was to ensure that evidence obtained would enable me to effectively address the research problem logically and as unambiguously as possible. Hammersley (2013), Denscombe (2014), Marshall and Rossman (2016) concur that case design involves interpreting a phenomenon or experience of an individual or a group through interactions.

Another essential point that I noted was not to give general assertions about the attitudes of learners because in case studies, results should not be generalised. This means that if attitudes

were found to be negative in one secondary school, I should not claim that attitudes were also negative in another secondary school while they were not. In the same manner, if they appeared to be positive, I should not provide a general assertion about the findings. Yin (2018), Wellington (2015), Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) agree with the above statement by indicating that a case study is not planned to represent the population as a whole from which the sample is drawn and further posit that the focus of a case study is not in its generalisability hence, the researcher should not give a general clue about the schools being investigated (Chen & Cheng, 2014).

### 3.5 Population and sampling

A qualitative case study does not require random sampling or every individual to participate in research since studying each subject of population is impractical. In accordance with Taherdoost (2016), a subset of population should be chosen for examinations and that is known as a sample. This refers to the process of taking a subset of subjects that represent the whole population. Sampling was done because it would not be easy to investigate the entire population and that helped me to save time and resources since both would not be enough if data was being analysed from the whole population (Nikolopoulou, 2023; Bhandari, 2023).

#### 3.5.1 Convenience sampling

In this study, convenience sampling was used. Convenience sampling involves selecting a sample of individuals or units that are readily available or easily accessible. The study was carried out in three secondary schools in Maseru due to convenience and accessibility. The selection of three secondary schools was prompted by my familiarity and easy accessibility of the schools. Bhandari (2023) posits that the ideal setting for any study is where the researcher has interest in and should be the place that allows for immediate rapport with the respondents. I preferred convenience sampling because it was cheaper in terms of transport and participants were readily available. Similarly, convenience sampling is beneficial because it appeared to be time saving and most convenient. Therefore, the schools were selected because of their accessibility and my familiarity with the areas, and hence, data was not hindered by the participants' hostility due to suspicions which might prevent data generation to proceed smoothly (Teddies & Yu, 2007).

#### 3.5.2 Purposive sampling

I used purposive sampling to obtain participants for this study. Purposive or judgemental sampling refers to a research technique that is applied in qualitative research to select a



specific group of individuals or units for data generation and analysis (Nikolopoulou, 2023; Bhandari, 2023). Robinson (2014) and Taherdoost (2016) assert that it is a strategy in which specific people are deliberately chosen to give necessary information that cannot be obtained from other choices. In this study, the targeted population was Grade 10 History learners from three respective selected schools which were chosen based on the fact that, the current study used case study design which allows exploration of a phenomenon in small geographical area using a very limited number of individuals (Lohman, 2023).

I chose appropriate participants being Grade10 learners who study History from the selected secondary schools in Maseru. After introducing myself to the teachers and the principal, I was permitted to meeting up with Grade10 learners. I described the purpose of the study, and then asked them to volunteer. In two schools, the voluntary participation was successful while in one school, a History teacher assisted me by selecting the participants. From the entire population of the schools, I managed to work with four participants from each school which included five males and seven females. The study used the qualitative research approach; therefore, qualitative sampling was concerned with rich information that I expected to get from the sample that I chose (Schreiber & Asher-Self, 2011) rather than a big number, hence my choice of only twelve participants out of the three schools.

Purposive sampling was beneficial because it allowed me to select a specific subgroup of the population that was highly representative of the characteristics and experiences concerning History as a subject in their respective schools. Again, the sampled participants were willing to share a rich and in-depth data on behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners in three secondary schools in Maseru. Purposive sampling was further used because it requires small-scale studies such as the one that I carried out with a limited sample size (Palinkas et al., 2015). Busetto et al. (2020) highlight that qualitative research does not require specific sample sizes nor does it require that sample size be determined a priori as long as the researcher found it useful to the purpose of the study. However, Kruger (1998) and Morse (1994) suggest that at least more than one participant should be used in order to get the thoroughness of the information as it was the intention of this study to get multiple realities of the problem that was being explored.

Therefore, I chose twelve learners because sampling in a case study seems to require small size with a large generated data which involved several hours taken during interviews and focus group discussions (Fossey et al., 2016). Specifically, Grade 10 seemed to be the middle class where learners are sure of which subject to do or not to do unlike in Grade 9 where

learners are only given the chance to choose amongst the social science subjects which include geography, development studies and History, among others. In other words, learners choose subjects to do at Grade 9 and continue with those up to Grade 11 where they write examination. On the onset, purposive sampling seemed inexpensive, convenient, less time consuming and was ideal for exploratory research design similar to this case study design that I used.

### 3.6 Research Instruments

In qualitative research, data is generated through fieldwork, observations, focus group interviews and document analysis (Meyers, 2013). Similarly, Bryman (2016) postulates that observation guide, focus group discussion guide, interview guide, audio or video recorders and cameras are instruments which can be used in qualitative research. For the purpose of this study, data was generated using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

#### 3.6.1 Data generation procedure

I generated data in person without assistance because the aim was to work with only three schools not far away from the researcher's place. Participants were given interview questions to respond to. All of them were expected to answer the questions: whether they have positive or negative attitudes towards History subject or not. In addition, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to generate data from the participants.

#### 3.6.2 Semi-structured interviews (SSIs)

Semi-structured interviews refer to a qualitative research method that combines a pre-determined set of open-ended questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further and to discover subjective responses from participants regarding a specific phenomenon that they have experienced (McIntosh-Morse, 2015).

In this study, I used semi-structured interviews because they seem to be a very common form of qualitative data generation which I employed as a research approach (Creswell, 2014). I conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants in trying to discover Grade 10 learners' attitudes towards History. I began by preparing an interview guide which was developed prior to the research process and it included a list of open-ended interview questions and topics that needed to be covered during the interviews. Magaldi and Berler (2020) assert that semi-structured interviews generally follow a guide that researchers should

prepare before the interviews could begin and further posit that semi-structured interviews are useful because they allow new ideas to emerge as conversations unfold. This seems beneficial as it involves in-depth conversations into matters that are personal including one's attitude towards a certain behaviour.

More importantly, preparing an interview guide in advance enabled me to familiarise myself with the questions and to be confident in front of the participants. In the beginning of the interviews, I introduced myself and outlined the purpose of the study and thanked my participants for participating in the interviews. I told my participants that there were no right or wrong answers so as to make them feel comfortable and to allow them the freedom to express their views using their own language. For instance, I used both Sesotho and English during the interviews to make my participants talk freely. Bhandari (2023) posits that semi-structured interviews involve personally asking participants questions on one-on-one conversations using prompts to help interviewees to answer the questions being asked.

Due to their flexibility in allowing for usage of prompts, I was able to encourage the interviewees to give me more information about their behavioural attitudes towards History (Thomas, 2018). Open-ended questions and the use of interview guide in which broad areas of interest were defined were beneficial because they were able to evoke responses that were meaningfully and culturally salient to the participants as all the participants were asked the same questions in the same order. They even allowed new ideas to emerge and encouraged more than a 'yes or no' responses (McIntosh-Morse, 2015).

An individual interview lasted approximately for 30 minutes because I could only use learners' spare time as they had to attend other lessons besides History. Sometimes I waited to interview other participants after school. I listened carefully to what the participants were saying and engaged with them according to their individual personalities and styles of responding to the questions. Where necessary, I used "probes" to encourage them to elaborate on their answers as the semi-structured interviews were used to generate subjective responses from Grade 10 learners regarding the phenomena. During the interviews, I recorded some responses with a phone while some of the responses were written down.

I further used semi-structured interviews to gain insights into Grade10 learners' subjective experiences, opinions and motivations about History subject. Bearman (2019) posits that qualitative research aims to seek deeper understanding about human experiences and semi-structured interviews seem to be one of the most common method that can be used to achieve

such a purpose. As a result, I used semi-structured interviews due to their advantage of being interactive, allowing unexpected topics to emerge and to be picked up by the researcher (Delve & Limaecher, 2022). Semi-structured interviews seemed to be flexible as they could either be audio or video-taped; therefore, they allowed me to do recordings while listening to the participants' responses. Secondly, in-depth interviews are optimal for data generation on individual's histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored (George, 2023). As the researcher, I made sure that the interview was always on track and on time and that the key points were covered. Finally, I closed the interview session by thanking the participants once again for their participation.

### 3.6.3 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

I also generated data using focus group discussions. Kruger and Casey (2015) describe focus group discussion as a data generation method that involves paying attention, listening and hearing what people have to say, being non-judgmental and making a comfortable environment for participants to share important information on what is being studied. I therefore used focus group discussions in this study because I wanted to generate a wide range of experiences and multiple participants seemed to be able to share their knowledge about their behavioural attitudes towards History in the three secondary schools. Creswell and Phom (2018) postulate that in focus group discussions, participants are able to respond and build on the views expressed by others in a group and that may reveal more important information regarding the phenomenon. Therefore, I utilised focus group discussions because it was beneficial in obtaining multiple views and attitudes. Again, the participants seemed to be free to use their own language and that reduced their reluctance to give out data.

