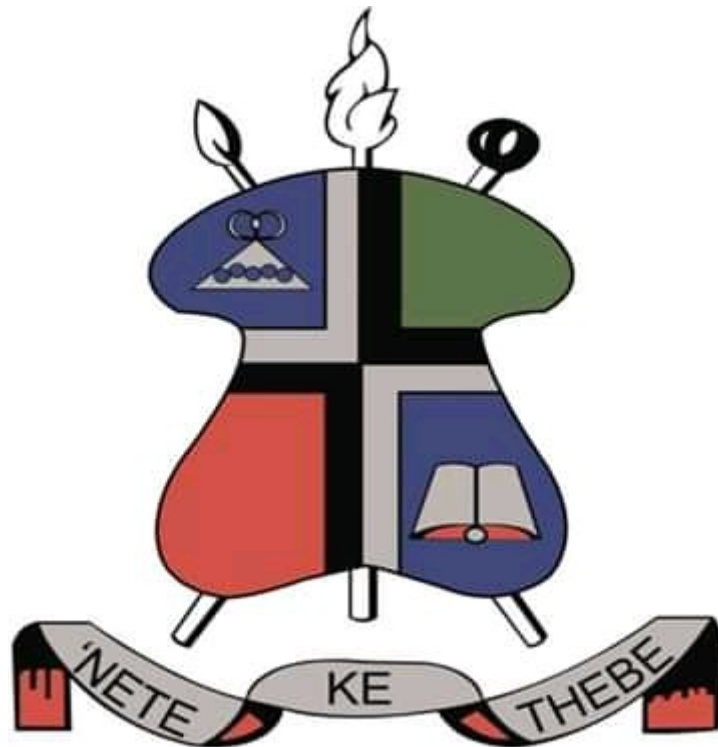


**Investigating Teachers' Perceptions Concerning the use of Authentic Assessment in
Lesotho Schools: A Case of One School in Mophale's Hoek District**



By

Mahlape Asnathe Tšoana- 200705143

Submitted in fulfilment for the Master of Education (Testing and Measurement)

(EDF)

Supervisor: Dr Julia Chere-Masopha

September 2024

Certification

This is to certify that this dissertation has been read and approved as having met the requirements of the Faculty of Education, the National University of Lesotho for the award of Masters in Education (M.ED).

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Supervisor

Dr Julia Chere-Masopha

.....

Head of Department

.....

Dean of Faculty of Education

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Declaration

I Mahlape Asnathe Tšoana, hereby declare that ‘Investigating teachers’ perceptions of using authentic assessment in Lesotho classrooms’ embodies my original work, and all the sources have been acknowledged using references. In the case of failure to comply entirely with the mentioned declaration, I apologise and confirm that it was not my intention to do so.

This dissertation has not been submitted to any institution by me or any other person to attain any qualification.

Mahlape Asnathe Tšoana

August 2024

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

LBECP	Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
CAP	Curriculum and Assessment Policy
AA	Authentic Assessment
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
SSI	Semi-structured Interviews
PBAS	Performance-Based Assessment Strategies
TBAS	Task-Based Assessment Strategies
Ecol	Examination Council of Lesotho
LE	Learning Environment
DEP	Diploma in Education-Primary
DIP	Diploma in Education
TA	Traditional Assessment
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
IC	Integrated Curriculum
LCE	Lesotho College of Education
NUL	National University of Lesotho
AE	Art and Entrepreneurial Learning Area
PSS	Personal and Social Science Learning Area
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
ACL	Anglican Church

Abstract

The study investigated teachers' perceptions of using authentic assessment in Lesotho primary classrooms. To achieve this, a phenomenological qualitative research design was used. The data for this research was generated through focus group discussion and semi-structured interview from the reflexive selection of nine teachers out of a population of 13 within the area of the study. What is more, this study used thematic analysis and the following themes emerged; teachers' interpretation of authentic assessment, teachers' experiences of using authentic assessment, teachers' experiences influence on their views on the practicality of authentic assessment in Lesotho schools.