Most importantly, I realised that it was quicker and cheaper than semi-structured interviews because the time that was spent doing focus group discussions appeared to be less than that of semi-structured interviews. Focus group discussion also allowed me to do follow up questions as a moderator in the discussion. During the focus group discussion, I also took into consideration not to possess a position of power over the participants to avoid impacting participants' willingness and honesty to be interviewed or not to be interviewed. The discussions were audio-taped (Guerrero & Xicola, 2018).

My role was to facilitate and give guidance during the focus group discussion interviews and to maintain the group's focus while also making sure that the key questions were all discussed. Finally, focus group discussions were effective in generating broad overviews of

issues of concern to the cultural groups or sub-groups represented (O'Sullivan & Maurice, 2020).

### 3.7 Data analysis plans

I employed thematic analysis which refers to a method of analysing qualitative data which is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interviews or transcripts in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis involves an active process of reflexivity, where the researchers' subjective experience plays a central role in meaning making of data (Delve, 2020).

I used deductive approach of thematic analysis whereby apriori of themes and knowledge which already existed from related literature were used. According to Webster (2024), a priori denotes to the previous knowledge which proceeds from theoretical deduction. In other words, the themes that emerged during data generation had connection to the existing literature that I already had. For inductive approach, I used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions which provided me with the posteriori themes that emerged during the data generation process (Webster, 2024).

I followed the six steps of thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006). During the first stage of analysis, all interviews were coded according to reoccurring patterns. I closely examined the data and organised it by spending a considerable amount of time listening to the recordings and transcribing them. After transcribing, I repeatedly read the transcribed data to determine common themes, ideas and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly as Caulfield (2023) supports that in thematic analysis, researchers closely look into generated data in order to identify common themes-topics, ideas, patterns that come up repeatedly. I read the transcripts for several times in order to analyse them. As I was reading, I was also writing word for word of what the participants said manually.

Secondly, I grouped the categories to give them names. This is known as coding. For example, in this study, the initial codes were (1) History is boring because a teacher does not engage us in our learning (2) History is difficult because there are no textbooks to assist us in the learning of History. Thirdly, I employed inductive approach to themes which were based on the findings of data. Fourthly, I labelled the themes especially the ones that seemed relevant to my study and appeared repeatedly. For example, the categories that appeared for several times were then labelled themes. These themes were relevant to the first research question which aimed at finding factors that influence the behavioural attitudes of Grade 10

learners towards History. The fifth step was to define and give names to the themes. For instance, theme 1 could be as follows: History is difficult because there are no textbooks to assist us in the learning of History. Then, the main theme would be: unavailability of teaching and learning materials. Lastly, I analysed data and presented the findings in Chapter 4.

The advantages of thematic analysis are that it is a flexible approach that allowed me to generate new insights and concepts derived from data. Thematic analysis can be conducted differently, but in this study, I used the common form which followed a six-step process which are familiarisation, coding, generating themes and writing up because it helped the researcher to avoid confirmation bias when formulating analysis (Delve, 2020).

Thematic analysis allowed me a lot of flexibility in interpreting the data, and it also provided me the opportunity to approach large data sets more easily by sorting them into broad themes. As a result, thematic analysis aligned with this study because of being quite subjective and relying on the researcher's judgement. I paid close attention to the data and made sure not to pick up on things that were not there or obscuring things that were there (Caulfield, 2023).

### 3.8 Trustworthiness of the study

This refers to a degree to which the findings accurately reflect the reality that the participants experienced in a qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I developed credibility of the study by engaging over extended periods by dedicating ample time in the field and engaging with the participants. This also helped me to acquire comprehensive insights about the behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners of History in three selected schools. Moreover, I used triangulation by employing multiple data sources including semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to cross-verify the findings (Giddens & Sutton, 2013). Flick (2015) and Kumar (2014) concur that this should be done in order to reduce the impact of potential biases from a single method of data source.

For transferability, I provided a detailed and comprehensive explanation to allow readers to evaluate how applicable the findings were to similar situations and enable them to judge the applicability and relevance of the findings to their own situations hence improving the study's transferability. Furthermore, I described the sampling methods and the criteria for participant selection in determining whether the findings might be transferable to similar populations outside the study context or not (Gay et al., 2012).

In order to show the reliability and transparency of this study, I ensured that each step of the research process was thoroughly documented to allow others to assess the dependability of

the findings by following the same procedures. More importantly, Mills and Birks (2014) assert that in case study research, reliability refers to the extent to which other researchers would find similar results if they studied the same case using same procedures as the previous researcher. Then, I maintained a record of decisions made during the methodologies and analysis in order to facilitate transparency and traceability which also showed dependability of the research and gave insights into potential biases.

Then with the confirmability of the study, I requested for debriefing from peers and the supervisor to review interpretations and findings with the purpose of minimising my own biases by introducing alternative perspectives thereby confirming the accuracy of findings. Reflexive journal was also kept for tracking reflections and biases during the research process. In that manner, I was ensuring transparency and confirmability of the study.

### 3.9 Ethical considerations

Sound research is a moral and ethical venture and should be concerned with ensuring that the interests of the participants are not harmed as a result of the research being done (Cacciattolo, 2015). Similarly, Farrimond (2013) posits that ethical issues play an important role in research during data generation procedures including the analysis of that data to avoid the uncertainty of the participants as well as biased data. Therefore, I followed a set of principles that guided the research design and practices. Those principles included voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and potential for harm. In addition, Swedan et al. (2020) highlight that whenever researchers are conducting research involving human beings, the well-being of research participants must be protected. This suggests that I had to make sure that the rights of the participants are not violated in any way during the research process because that would lead to misleading of information or hostility in some instances (Bhandari, 2023).

The first ethical consideration that I followed was obtaining letters of introduction from the Faculty of Education at the National University of Lesotho where I am studying. Following this principle, I was adhering to a larger issue of respect to the participants as I could not force them to participate in my research. In the letters were stipulated points such as the purpose of the study, procedures and time frame among others. Then, I issued the letters to the principals of three secondary schools respectively. The introduction was done upon arrival to the teachers and learners.

Then, I told them the purpose of the research which was mentioned earlier in this paper. Most importantly, the participants' parents were requested to sign consent forms to show that they allow their children to participate in this study because the research was dealing with young learners in secondary schools aging between 15 and 17 years. Graham (2013) posits that where research involves minor participants in terms of their age, the researcher should include the principle of informed consent. Further, I told them that participation was voluntary; no one was forced to participate and that whenever they wanted to leave, they could do so freely (Kumar, 2014). Here, I was following the principle of informed consent.

Furthermore, I told the participants that their information would be kept confidential and that the information that they provided would be kept safe in the locker which would always be locked. Moreover, for protection of participants' identities, I told them that their real names were not to be disclosed instead, I promised them that I was going to use pseudonyms which were not their real names (Naidu & Roberts, 2018). By so doing, I was applying the principle of confidentiality of shared information and anonymity of research informants. Mohd Arifin (2018) argues that this principle is also concerned with offering respect and protection to the respondents. I did this because there was a need to affirm to the participants that they would be protected from any harm whether by revealing their names or data unnecessarily and the participants seemed convinced and agreed to join the study (Novak, 2014).

More importantly, I established that clear boundaries exist between the information that I got from the participants and what I had to tell them in order to avoid upsetting the participants during the research process. This was a success because from the beginning to the end of the research process, my participants were happy. Maintaining healthy relationships between the researcher and the participants is crucial because qualitative research seems to be conversational; therefore, I needed to maintain clear boundaries between what participants told me and what I said to participants because it might be tempting to pass along inconsequential information such as a funny statement or personal information from one participant to another (Cacciattolo, 2015).

### 3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the paradigm, qualitative research approach, the case study design, and the procedures that I followed during the process of data generation and analysis. The justifications of the choices regarding the methodologies and methods including the trustworthiness and the ethical principles were discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. It



was stipulated in this chapter that data was drawn from three secondary schools in Maseru. The following chapter will present the findings that were provided through the use of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Exploring Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History: A case of three secondary schools in Maseru

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings and analysis of generated data from three secondary schools in Maseru in order to answer the question of whether Grade 10 learners have behavioural attitudes or not towards History as a subject. Through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with History learners from Grade10, five main themes reflecting the research questions which guided the study emerged. Those themes include: teaching approaches, unavailability of resources, peer pressure, reactions of learners towards History and the suggestions of learners on how to make History more interesting subject. More importantly, this chapter begins with the profile of the participants which provides characteristics of each participant who took part in this study. The research questions to be answered are as follows:

1. What factors influence Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History?
2. How do Grade 10 learners behave towards History and why?
3. What do learners suggest to be done in order to make History an interesting subject?