The study findings indicate that teachers demonstrated some knowledge about authentic assessment. It is established that teachers are optimistic of practising authentic assessment and employ strategies and tasks for authentic assessment. Conversely, they emphasise that using authentic assessment could only be practical in Lesotho classrooms if challenges including limited resources and facilities, limited knowledge, learners' calibre, and overcrowded classrooms are addressed. As perceived, such challenges hinder teachers' effort to practice authentic assessment effectively. Based on the assessment strategies teachers claim to use, it is concluded that teachers' practices of authentic assessment are limited and that traditional assessment might be still dominating. Teachers also show concern that the complex content syllabus and time consuming authentic assessment strategies influence their perceptions and practices. Therefore, teachers strongly recommend that they should be equipped with professional development training on authentic assessment, necessary resources and facilities, and support from the government and educational bodies. Further, it is recommended that the reforms and educational policies be familiarised through workshop dissemination.

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Chapter 1: Study Background

1.1 Introduction

This study investigated teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment in Lesotho classrooms, and how these perceptions influence their practices of authentic assessment. Teaching and assessment have a significant contribution in the development of the global society. There is a general belief that good education can assist achieve this. It is believed that quality teaching and assessment can enhance the well-being of a learner, and the socio-economic development of the nations. This is why of late, stakeholders in education are focusing more on how learners are taught and assessed. In Lesotho, they have been making attempts to restructure school curriculum and assessment so that it aligns with these global beliefs. One of the recent attempts in Lesotho was to implement the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) in 2012.

It should be noted that CAP brought notable challenges, hence Lesotho government found it necessary to revise the policy. As a result, the government attempted to develop the new policy framework 'Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy' (LBECP) in 2021. LBECP intends to build on the CAP framework, to close the gap between primary and secondary education (LBECP, 2021). Thus, this new policy also aims to provide learners with skills, values, ethics and attitudes essential to enable them to be functional and survive in real-life situations (LBECP, 2021). From this point, it should be understood that this policy entails an aspect of authenticity. For example, the policy advocates for assessment which is participatory, interactive, and constructive. Although this policy framework has been approved, it is yet to be implemented. It is assumed its application might still be challenging.

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If LBECF will not be completely prepared for effective implementation, detrimental challenges brought by CAP are also anticipated. It should also be noticed that the curriculum presently practised in Lesotho schools is grounded on the CAP framework.

Now, the changes which were brought by CAP aimed to close the gap between what is taught in schools and what is needed in the communities. As such, the policy emphasised teaching and assessment that incorporate application of knowledge and skills that address the needs of a learner in their academic world and everyday life (Chere-Masopha & Sebatane, 2018). These reforms required teachers to use authentic teaching and assessment. Despite this policy aspirations, some studies have been reporting that teachers have not changed how they teach and assess learners (Chere-Masopha & Sebatane, 2018). This formed the base for this study. The study sought to investigate teachers' perceptions on using authentic teaching and assessment approaches in Lesotho classrooms which is believed to influence education at large.

This chapter gives an overview of this study. The chapter is structured as follows: Introduction (this section), Background, Statement of the problem, Study purpose and Research questions, Research aim and objectives, Significance of the study, Theoretical framework and Methodology, Definition of critical concepts, Summary, and Study outline.

1.2 Background

Education is one of the most vital instruments for sustainable economic growth. Studies describe education as a discipline that aims to equip learners with skills and knowledge that enable them to contribute positively during their schooling period and after graduation (Akarowhe, 2018). In support, Nashash (2015) argues that education prepares and

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activates learners' theoretical and practical knowledge and skills and gives them essential experiences to participate functionally in a well-constructed society. Nashash (2015) advances the argument by pointing out that how the school curricula are designed and implemented determines the authenticity and quality of education.

The background of this study is sectioned as follows: school education and modern societal needs; teaching, learning, and assessment; assessment methods in teaching and learning; educational reforms in Lesotho: curriculum and assessment policy. These are outlined hereafter.

1.2.1 School Education and Modern Societal Needs

Despite the observations of the importance of education for economic development and the well-being of learners, it (education) has not responded well to the demands of the modern labour market (Nashash, 2015). The main concern is that schools have been equipping learners with attitudes, knowledge, and skills that are incompatible with the needs of the labour market and in the everyday lives of these learners. The concern further indicates that most educated people are struggling to perform in their field of work because their skills and knowledge acquired at school do not complement those required by the modern labour markets (Chere-Masopha & Sebatane, 2018; Chere-Masopha & Honu, 2018; Nashash, 2015).

The mismatch has been observed mostly in the less developed countries, Lesotho included. For example, in 2015, Khaketla, the then Minister of Education, pointed out that Basotho graduates have been unproductive in the labour market because the curriculum used in Lesotho schools is mismatched with what is required in the world of work; hence economic development of the nation was affected negatively (Chere-Masopha & Honu, 2018; Nashash, 2015). The major complaints about the curriculum and mismatch have been

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directed to teachers' classroom practices (Chere-Masopha & Honu, 2018, Ralebese, 2018). The complaints suggest that teachers' practices appear to focus more on disciplinary knowledge than addressing the real-life problems and challenges these learners encounter, and are likely to encounter, in their present and future everyday life and at the workplace (Chere-Masopha & Honu, 2018).

1.2.2 Teaching, learning, and assessment

Teaching, learning, and assessment are central to curriculum implementation. This is in line with Bunch's (2012) view that teaching, learning, and assessment are aspects of the curriculum that should align, interact, inform each other, and work towards the same end in education. Learning is the outcome of teaching (Bunch, 2012; Hernandez et al., 2023). Teaching involves creating a conducive learning environment that creates opportunities for learners to develop and acquire knowledge and skills. Learner assessment checks whether learners have acquired the required skills and knowledge from their learning. Ideally, learner assessment should focus on the learners' application of knowledge and skills that a learner has acquired during teaching rather than on content knowledge alone.

Ideally, assessment should not only be carried at the end of a teaching lesson or programme, but during learning process as well. Learners should be systematically and frequently assessed by a teacher to monitor learning progress, to judge and measure the achievement of content knowledge and skills obtained during teaching. In a way, assessment should be used to check whether learning has taken place and the objectives and intentions of the curriculum have been accomplished (Rangachari & Kulasegaram, 2018). The observation made by Hussain et al. (2019) is that assessment connects curriculum, instructional mechanisms, and learners during teaching and learning. With this view, it is evident that the

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concepts of assessment, teaching and learning are integral, inseparable, and supportive. They inform each other in such a way that the absence or inefficacy of one affects the other (Bunch, 2012). This further suggests the importance of ensuring that the teaching, learning and assessment mechanisms link well with the curriculum intentions (Hussain et al., 2019).

1.2.3 Assessment methods in teaching and learning

Although there is a consensus that before, during, and after teaching and learning, learners should be assessed, so far there is no global consensus on how learners should be assessed. As a result, education systems have been using differing learner assessment methods (Yambi, 2018). In some systems, traditional methods to monitor learners' knowledge and skills have been used. These methods focus primarily on assessing learners' recollection and replication of theoretical knowledge. Such systems rarely assess learners' acquisition and application of knowledge and skills outlined in a curriculum (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022). To clarify this, Chere-Masopha et al. (2021) give an example of where a curriculum outcome requires a learner to demonstrate knowledge of the methods to prevent soil erosion. According to Chere-Masopha et al. (2021), this curriculum outcome requires a learner to be assigned a practical assessment that would require such learner to apply knowledge and skills relating to the prevention of soil erosion. However, in an education system where traditional methods of assessment are used, a teacher is likely to ask a learner to mention and describe methods of soil erosion instead of engaging this learner in the actual life activity.