#### 4.2 Profile of study participants

Below is the presentation of the participants of this study using a tabular form. Their real names were not used. Instead, pseudonyms were used to represent the participants' names to maintain the principle of anonymity and confidentiality. Twelve participants took part in this study, four from each school respectively. Both males (five) and females (seven) participated in the study and age was considered important as an indication that the study took place in secondary schools. At his level of education, learners are still minors and at some point could be easily influenced by factors such as peer pressure to make decisions on their attitudes towards History as a subject; therefore, their ages added to the advantage that they could respond to the questions themselves due to maturity.

**Table 1: Participants profiles**

Names of participants (Pseudonyms)	Gender	Age
<b>School A</b>		
Participant 1	Female	14
Participant 2	Male	15
Participant 3	Female	16
Participant 4	Female	17
<b>School B</b>		
Participant 1	Male	15
Participant 2	Male	16
Participant 3	Female	17
Participant 4	Male	16
<b>School C</b>		
Participant 1	Male	14
Participant 2	Female	15
Participant 3	Female	16
Participant 4	Female	16

*Table 1: Participants profile*

Demographic profile of participants was presented to verify that the chosen population of this study fitted the segment that was being explored and to provide valuable insights into data analysis as these details can play a vital role in interpreting the results (Hammer, 2011; Bein, 2009). In this study, demographic profiles of participants gave background of Grade10 learners from three selected secondary schools in Maseru who participated in this study

including the schools in which research took place, names (pseudonyms), gender and ages. I presented three secondary schools as school A, B and C while the participants were referred to as participant 1, 2, 3 and 4 from each school. I made sure that the participants voluntarily participated and because this study worked with learners whose ages range from fourteen and seventeen, before data could be generated, their parents consented to their participation.

### 4.3 Factors that influence Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History

#### 4.3.1 Teaching approaches

I asked my participants to explain to me what they think about the strategies that are used when teaching History in their schools. They responded in different ways.

Participant 1 from school A said:

*“The strategies that are used by the teachers to teach History are appropriate for me because our History teacher allows us in class to participate, have discussions and solve some of the problems on our own without only listening and copying the notes. I think the strategies can be supplemented by sufficient instructional materials such as textbooks, libraries and computers, that may promote my interest of learning History because I like studying History.”*

Then, participant 2 from school A confirmed this by saying:

*“I do not have a problem with the methods of teaching and I enjoy History lessons very much. However, I wish we could be assisted with the learning materials so that if we missed something when being taught then we can refer back to the textbooks and the materials downloaded online.”*

The above findings show that the teachers were using quite good strategies but that was challenged by insufficient instructional resources for use in the classrooms. However, participant 3 and 4 from school A disagreed with the above assertions by pointing out that the way that History is being taught is boring. They complained that they remain passive during History lessons whereby they just listen to the teacher and take down some notes that they do not even understand after which they are assessed. As a result, that promotes their negative attitudes towards History. They further indicated that teachers only give them narrations of what happened in the past and then give them old notes which sometimes are even irrelevant to the contemporary syllabus.

The same question was asked to the participants from school C.

Participant 1 from school C said:

*“Actually, another issue that makes History boring is the way it is taught... A teacher does a lot of talking without giving us time for discussion and the next thing is that we will be given notes that are not even explained. This makes History to be dull, hence I even lose interest in attending History lessons. Most of the time when it is time for History lesson, I leave before the teacher comes into the classroom or if I can stay, I just sleep or distract other learners from listening.”*

Based on the responses above, it could be said that learners get bored when they think of attending History classes due to the teaching method that their teacher use which neither include group discussion for recap nor further understanding of the lesson. This aligns with what Ganj and Isaar (2021) highlighted that teachers tend to use linear methods in their teaching of History which seem to promote unfavourable attitudes of learners towards History.

Participant 2 from school C added:

*“I have lost interest in studying History because of boring methods that are used to teach History in our school. For example, a History teacher only teaches us History from online using a cell phone. The worst part is that the process of searching for the material online, is done in front of us during History lessons. For me it seems as if the teacher lacks History content knowledge and does not prepare for History lessons in advance.”*

Participant 3 from school C added by saying:

*“I get bored when the teacher seems to struggle to get the appropriate content for the lesson. Sometimes the lesson ends without being taught while waiting for the teacher to find content from online materials which could be done prior to the lesson and that also show us that the teacher does not have enough content knowledge for the subject. As a result, most of us in class get bored and no longer pay attention to what is to be taught.”*

The findings revealed that majority of the participants believed that their dislike towards History is rooted in the teaching strategies that forced them to listen and take notes while the teacher acted as the only source of information. The participants further complained that some of the teachers seem to teach History without any encouragement and motivation which may enhance learners' interest in the learning of History subject. According to the findings, other teachers go to History classes unprepared and even search for content to teach in front of the learners. This shows that the teaching approaches in History education were found to

be a factor that influences learners' behavioural attitudes towards History which according to Okoye (2021), could be merged to the traditional ways of teaching that do not liberate learners hence making the relevance of the subject to be questioned. Derilioglu and Sar (2017) assert that due to use of traditional method of teaching that seems to be mostly used in secondary schools, learners end up behaving negatively towards History and are consequently inattentive in class.

Participant 4 added: *“For me everything is okay, I do not have a problem. I enjoy History classes.”*

Then again, I asked participants from school B the same question. Participant 1 said:

*“I do not enjoy the way History is being taught. ... it is boring to go to class every day to listen to old stories and then write notes. I like discussion after every topic but in History we only listen to the teacher.”*

Along the same vein, the findings highlight the factor of being taught mainly in one method even when they are bored. It is as if their teacher does not change the way of teaching leading to learners losing interest in History as a subject.

Participant 2 responded by saying:

*“I think that our teacher teaches us appropriately. The problem is that we do not have any teaching aid that supports what the teacher has said [...] we have to take notes after every lesson, and that makes History difficult because I do not like writing the notes.”*

Participant 3 and 4 said that they enjoy the teaching method but if they could be allowed time for group discussions, it would be good for them.

#### 4.3.2 Unavailability of resources

I further asked participants to explain to me the reasons why History performance has dropped drastically for the past few years in their schools. This was done in order to get more information on the factors that cause the behavioural attitudes of learners towards History.

**Probe 1:** What do you think about the instructional materials that are used in the teaching and learning of History?

Participant 1 from school A said:

*“I like fieldtrips such as History fair where learners from all secondary schools that still offer History come together with their teachers in an educational trip to compete by participating in both written and oral quizzes and by answering the impromptu questions. Even if I do not participate, but I learn a lot from those activities which are also very much enjoyable and may improve History performance as some of the questions that are asked prepare learners for their exams. I think if all schools can attend and participate in such trips and activities that may also help learners to develop critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills among others.”*

From the above findings, the evidence is that learners may enjoy History if there could be more fieldworks that involve competitions with other schools sourcing from the topics that they learn from their History classes.

The above evidence indicates that participants from school A were familiar with the fieldtrips that are carried out yearly by other schools which offer History subject. Their results revealed that History fair appears to be the most popular trip with lots of learning activities that enhance their motivation of learning History. Participants 2 and 3 from school A pointed out that the high failure rate of History as a subject is due to lack of teaching and learning materials such as textbooks for them to read and to do assignments and activities together in groups. It seems that learners are aware that History performance is low but they indicate that if teaching strategies could allow them the opportunity to engage with other History schools to interact, that could bring positive results.

Participant 2 added:

*“Though I like History and enjoy History classes but because of not having our own materials to help us with more information, I started losing interest in it because I do not want to perform poorly in History subject.”*

However, participants 1 and 3 from school B differently claimed that they do not enjoy History because there are no fieldtrips. They lamented that they only hear about such fieldtrips from other schools and they only learn History through traditional methods of teaching.

The following is the response that came from participant 2 from school B:

*“There are no fieldtrips, we only attend lessons the whole year to be lectured and write notes. I think if we can at least visit other Historical sites such as Thaba-Bosiu which we only learn in History lessons that it holds the historical significance of where Moshoeshoe I started*

*building the Basotho nation. In so doing, we can at least see things for ourselves and listen to the tour guides rather than our teachers. I think this may promote our interest in History as a subject.”*

Participant 3 added:

*“There are no enough resources such as History textbooks and other resources such as Information and Communication Technological gadgets such as computers or cell phones to help us in our own researches and maps which may show us the old and current boundaries that separate different places. We rely only on what the teacher teaches us and if we have to do the assignments, it becomes a challenge without having enough resources, hence we as learners lose interest in History as a subject.”*

Evidence from the above assertions also indicate that the problem of History is lack of enough instructional materials.

Participant 4 responded by saying:

*“History is an interesting subject which needs to be read more often in order to master it but in our school, there are no reading materials or at least computers and internet where we can download History materials. [...] it is difficult to learn History hence we fail it”*

The findings which were highlighted by majority of the participants show that there are insufficient instructional materials that need to be used in classrooms. These findings are in line with Salema and Wambiya’s (2016) who assert that there are insufficient resources such as textbooks, libraries and particularly computer facilities which make learners to lose interest in the learning of History. The participants highlighted that in the textbooks, there are pictures of world maps which can make learning of History effective and the lesson activities that may help them to do a lot of practice on their own. Seeing the images of different places where the past events such as the First World War took place may help the learners to locate the places where the events of the wars took place for themselves.

I asked the participants about the resource materials and poor performance. They responded differently as thus:

Participant1: *“I do History but I fail it more than other subjects that I do in school because such subjects have text books. We read them in class and even at home but with History, after listening to the teacher in class it means we will see it again in the next lesson. In that manner, I find learning of History difficult and boring.”*



Participant 2: *“There are no text books and we do not do a lot of practice in order to remember what we learned in History. Every time when the teacher comes we have already forgotten everything that we learned in the previous lessons and that make History boring and difficult because a lot of time is spent repeating the same things just because we could not practice them in our own time.”*

Participant 3 added: *“In my school, History is the most failing subject because there are no materials [...] I mean, ... nothing. Our teacher uses old notes that are even not relevant to the current syllabus. There is no way that we can pass the subject.”*

Participant 4: *“I think that History is not being performed well because of no teaching and learning materials such as text books to start with.”*

This appeared to be a more challenging issue when it comes to the teaching materials that learners need not only to strengthen their positive behavioural attitudes towards History but also to promote History performance that is now the issue of concern in most secondary schools. Afolabi (2018) adds that “lack of good History textbooks makes learners to run away from History class and choose to do Geography or to focus on Mathematics and Science subjects” (p.17) because those other subjects have text books.

The emphasis is seen from school B and school C that at least there should be more than one outing to the historical places. For them, to be exposed to some of the primary sources of History would promote their interest in the subject. These views are in line with the findings of Cooper (2018) and Vilarrasa (2003) who posit that school outings are crucial and expose learners to primary sources and raise awareness of their immediate environment.

The participants’ responses revealed that the quality of resources used in History education has an influence on learners’ attitudes towards the subject. The majority of the participants from all the three schools seemed to be demotivated by the lack of resources such as History textbooks, technological gadgets that could help them conduct their own researches. In addition to that, Sengai and Mokhele (2022) allude that instructional materials are regarded as essential tools throughout the syllabus reforms which can ease the work of teachers and learners.

#### 4.3.3 Peer pressure

In order to find out whether the learners study History because of factors such as peer pressure influence or not, I asked the participants the following question:

What influenced you to study History in your school?

**Probe 2:** For example, if History is an elective subject in your school, then what influenced you to study History?

The findings revealed that some learners chose to study History because of peer influences. Their choice of studying History may not be motivated by the curiosities that could be addressed by History lessons but rather, by peer pressure including parental influence and influence from their friends. The implication could be that such participants may not show positive development in the course. The following extracts reveal how peer pressure influences choice of studying History:

Participant 1 said:

*“I was influenced by my peers who study History in my school and the other ones who do it in other neighbouring schools. For example, when we were selecting subjects which are elective in Grade 9 which include History and Geography, I chose History only because my friends chose it, hence I am doing it now in Grade 10 class and this is because I did not want to lose our friendship.”*

These ideas of being pressurised to study History by friends and families seemed to appear from all schools that were being studied though it was not from all the participants. Some participants revealed that they were from families which value culture and tradition and persuaded their children's choice of studying History with the belief that it might promote their understanding of their family backgrounds.

Participants 1 and 2 responded as follows:

*“I decided to do History in school because my family believes in cultural activities such as communal works and traditional attire among others and therefore they persuaded me to study History so that I can learn more about our tradition and other people's cultures and traditions.”*

Participant 3's response read: *“My brother studied History and got credit B in the public examinations and he gave me his History notebooks so that I cannot write notes from scratch instead, I can only add if new topics emerge in class. Therefore, I got that motivation from him and decided to study History not knowing that I will not enjoy and perform well like my brother did.”*

The evidence from the above assertions suggest most of the participants ended up doing History following orders from their families or friends or it could be that other family members did before and obtained good results in History public examinations. This shows that if families do like History, they would influence their children to do it in schools but if they talk negatively about it, then their children will not like it because group dynamics play a vital role in attitude formation, individual behaviour and decision making in the process of learning (Forxall, 2005). Likewise, the results of the above findings show that even friends play a vital role in influencing their peers to do or not do History.

This could be rooted from what is said about History by Grade 10 learners' peers. In other words, if their peers talk negatively about History, then it is not going to be selected, while on the other hand, it was selected because it was favoured by peers resulting in learners doing it. Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) agree with the views that peer pressure influence plays a crucial role in the formation of behavioural attitudes of individuals towards a certain behaviour such as History. For Ajzen and Fishbein (2012), attitudes are influenced by subjective norms which refer to what other people such as peers or family members think about History in this case. That said, if Grade 10 learners' friends or families like or dislike History, then these findings are relevant to the current study.

Participant 4 said:

*“I already liked History from the Social Science subjects when they were taught as integrated subjects which included Geography, History, Development Studies and Religious Studies in Grade 8. Amongst all of these subjects, I performed well in the section that contained History content. It was then that I decided to study it further in the next classes hence I chose to do it from Grade 9 where learners are given the opportunity to choose the subject that they like most.”*

The findings from the above response revealed that the participant genuinely liked History and was not pressurised by what other learners of family said about it. The participant's motivation seemed to have resulted from good performance in History from lower grades.

Participant 1: *“My mother is a History teacher in another school, so I am following her footsteps of wanting to be a History teacher. I also liked the fact that I get a lot of information from my mother as a History teacher and therefore I have positive attitudes towards History.”*

From the above extract, the findings seem to have an element of indirect family pressure whereby this participant decided to follow the parent's career without being told to do so.

Having a parent who teaches her favourite subject seems to be valuable for her to perform well in History which also promoted her interest in studying the subject.

Participant 2: *“I am influenced by the fact that I have to choose between History and Geography because in my school, the choice is made between only those two subjects and I opted for History over Geography. For me History is easier than Geography.”*

It is evident that not all learners decided to do History because of peer pressure. Some of them like History as it is regardless of the challenges that it faces as compared to other social science subjects that they were choosing from. Okoye (2021) expresses that some learners disagree that they get influence from families and friends regarding their perceptions about History subject. However, the findings from the current study show that most of the participants’ responses were of the view that they were being influenced by their friends and families to study History. I think that peer pressure plays a significant role on the choices that learners make for other subjects such as History because it is likely that even when they do not perform well in History, the blame may be against the people who influenced them to do the subject.

#### 4.3.4 Teacher characteristics

I further asked the participants about some of the challenges that contribute to their behavioural attitudes towards History and their various responses were as follows:

**Probe 2:** What make you like or dislike History?

Participants 1 and 4 from school C indicated that there are no enough History teachers in their school and that makes History dull and not liked by many learners in their school.

Then participant 3 responded by saying:

*“In my school, there is only one History teacher. What I am trying to say is that, from Grade 8 where History is still taught under Social Science group which includes other subjects such as Geography, Development Studies and Religious Studies and from Grade 9 where the mentioned subjects start to be taught independently as one single subject up to Grade 11, there is only one History teacher.[...] This make us demotivated because more often than not, our teacher becomes ineffective due to workload and that affect us badly and lead to negative attitudes towards learning of History.”*

In the similar vein, participants 4 and 2 from school B supported the above findings by highlighting that History is boring because it has only one teacher who is not even qualified

to teach History. When I asked them what they mean by that notion, they revealed to me that the subject majors of that particular teacher do not include History. They explained that if she is absent for a week, there would not be History classes in that whole week.

Participant 1 added;

*“Unfortunately, he is the only one who teaches us History. This makes History boring and more difficult than any other subject that we do in school, hence I despise it and regret why I chose to study it.”*

Based on the findings above, evidence shows that there is no more than one teacher in most of the secondary schools particularly the schools in which the current study was conducted. Majority of participants raised the issue of being taught by only one teacher who relies on using lecture method which in most cases does not inspire the learners. This suggests that there is scarcity of History teachers in these particular schools and that lead to learners losing interest in the subject. To make matters worse, the following extracts indicate that History is even taught by teachers who did not specialise in History. In other words, as long as someone is a teacher, they are allowed to teach History. Participant 2, 3 and 4 commented by saying:

*“In our school, History is being taught by one teacher who is not even a History teacher. That particular teacher seems to be not interested in the subject; as a result, it is difficult for us to enjoy the subject too. I think that History is being taught by teachers who also dislike it because even when we perform badly after being assessed, the teacher does not change the ways of teaching and that makes History more difficult. This makes us to behave negatively towards History as a subject.”*

Amongst the factors that influence the behavioural attitudes of students towards History, teacher quality and quantity play a pivotal role. When interviewed, the participants responded that the motivation in History education is affected by having one History teacher who sometimes may be unwilling to commit to their education. More importantly, the responses reveal that teachers who are not qualified History teachers may influence negative attitudes towards the subjects. Fru (2015) points out that it appears easier to allocate History teaching to unqualified teachers under the impression that History is only a collection of the stories of the past that everyone can possibly pass to the learners.