Some education systems have shifted from traditional assessment approaches to more advanced methods that emphasise the authenticity of the assessment. For example, performance assessment, self-assessment, and electronic assessment program (Mueller, 2018;

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Elgendy, 2023) are believed authentic. Performance assessment requires learners to engage in projects and allows learners to apply the concepts in a practical way. For example, self-assessment that is often used in the learning projects gives learners an opportunity to improve self-awareness and to identify their strengths and weaknesses. This identification encourages them to succeed, and evaluate their performance. Electronic assessment program employs modern technological program and intelligent software. This type of assessment speeds up the assessment progress and provides immediate feedback and accurate analysis of learners' performance (Elgendy, 2023). In the systems in which these assessments are used, learners proved to improve continuously since they are engaged in the practical tasks where they take ownership of their learning. Therefore, learners are likely to develop knowledge and skills and apply them for their survival in their immediate learning scenarios and in future life (Ecol & Burdett, 2011). This mode of assessment is believed to grant both teachers and learners opportunities to demonstrate deep understanding and higher-order thinking (Curriculum and Assessment Policy [CAP], 2009; LBCEP, 2021). These assessment methods give teachers an opportunity to understand learners better because of their maturity. As a result, teachers are able to assess the skills in learning process and the results of that learning rather than focusing on scores (Moria et al., 2017). As thus, teachers gain insights on learners' knowledge, skills, and performance, resulting in both teachers and learners become problem-solvers, decision-makers, good communicators, critical thinkers, and creative (Ecol & Burdett, 2011; Swaffield. 2011).

1.2.4 Educational Reforms in Lesotho: Curriculum and Assessment Policy

This dissatisfaction that Basotho have been expressing about the outcomes of school education in Lesotho led to a series of efforts by the government to revise and reform the

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Lesotho education system so that it addresses societal needs (Raselimo & Mahao, 2015; Chere-Masopha et al., 2021). One of the recent reforms was the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) Framework of 2009. This policy introduced an integrated curriculum in Lesotho primary schools. The integrated curriculum (IC) replaced the subject oriented curriculum that was organised into separate disciplines and that encouraged learning concepts in isolation (CAP, 2009). Reasons that persuaded the government to introduce integrated curriculum were that it,

- Advocates for learning experiences that are constructive, meaningful, and relevant to the real-life situation of the learners (Drake & Reid, 2018);
- Can lead to deep learning that shifts from surface learning to understanding concepts in depth, with learners responsible for their learning and being able to relate concepts within and across learning areas (CAP, 2009);
- Offers opportunities for learners to develop knowledge and skills that they can use meaningful to address their needs in their communities,
- Allows them to engage in activities that connect with what they are taught in the classroom and what happens in their everyday life and future workplace.

Integrated curriculum requires teachers to facilitate learning, make it functional, and assist learners in making sense of the world around them (Mora & Coco, 2014). It encourages teachers to use collaborative learning approaches that allow learners to become active participants who in the process, develop skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making or creativity. These are skills required for survival in the everyday life and in the labour market (Chere-Masopha & Honu, 2018; Ecol & Burdett, 2011).

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Learner assessment in Lesotho schools had been mainly relying on traditional methods of assessments (Ecol & Burdett, 2011). Other studies indicate that assessments in Lesotho schools have been theoretical, objective-examination-oriented, and reliant on paper and pen (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022). Only the assessment of vocational subjects such as agriculture, woodwork, home science, and fashion and textiles have been allocated small parts of practical examination (Chere-Masopha et al., 2021).

Theoretical assessment requires learners to take oral or written examinations, often in multiple choices, fill-in, and short-answer questions. These modes of assessment mainly test cognitive domain, which is the lower level of Bloom's Taxonomy (CAP, 2009; Ecol & Burdett, 2011). This approach to assessment requires learners to demonstrate their lower-order ability by memorising and regurgitating what they are taught in the class (Ghosh et al., 2020). They focused mainly on the learners' demonstration of basic knowledge of the concepts taught.

Assessment methods that can effectively require learners to demonstrate knowledge and skills learned at school are not yet popular among teachers in Lesotho (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022). Such methods, which are associated with authentic learning and assessment include learning portfolios, learning journals, research projects, oral presentations, learning conferences, and classroom interviews (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018). When learners are assessed through these methods, they are forced to apply knowledge and skills they need in their everyday lives and future workplace. It is believed that these methods promote authentic teaching, learning, and assessment and enable learners to connect what they learn at school with their everyday life knowledge and skill needs (Alghamdi, 2017; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). This is why others refer to them as authentic

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teaching, learning, and assessment strategies. The reforms that were introduced by CAP (2009) require teachers to use these assessment strategies in their classrooms.