In order to generate robust data for the main research question, further investigations were made to establish how the participants react towards History as a secondary school subject. Therefore, the participants were asked the following question: “How do Grade 10 History

learners react towards History and why?” The findings revealed that the behaviours or reaction towards History is two-fold: other participants seemed to show positive interests towards the subject while others responded by saying that they dislike History and recommended that it should not be taught in schools as they consider it unimportant. I asked participants to justify their reasons for their behavioural attitudes towards History.

**Probe 3:** Why do you have negative or positive attitudes towards History?

**Probe 4:** Why do you behave in the manner that you do towards learning of History?

The following extracts are some of their responses when interviewed:

Participant 1 from school A said:

*“I just like it and I also behave positively towards History learning because I want to obtain higher marks in it. I also believe that it must be taught in schools.”*

Participant 1 from school B added:

*“I think History should be given equal priority like other subjects that we do in school because I like it as is. My behavioural attitude towards History is positive although sometimes I encounter difficulties in understanding some of the historical facts such as many wars and places due to poor teaching methods that are used by History teachers.”*

Participant 2: *“My opinions are positive about History because from learning of History subject, my understanding about my identity and other people’ different cultures and life styles is being broadened. I now understand better that Lesotho is celebrating two hundred years this year 2024 because Moshoeshoe I started building Basotho nation in 1824 when he arrived in Thaba-bosiu from Botha-Bothe. This makes me realise that History is important because other learners who do not study History believe that Basotho nation already existed before 1824.”*

Participants 2 and 4: *“I have also developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, from the topic that tells us about Moshoeshoe I’s nation building strategies, I realised that when we come across challenging issues in our lives, we have to think critically before doing things that may put our lives in danger. That is to say that we should try to avoid conflicts and live peacefully like Moshoeshoe I did. I have a positive attitude [...] I like everything about History because I think History is a fascinating subject”*

However, majority of the participants revealed that their behaviour towards History is negative. Their responses show that they dislike History because it is useless, boring and

difficult. It was also found out that History is considered as a useless subject that does not guarantee job opportunities.

#### 4.3.5 Conception of importance

Why Grade 10 learners behave the way they do towards History?

In order to establish why the Grade 10 History learners, react the way they do towards the subject, the researcher probed into their reasons for liking or showing resentment to the study of History. The results of the focus group interviews were analysed and themed according to emerging themes. Amongst others, it was found out the participants developed certain behaviours or attitudes towards History due to its nature of importance. Some of the participants considered it important and liked it while others perceived it unimportant and disliked it. Their reasons for liking and disliking the subject are presented under this sub-sub-section and the following question were asked in order to obtain multiple realities about the behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners towards History:

What do you think makes History an important or unimportant subject in your school?

**Probe 3:** Can you share a specific career that you will achieve after studying History that makes you think that History is important?

**Probe 4:** Do you think History should or should not be taught in your school? Please give explanations for your answers.

*“History is an important subject because it teaches us about our identities as well as other people’s identities and different cultures. It is important for us to know who we are and to understand why we are different from other people.”*

Participant 3: *“I like History because it helps me to understand how our forefathers lived and did certain things such as how they were being ruled and to understand why things are now different from the past and that it helps me to be where I want to be in future. For instance, after studying History I can become an academic researcher.”*

Participant 4: *“After studying History, one can be a teacher, researcher, archaeologist and a lawyer. For me History is an important subject which helps learners to achieve the mentioned careers in future.”*

The participants’ responses from school A revealed that they believed that History is capable of offering clear messages of the past events, which makes it easier for them to relate to the future. Further, the respondents considered the subject important as it can put a person in the

position of becoming a teacher, lawyer, translator, or being sent into parliament. Hence, they had a positive attitude towards History.

However, some of the participants seemed to be confused about their perception of History. These are the participants who regard History as important based on the merit that it helps them understand the evolution of religion and educational systems. However, their dislike of the subject only manifested when it comes to the employment opportunities; they dislike History because they do not see its potential of offering them jobs. These assertions are evidenced by the following quotes:

Participant 1 from school B:

*“For me, History is the only subject that helps me to understand past politics as compared to modern politics and different lifestyles. For instance, in Lesotho, during Moshoeshoe I’s reign, the country was ruled by him as the Paramount chief unlike now that the country is having the king and the Prime Minister.”*

Participant 2 added:

*“My opinions are positive about History because I think that History helps us to know about our religion and education system that we have. History reveals the strengths or weaknesses that we have as a nation as compared with past activities. For example, I have learned that in the past few years, Lesotho was once called a granary to South Africa, because it used to supply South Africa with grain but presently, South Africa is the one supplying Lesotho with goods such as wheat and maize meal. This indicates that in the past, Basotho depended much on Agriculture more than they are now. I think that field trips can also help us enjoy History.”*

Those who had a positive attitude towards History responded that History is important and should be prioritised because of its ability to enable learners know where they come from, to be critical thinkers, and to appreciate cultural differences. The learners’ responses revealed that History is important because it keeps them motivated about current affairs and it improves their writing skills. For these reasons, they like the subject.

Some of the participants found History unimportant and emphasised that History should not be included in the school curriculum. Their dislike of History was influenced by the following (1) it requires a lot of reading (2) unavailability of textbooks and other resources such as internet, phones, and computers which would help them conduct their own researches. When interviewed, the participants said the following:



Participant 1 from school C said:

*“One of the subjects that develops learners and youths into better generation that knows their past. History also makes one to understand human behaviour. For example, we understand why black South Africans behave negatively towards white South Africans. I have a positive attitude because it informs me about the current affairs and improves my writing skills. I believe that History tells us the truth about what actually happened in the past and why the world has different identities and tribes.”*

The participants’ responses highlighted that the participants from school C reacted both negatively and positively towards the study of History based on its importance. Others displayed a negative perception towards History because they believed that it will not be valuable in the future. Thus, the participants considered the subject useless due to its inability to provide job opportunities post-graduation.

Those who displayed a positive attitude believed that the inclusion of History in the school curriculum can create opportunities for the learners to know why their families, clans, and cultures are different. In addition, the responses revealed that they believe that self-esteem, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, and empathy are promoted by the History lessons. Thus, they liked History based on these merits. More importantly, Issar (2021) asserts that History as an academic subject taught in schools provides endless opportunities to develop analytical skills, value judgment, and expression of creativity. However, it is evident that despite the importance that History has, some of the participants had different opinions which were expressed as follows:

Participant 1:

*“I do not like History because I do not think that History will help me to achieve my goals because I have seen people who studied it suffer from being unemployed. It shouldn’t be taught because it requires a lot of reading but there are no text books and other resources such as internet, phones and computers to help us with our own researches.”*

Participant 2:

*“It teaches people about where they come from and to keep good relationships between different people. History is full of captivating stories about powerful rulers such as battles and remarkable cultural activities such as traditional dancing and traditional cooking. I love exploring my cultural History and discovering where I come from.”*

Participant 3:

*“I like History because it is an important subject that teaches learners about their origins. People should know their identities, why they are Basotho and not Batswana. For example, History also helps learners to understand why a small country like Lesotho has both the Prime Minister and the king.”*

Participant 4:

*“It should be taught so that learners know and understand why families, clans and cultures are different and then they can decide to change their lives. History is everything that can help learners to have different skills such as high self-esteem, problem-solving skill, critical thinking skill, empathy as well as positive values such as forgiveness, nationalism and patriotism, understanding, leadership and many more.”*

Based on the findings of the participants who still perceive History as an important subject, it could be concluded that if History can be taught well by enough quality teachers for the subject, then learners’ behavioural attitudes towards History will be positively strengthened. The findings further indicated that learners get bored from time to time when teachers only use traditional methods of teaching which according to the findings seem to be ineffective in the classrooms.

According to Du Plessis and Letshwene (2020), traditional method of teaching is more teacher-centred rather than learner-centred and remains a global challenge because it appears that it is the most dominating method that History teachers use. The findings showed that this method makes learning of History very dull, and burdensome to most of the learners which in turn make them to have negative behavioural attitudes towards History. Seemingly, if learners remain passive during their learning of History, it becomes difficult to develop creativity skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

#### 4.3.6 Conception of content and difficulty

I asked the participants to explain to me what they like or dislike about History and what they think about History as being important or not. Participant 1 responded by saying:

*“What I dislike most about History is that most of the topics include wars, names, times and places that need to be memorised. I do not like the fact that I always get lower marks or even fail it completely sometimes.”*

Participant 3 said:

*“The failing rate [in] the subject [at] final year makes it useless for me. On the other hand, I don’t like History because in school we enjoy and pass it very well but History Public Examinations results seem to be poor every year in our school.”*

While other reasons for disliking the subject could be attributed to the learners’ disbelief of the historical events. Another reason is that the participants perceive History to contain massive content that demands a lot of time while they also have to do other subjects. To add more, they have a negative attitude towards the subject based on the belief that History contains too much content that needs to be memorised and requires them to read a lot which they fail to master. Boadu (2016) adds that teachers and learners struggle through overloaded syllabus, lack of resources and lack of academics which cause the perception of History as a non-utility subject. Ganj and Issar (2021) reveals that attitudes of learners towards History learning cause the perception of History as a non-utility subject, having no relevance to the present or future.

On the opposing side, the results revealed that there are instances in which students like the subject primarily because they obtain good marks which boost the overall performance. The attitude here is not motivated by the opportunity of getting a job in future but by the extent to which it awards easy marks. When interviewed, the participants from school B said the following:

Participant 4 claimed:

*“There are things that I dislike about History. There is a lot of information about wars that occurred a long time ago. At some point I get confused because I have to know all the dates, places and significant figures and the roles in those wars respectively. Then I lose interest.”*

Participant 2 responded:

*“I do not believe in some things that History tells us. I think a lot of information is just stories. It just does not make sense; hence it is difficult for me. It shouldn’t be taught because it requires a lot of reading while there are no History text books which can assist us to learn History better.”*

Participant 3 added:

*“History contains too much content that needs us a lot of time while we also have to do other subjects. I have negative attitude because History content needs to be memorised and requires a lot of time so, I somehow hate reading a lot. I perceive History as the study that*

*only focuses on old stories and wars and that makes it dull and difficult with a lot of vocabulary to be memorised.”*

Participant 4: *“I like History because it is easier than other subjects such as Geography from which I have to choose. We get good marks in it which boosts our performance.”*

Participants 2 and 4 pointed out that History reminds them of the bad deeds that happened in the past. The example that one of them raised was that of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa which reminds people about the deaths of their loved ones during that event.

Participant 1 said:

*“I do not think that History is important and that it should be taught in schools because it makes learners who grow up with hatred after discovering what exactly happened in the past. Hence, there are things like xenophobia in other parts of the world such as South Africa. Knowledge that they get from studying History promotes anger, so I do not like it.”*

The participants from school C had differing reasons considering their dislike of History. On one hand, some of the participants do not like History because of their belief that the subject promotes anger as a resultant of studying content that opens old wounds. Thus, History creates nothing but sad memories. Evidence from this extract indicates that some of the participants think negatively about History which shows that there is a need to vary the methods of teaching so as to make sensitive topics such as the Sharpeville Massacre, interesting to learners rather than making them angry. Levstik and Borton (2015) remark that through learning of History, learners would gain different perspectives of significant figures in History and that may help them to appreciate the past, the present and to interpret possible events that may happen in the future.

Participant 2 from school A said:

*“I like History because it is important. Whether the stories that History teaches us about may be painful or not but I think that we deserve to know the truth of what really happened. This may also make us not to seek for revenge but to become lawyers in order to ensure that justice is provided.”*

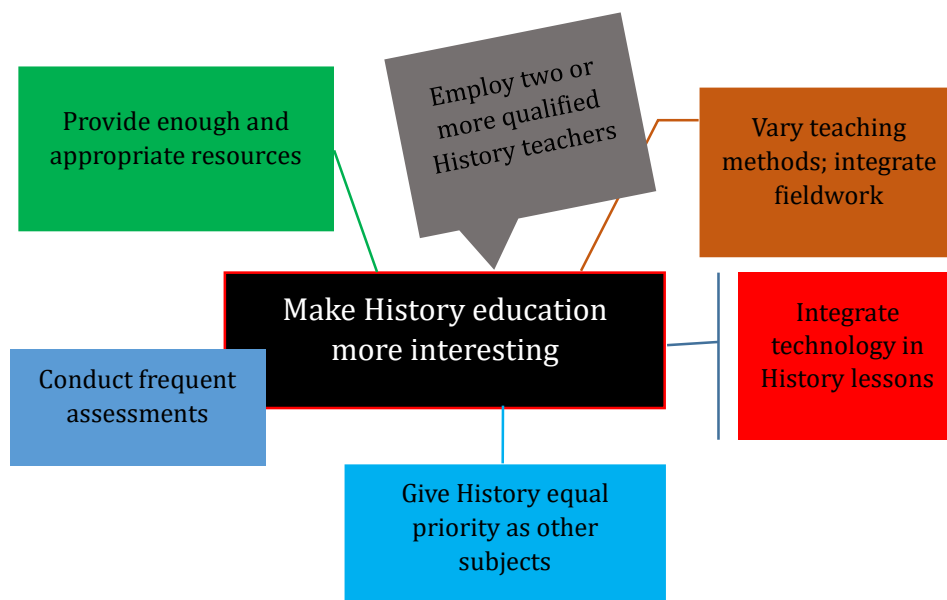
Based on the findings above, it seems that some of the participants do hate History because of reminding them about horrific events that involved deaths of many people while others like History because they consider it as a lesson that people should avoid in future.

On the other hand, some of the participants considered History boring due to its content of old stories and wars. Again, it is a difficult subject as it is characterised by a lot of vocabulary. The participants asserted that History contains a lot of information about wars that occurred a long time ago, with the dates, places, significant figures and the roles of kings in those wars. Thus, they lose interest in the course. The majority of the learners from school C seemed to dislike the nature of the History content. In support to the above views, Wineburg (2001) contents that “too much content in class without procedure and engagement results in a scenario where learners...sit mute and glassy eyed, a few scribbling notes but most yawning in boredom” (p. 217). In other words, History was found to be taught in the manner that does not allow learners to engage effectively, instead leaving them passive and bored.

#### 4.4 Learners’ suggestions on how to make History more interesting

Having heard all of their reasons for liking or disliking History, the participants were further requested to provide their suggestions on how the teaching and learning of History could be improved to make History education more interesting. Figure 2 summarises the key suggestions derived from the interview responses.

**Figure 2: Measures that can be taken to make History more interesting**



*Figure 2: Measures that can be taken to make History more interesting*

Participant 3 responded saying:

*“My opinion is that History should be made compulsory in all secondary schools and be given equal priority like other subjects that we do in school so that as we grow up we have a better understanding of our nation.”*

Participant 2: *“To make History more interesting subject, I think there should be enough resources, fieldtrips should be taken at least quarterly not only once or twice a year. I also think that there should be many teachers who teach it in our school, so that if we do not understand one teacher then we can consult the other one.”*

Participant 1: *“If learners can be given more materials to use, then History can be more interesting subject and many learners will do it doubtlessly.”*

Participants 2 from schools A and C agreed by saying:

*“What can be done is to supply schools with History materials and enough History teachers. We also believe that if we could be assessed after every topic which is not the case currently, then our subject would be more interesting. At least there should be availability of cell phones and computers for broader research.”*

Participant 1: *“History needs a lot of fieldtrips so that at least, for some of us who do not believe that things actually happened, when we visit Historical places, then we would understand better. Fieldtrips would also motivate us hence promote our interest in History learning.”*

Depicted in Figure 2, the responses established that the participants believed that History education could be more interesting if the following aspects would be addressed: (1) make resources available, including cell phones and internet (2) have more qualified History teachers (3) varying of teaching methods and integrating fieldwork (4) conduct frequent formal assessments to track progress (5) giving enough space for History in the timetable. This was evidenced by the above quoted responses which were highlighted by the participants from three respective secondary schools.

The idea of supplying secondary schools with adequate instructional materials due to their importance in the teaching and learning of History is supported by authors such as Okebukola (2005) and Okunola (2005) who assert that availability of resources play a vital role in promoting the learners' attitudes towards learning of different subjects. According to Gomez (2017), integration of internet browser in social studies classrooms connects both teachers and learners to the global world.

#### 4.5 Chapter summary

The main findings in this chapter revealed that there are insufficient resources and instructional materials such as computers and textbooks among others that are needed so as to make History interesting for learners. Some of the participants further indicated that History is taught by any teacher in their schools whose major subjects of specialisation do not include History. Other factors that were outlined here included poor teaching approaches that are used by the teachers in History classrooms which result in learners who have negative attitudes towards History. Moreover, the findings revealed that most learners' likes or dislikes of History were influenced by what their peers think about History. More importantly, some of the participants suggested on the strategies that could be employed in order to make History more interesting including frequent assessments, fieldtrips and integration of technology in History subject. The discussion of these findings will be done in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Exploring Grade10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History: A case of three secondary schools in Maseru

#### 5.1 Summary of findings

This chapter delves into the summary of findings that were presented in the previous chapter which was also to probe on the behavioural attitudes of Grade 10 learners towards History in three secondary schools in Maseru. It also provides summary of the findings, discussion, conclusions, limitations and the recommendations that can be pursued by secondary school History teachers and all the stakeholders.

The study was conducted in three secondary schools in Maseru. The participants were Grade 10 learners from section love and benevolence. The participants were purposively selected. The study employed qualitative research approach and case study design. Pertinent data were obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The focus is on aligning these findings with the research questions and exploring both convergence and divergence from existing research. The ensuing sections will provide an in-depth examination of the data generated to address each research question.