1.3 Problem Statement

The successful implementation of curriculum and assessment reforms usually depends mainly on teachers' involvement. However, teachers resist adopting new changes and demonstrate incompetence in the proposed reforms (Luttenburg et al., 2013). Factors contributing to resistance of curriculum and assessment adoption are associated with teachers professional abilities, experiences, roles and responsibilities, availability of resources, their attitudes and perceived importance of the reform, and level of education (Ungar, 2016; Cristina-Corina and Valerica, 2012; Carter and Velde, 2021; Lomba-Potela, 2022). Since the reforms on teaching, learning, and assessment were introduced in Lesotho classrooms in 2009 and 2012, there has been limited information on how teachers respond to the reforms.

One of the proposals made by these reforms is that teachers should use authentic teaching and assessment strategies in the classrooms. However, authors, such as Chere-Masopha & Honu (2018), have expressed their concerns that curriculum and assessment are not practised as intended; teachers do not use authentic strategies recommended for these processes. It was established that it is challenging for Lesotho primary teachers to embrace authentic practices and proposed assessment methods (Chere-Masopha & Sebatane, 2018). Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022) also established that teachers are not using authentic assessment strategies effectively in their classrooms. However, these studies have not established why Lesotho's primary teachers find it challenging to effectively enact authentic assessment strategies.

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Against this backdrop, this study intended to reveal the reasons behind ineffective use of authentic assessment in teaching and learning within Lesotho's primary schools. Studies (Elmosaad, 2024; Reye-Sokolowsky, 2020) indicate that perceptions are one of the significant contributing factors to the successful practices of any change. Therefore, knowing how teachers perceive the proposed authentic assessment strategies could reveal the psychosocial aspects in which teachers should be helped in order to shape their views and understandings about the significance of authentic assessment. Since there is no study that I am aware of; which probes into teachers' perceptions about authentic assessment within Lesotho's primary schools, it was considered necessary to conduct a study that investigated how teachers perceive authentic assessment strategies being practised in Lesotho primary schools; which marked the purpose of the current study. Importantly, investigating how teachers perceive AA may reveal reasons as to why AA is not being successfully implemented within Lesotho's primary schools.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

This study aimed to generate information about teachers' perceptions of using authentic assessment in Lesotho primary schools. Therefore, the objectives of this study were:

- 1.4.1 To find out how teachers interpret authentic assessment;
- 1.4.2 To establish teachers' experiences of using authentic assessment in the classroom;
- 1.4.3 To establish how teachers' experiences influence their views of practising authentic assessment in Lesotho classrooms;

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1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of using authentic assessment in Lesotho classroom practices. Therefore, the main research question that underpinned this study was: What are teachers' perceptions of using authentic assessment? To address this question, the following sub research questions were used to generate the data for the study;

1.5.1 What are teachers' interpretations of authentic assessment?

1.5.2 What are teachers' experiences of using authentic assessment in the classrooms in Lesotho?

1.5.3 How do teachers' experiences influence their views on the practicality of using authentic assessment in Lesotho schools?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study provide information about teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment: their interpretation of this concept; their experiences of using this type of assessment; their views on the practicality of using authentic assessment strategies in Lesotho schools; and how their perceptions influence their views on practising authentic assessment. This information is valuable for curriculum developers and designers, the Examination Council of Lesotho (EcoL), and teacher training institutions. These institutions may find this information useful for supporting teachers and revising the reforms that require teachers to use new methods of assessment. The teacher training institutions may also find the information in this study beneficial for their teacher education programmes. The findings of this study may influence the in-service teacher training institutions to organise training