#### 5.2 Discussion

##### 5.2.1 Factors that influence Grade 10 learners' behavioural attitudes towards History

Within the frame of this study's objectives, first research question aimed to discover the factors that influence the behavioural attitudes of Grade10 learners towards History. To address this question, interviews were conducted in the selected schools to unpack the factors that influence behavioural attitudes of History learners in studying History.

The participants were asked to give reasons for their favourable or unfavourable attitudes towards History. The participants' responses were analysed on the basis of the themes that emerged from the data. The analysis revealed that teaching approaches in History education



influences learners' behavioural attitudes towards History. Majority of the participants indicated that the main method that teachers use includes narration of events without even being clearly explained. These findings validate Ganj and Isaar's (2021) assertion that the use of linear or traditional method of teaching may influence learners to behave negatively towards History or become inattentive in class because it does not allow learners to be flexible in the classroom. This indicates that teachers do not employ pedagogical practices in teaching certain subjects, specifically History.

In addition, these findings correspond with Makunja (2015), who found out that in most secondary schools in Tanzania, teachers rely much on traditional method which does not motivate learners. That is, the study revealed that traditional methods hindered active engagement and participation of learners leading to a passive learning experience. Majority of the participants showed that for them to have favourable attitudes towards History, they need to be kept busy with reading materials and lesson activities in order to remember easily a lot of content that History contains.

Kiio's (2012) discoveries were different as they pointed out that despite the negative attitudes of some students towards History, many of the students still enjoyed studying History. It was argued that it would help them with their future career goals, such as becoming lawyers, archaeologists, government administrators, and History teachers, among others. All these careers require skills and knowledge learned from History. In addition, Harley (2015) posits that when employing new historical teaching methods, learners showed positive attitudes towards History than before.

As portrayed by the findings, some of the participants believed that their dislike towards History was rooted in the factors such as teaching strategies that forced them to listen and take notes while the teacher acted as the only source of information. Again, some participants complained that some of the teachers seem to teach History without any encouragement and motivation. Consequently, these teachers use boring methods which in turn demotivate the learners in studying History. This suggests that these participants lacked sufficient exposure to active History lessons or were not adequately influenced to be independent.

Furthermore, the participants' responses revealed that the quality of resources used in History education has an influence on learners' attitudes towards the subject. To be more specific, majority of the participants from all the three schools seemed to be demotivated by the lack

of resources such as History textbooks, technological gadgets that could help them conduct their own researches as well as arousing their interest in History.

It would therefore seem appropriate to conclude that unavailability of resources for the subject may demotivate the learners from putting considerable effort in their studies and that resource insufficiency results in missed opportunities for individuals who study History. Similar findings were recorded by Salema and Wambiya (2016) and Afolabi (2018) who both found out that lack of good History textbooks, computers, library make learners to abandon History classes and choose to do geography, mathematics or sciences.

Furthermore, the responses revealed that some of the learners choose to do History because of the peer influences. That is, their choice of studying History may not be motivated by the curiosities that could be addressed by History lessons but rather, by peer pressure and parental influences. These findings confirm Majeed (2010) and Okorodudu's (2013) assertions that peers can influence their colleagues to behave through imitation and followership.

These authors reported that other learners can do what their peers tell them to do or just follow what their peers do or did before. Based on these findings, it is evident that peers seem to have a significant impact on other learners' attitude towards subjects. The implication could be that such participants may not show positive or negative attitudes in the course depending on how their peers view the subject. Majority of the participants seemed to be studying History because they listened to their friends and families. Most of them got influence from their friends as they could not resist following their friends' choices. This showed a significant relationship of learners' age and behaviour because at their age, it is possible to be influenced by peer pressure.

On the contrary, Okoye (2021) made different discoveries that some of the learners disagree with the above findings by indicating that they were not influenced by anyone to study History. They reported that they already liked it regardless of many challenges that it faced such as lack of instructional materials and inappropriate teaching strategies that teachers use to teach History. However, the findings from the current study showed that most of the participants' responses were of the view that they were being influenced by their friends and families to study History.

Amongst the factors that influence the behavioural attitudes of learners towards History, teacher quality and quantity seemed to play a pivotal role. When interviewed, the participants

responded by saying that the motivation in History education is affected by having one History teacher who in some instances, lacks historical content knowledge and struggles to deliver historical facts to the learners making it more difficult and boring. More importantly, the responses revealed that teachers who are not qualified to teach History may influence negative attitudes towards the subject. In correspondence to these findings, Alabi (2017) asserts that the negative attitudes towards History are also influenced by the quality and quantity of History teachers.

For Alabi (2017), non-History teachers seem to be teaching the subject because there are no qualified History teachers available to teach the subject. In cases where there is a qualified History teacher, it is likely that they are not competent enough to deliver historical content knowledge to the learners. This assertion is validated by this study's findings, which pinpointed that schools are often characterised by one History teacher who sometimes does not teach properly due to workload and a need to rest. Learners hate History because they have realised that one teacher is not enough to teach History. For them, it is a subject that needs different qualified teachers who love the subject and give their all to find solutions when performance drops.

How Grade 10 History learners react towards History and why?

As discussed in the literature review section, the learners' attitude towards the subject may either be negative or positive. On one hand, positive attitudes are made visible by the learners' liking of the course and willingness to carry out the tasks infused within the subject curriculum. On the other hand, negative attitude is made visible by the learner's dislike of the subject and unwillingness to complete the tasks provided. Participants indicated that when it is time for History lessons, they deliberately disappear. While other participants indicated that, they attend but intentionally sleep or distract other learners because History lessons bore them. This also suggests that if teachers do not use varying methods of teaching, more learners will bunk History classes and this may undermine the importance of the subject as it would be seen as unimportant.

Initially, the learners' emotional state towards History, as emphasised by the theory of planned behaviour, was considered. The interviews centred on learners' attitudes towards History and why the learners behave the way they do. The findings indicated that the participants display a positive attitude while at the same time reveal a little negative attitude.

To be specific, the negative or positive motivation was dependent on the perception of subject's importance and content difficulty.

Based on the conception of the subject's importance, the results demonstrated that some of the participants consider it important and like it while others perceive it unimportant and dislike it. The participants' response from school A revealed that the participants believe that History is capable of offering clear messages of the past events, which makes it easier for them to relate to the future. This mirrors Cendek and Akengin's (2017) findings that majority of learners like studying History as it helps them to make sense of the past events and to connect them with the present and the future. Therefore, it is evident that the positive attitudes towards History can lead to strong intentions to study History.

Further, the participants consider the subject important as it can put a person in the position of becoming a teacher, lawyer, translator, or even sent into parliament. Hence, they had a positive attitude towards History. The findings on this aspect put forth the implication that the subject is likely to experience increased enrolment and gain considerable recognition from learners only if they see the unlimited career opportunities that lay ahead after studying the subject.

In addition, the responses revealed that the students believe that self-esteem, problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, and empathy are promoted by the History lessons. Thus, they like History based on these merits. Thus, these findings correspond to Mohamad and Ambotang (2013), who highlight that History teaching needs strategies that develop a wide range of positive skills such as problem-solving skills, decision making skills, critical thinking skills and many others likely to influence positive attitude of learners towards the subject.

However, participants cited their dislike of the subject on the grounds that they do not see the potential of getting employed after studying History. The same findings were recorded by Ahmad and Maryam's (2016) study, which revealed that the attitudes of learners towards History were negatively influenced by the belief that History does not offer job opportunities.

Similarly, Wassermann et al. (2018) report that in South Africa, learners seem to be reluctant to take History as their major subject due to fear of not getting jobs and remaining in poverty forever. Therefore, it seems obvious that History is regarded as unimportant because of failing to offer unlimited job opportunities to learners. The implication is that the negative

attitude will affect learners' choice of History subject in college and influence them to study other majors that do not include History.

In the same vein, some of the participants highlighted that their dislike of History was influenced by the fact that it requires a lot of reading as well as the unavailability of textbooks and other resources such as internet, phones, and computers which would help them to conduct their own researches. Literature suggests that lack of History resources discriminates History from other subjects (Namamba & Rao, 2017).

In their study, Salema and Wambiya (2016) discovered that insufficient textbooks, computer facilities and libraries in most secondary schools in Nigeria influenced the students to dislike History. These findings give the impression of lack of instructional and support material in History education which may influence negative attitudes of learners, thus influence the learners to consider the subject difficult or overwhelming.

Again, the findings revealed that the students' liking or dislike was based on the conception of content and subject difficulty. Some of the participants responded that they are not motivated in studying History because of the content that is bulky, requires a lot of reading, and that encompass unbelievable narratives. However, some of the participants highlighted that they like History because it is much easier than other subjects, thus it awards them more marks.

Some of the participants seemed to be of the view that History is difficult and the failure rates at the end of the academic year and national examinations demotivate them. Similar findings were reported in Canada by Fielding (2005) who discovered that learners' dislike of History was based on the belief that it is difficult. Therefore, it is evident that students' views about difficult content can be one of the reasons why students are demotivated to continue with the course.

The results revealed that the participants found out that History contain a lot of information about wars that occurred a long time ago, with dates, places and significant figures and the roles of kings in those wars. Consequently, they lose interest in the subject. Likewise, the current study findings have similarities with the previous studies by Boadu (2016) who posits that teachers and learners struggle through overloaded syllabus content. Therefore, learners' negative attitude towards History is caused by a lot of information that needs to be memorised. More importantly, some of the participants do not like History because of

their belief that the subject promotes anger as a resultant of studying content that opens old wounds. Thus, History creates nothing but sad memories.

In addition, some of the participants reiterate that History is boring because its content is only about old stories and wars. These findings validate the findings of Andrews and Mycock (2008) who note that students' attitude towards History is determined and or shaped by what is taught in schools. This implies that if the learners do not see the importance of studying certain topics, they develop a negative attitude and may not show interest in the study of such content.

### 5.3 Learners' suggestions on how to make History more interesting

The findings of the study revealed multiple suggestions given by the participants that may bring solutions to the negative attitudes of learners towards History. Some of the participants highlighted that they do like History if it could be taught in the manner that motivates them. For instance, if there could be more field trips to historical places, that would enhance their interest in the subject. The emphasis as seen from school A and school C was that at least there should be more than one outing to the historical places. For learners, to be exposed to some of the primary sources of History would promote their interest in the subject. These views are in line with the findings of Cooper (2018) and Vilarrasa (2003) who posit that school outings are crucial as they expose learners to primary sources and raise awareness of their immediate environment.

Furthermore, some of the participants believed that the incorporation of ICT gadgets such as cell phones, computers and accessibility of internet in their schools would be added advantages in making History more interesting which would also lead to more learners having positive attitudes towards History. Issar (2021) elaborates that ICT turns up to be enhancing teaching of History by blending together the modern and the traditional tools to develop the minds of the learners to be creative and analytical. Ideally, LBECP (2021) encourages employment of ICT in classrooms to enhance effective learning environment that would develop learners who are responsible for their own learning and enhancement of their interest in subjects such as History.

Additionally, the participants suggested the importance of the availability of textbooks and libraries in order to enhance their understanding and reading skills of historical concepts. Some of the participants believe that if there could be enough materials such as textbooks together with libraries where they could study, that also could arouse their interest in learning

of History subject. These findings are in line with recent research which was done by Afolabi (2018) in Nigeria which revealed that there are inadequate textbooks and libraries in most secondary schools.

Most of the participants suggested that at least they should be given two or more History teachers because in their responses, they indicated that one of the factors that make History monotonous is that they have only one History teacher. Responses from school B and school C even revealed that they are taught History by unqualified History teachers and plea that there is need for employment of qualified History teachers. Alabi (2017) and Lawal (2019) both content that there are no qualified History teachers in most secondary schools. Likewise, similar findings from Fru (2015) and Ntabeni (2010) in the context of Lesotho revealed that History is taught by any teachers whose major subjects may not include History.

Other suggestions from participants 1 and 2 from school A were that they should be given more assignments and quizzes after every chapter as part of the assessment. For them, this could also make History more interesting as they practice regularly and become familiar with many historical questions. This connects with literature by Adeyinka (2015) which indicates that History learners need frequent assessments. This suggests that multiple forms of assessment should be implemented by teachers to enhance learners' interest in History.

#### 5.4 Conclusions

The study intended to give voice to the learners who study History in three selected secondary schools in Maseru focusing mainly on their behavioural attitudes towards History. This study clearly pointed out that most of the learners have negative attitudes towards History subject. The results were drawn from the participants who represented Grade 10 learners from three selected secondary schools in Maseru district. In their responses, most of the participants indicated that History is difficult and a failing subject because it requires a lot of reading but does not have learning materials such as textbooks and more importantly, History is being taught by unqualified History teachers.

However, some learners seemed to be enjoying History regardless of the challenges that are faced by History as a subject. The implication is that there is need to foster positive attitudes and to develop love and interest of History in History learners. The necessity for changes that may enliven History in secondary schools were also suggested by the participants in the current study. In their interviews, the participants made suggestions that enhance learners' interest in History. Those included: integration of information and communication

technologies (ICT) and more fieldtrips to visit the historical places to name a few. This implies that considerable measures should be taken to modify History teaching and learning in most secondary schools to make it more interesting.

Overall, the findings from the present study indicated that conclusively, the improper teaching strategies, insufficient instructional materials, scarcity and quality teachers as well as peer pressure and the behavioural attitudes of learners towards History have significant relationship. In other words, they play a major role in the teaching and learning of History. From some of the findings of this study, it can be concluded that learners have knowledge about the importance of studying History. The findings revealed that they do not even have a problem that it is being included in the school curriculum.

The results again showed that the theory of planned behaviour informed this study because all the elements of the theory had significant relationship between the behavioural attitudes of learners. In other words, all the elements of the theory were addressed by the findings of the participants. That is, what do learners think about History (attitudes)? What factors influence learners' attitudes towards History (subjective norms) and perceived behavioural controls where the participants indicated that History is being made difficult by shortage of instructional materials and poor teaching strategies that are used by some of the teachers resulting into poor performance of the subject as well.

This suggests that regular teacher training and empowerment through workshops should regularly be done by the school administrators and the Ministry of Education and Training. Another measure could be regular inspection by subject HODs in order to ensure smooth teaching and learning of History subject. The findings also imply that there is a need to employ a large number of qualified History teachers in order to make History more interesting.

### 5.5 Limitations of the study

This study used qualitative research approach that seeks to understand phenomena in in-depth and in real situations that it occurs. Employing the qualitative research approach, I was able to explore rich and detailed experiences and behavioural attitudes of learners. However, these strengths also have certain limitations. The study focused only on three selected secondary schools in Maseru district in Lesotho and the total number of learners who participated in this study was twelve. Therefore, due to a number of three schools and a sample size of participants, the findings could not be generalised. This suggests that future studies may build on the current work and also increase the number of participants.



Moreover, this study used case study design and one of its limitations is that the interpretation of the results is subjective; therefore, it might be difficult for another researcher to come up with similar results with the current work.

Furthermore, limited time was also a constraint in this study because I used only one 30 minutes of the participants' spare time. That means I had to travel for longer days than anticipated. Working with learners was also a challenge for this study especially in the beginning where finding enough willing participants was challenging because they had to volunteer to participate in the study. After recruiting the participants, the major challenge was that some of the participants were reluctant to talk in front of the researcher. Besides that, it was that time of the year when schools were busy with sports activities in preparation for the upcoming games. This also made the work difficult because sometimes the learners would be in a hurry to go to the playgrounds.

### 5.6 Recommendations

This study recommends that measures should be taken by school authorities to see that History is taught properly in secondary schools. Teachers in the secondary schools need to develop and use the teaching strategies that enable learners to actively engage in their learning of History by expressing their views and understandings of historical facts. They need to emphasise to learners the importance of the subject, especially the careers that History offers, such as being archaeologists, secondary school teachers and librarians, to name a few. Teachers should assess learners more frequently and give them feedback immediately for more practice and effective engagement in their own learning which will also enhance History performance in secondary schools.

Teacher-training and empowerment by the Ministry of Education and Training is also recommended by this study in order to motivate them and to introduce new teaching methods to them such as the use of technology in the History classroom. The study further recommends that the school administrators use the findings from this study to understand the prime factors in the learning of History in secondary schools in order to make some positive changes regarding the subject.

Lesotho curriculum designers and planners should take into account the accessibility of resources in secondary schools so that learners do not struggle with scarce learning materials like textbooks, computers and libraries. Further researches should be done in many secondary schools to explore the similar issue to the current study and to do action researches aiming at

bringing solutions in the classrooms in order to make History subject more interesting to all History learners.

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## APPENDIX A

**Questions for focus group. (to answer the main research question and research question one).**

### **Questions**

1. What do you like about History?
2. What do you dislike about History?



4. What are your opinions about History?
5. What factors influence you about learning of History in your school?
6. What do you think can be done to make History interesting in your school?
7. What else do you think is important about History?

As the researcher, I remained neutral during the discussion while I had to also help in paraphrasing their responses to show that I was listening. Then I closed by thanking my participants.

## APPENDIX B

### **Semi-structured interview guide (research questions 2&3)**

#### **Questions**

1. Why did you choose to do History subject in your school?
2. Why do think History is an important subject?
3. Why do you think History not an important subject?
4. Why do you have negative or positive attitudes towards History?
5. Why do you behave in the manner that you do towards learning of History?
6. Do you like the way History is being delivered to you in classroom? If yes, give reasons for your answer and if no you can also give reasons.
7. Why do you think the resources that are used to teach History are not appropriate?
8. Give one reason why History should be taught in your school.
9. Give one reason why History shouldn't be taught in your school?