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programmes for teachers who are already in the field. The findings can also benefit other stakeholders such as the Lesotho Association of Teachers, education officers, and inspectorates who work directly with teachers. Teachers may use the findings of this study to improve their assessment practices and to reflect on their practices and therefore respond accordingly to the demands of the curriculum and assessment reforms. Further, the study contributes to the existing literature on teachers' perceptions and authentic teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The theory which guided this study is Gregory constructive theory of perceptions. Richard Gregory, is a psychologist who was founding editor of journal perceptions and founded this theory in 1970. The journal emphasised phenomenology and novel perceptions produced by stimuli. He also introduced the concept of top-down processing. This theory is framed from Piaget theory of constructivism. The Gregory constructivism theory of perceptions proposes that people perceive information by interpreting the sensory input data from the environment and those are much influenced by their experiences or moods (Gregory, 1972). This theorist argues that information alone is insufficient to account for perceptions. The theory emphasises that the sensory input data and how the information is inferred and interpreted is driven by prior knowledge and contexts of an individual (Demuth, 2013). This implies that perceptions teachers make about a phenomenon are usually influenced by integrating their previous practices with the present, and from that, teachers construct new meanings, understandings, and perceptions. This explains why people perceive the same sensory information differently; the information is perceived from individual past experiences and context which might be different from others (Zigman, 2018). The new

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knowledge teachers develop might not necessarily be similar because of some influences like their background. Furthermore, this theory advocates that individual perceptions are influenced by perceptual set. This holds the view that perceptual set are often influenced by human culture, motivation, emotions and expectations.

Gregory constructive theory of perceptions which is sometimes used interchangeable with indirect theory proposes that human makes inferences about what their senses communicate to them based on their past experiences (Demuth, 2013). This could mean teachers' perceptions develop from interpreting sensory data based on prior experiences. As thus, the study finds this theory compatible and suitable to obtain rich data on teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment in Lesotho schools.

1.8 Research Methodology

This section describes the research methodology that has been followed to generate data for the research questions provided earlier in this chapter. Research methodology is a systematic plan that describes the procedures and techniques for generating, interpreting, and analysing data (Bhaskar & Manjuladevi, 2016). It is used to generate new knowledge that can be used to solve a problem or improve a system. In this study, the methodology aims to solve a research problem on teachers' perceptions of using authentic assessment in Lesotho primary schools. This section gives the summary of the research methodology, which is organised as follows: Research approach, Paradigm, Epistemology, Research design, Population and Selection of participants, Method of data collection and Instruments, Methods of data analysis and instruments, and Ethical consideration. The details of research methodology are presented in Chapter 3.

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1.8.1 Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative approach that is associated with constructivism. This approach generated rich data about teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment, allowing in-depth data generation from answers to the problem. Hence, interpretive researchers and constructivists favour the qualitative approach. This approach is concerned with generating facts from cases and understanding their differences in a natural setting (Cresswell, 2013). Again, the qualitative approach seeks to find human perceptions using multiple methods to collect data, which are usually analysed thematically. Thus, the study finds this approach appropriate to investigate teachers' perceptions concerning the use of authentic assessment within their classrooms.

1.8.2 Paradigm

The constructivism paradigm, grounded in interpretive epistemology, advocates that individuals create knowledge through their experiences, active participation, and reflection on those experiences. As observed by Jena and Behera (2017), this paradigm holds that humans construct reality through interaction, interpretation, and experiences by activating prior knowledge. Constructivism paradigm also holds the view that there is no absolute truth but truth is subjective that depend on the contexts and humans perceptions. (Denzin & Lincoln 1998). From this point of view, this paradigm seems to provide researchers opportunities to explore and create new knowledge from different scenarios and phenomena, which they interpret through individualised schemas. This is with the view that humans always seek to understand phenomena through the perceptions of people under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln 1998). Hence this paradigm was believed appropriate for the study to generate the data on the teachers' perceptions of the phenomena under study.

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1.8.3 Epistemology

This study was influenced by an interpretive epistemological perspective, which believes there is no absolute truth but multiple truths, which are subjective and socially constructed by individuals trying to understand their realities (Furlong, 2013). Thus, humans construct knowledge by interpreting their experiences in the real world. Therefore, the study finds this epistemology appropriate for investigating how teachers interpret authentic assessment practices in the classroom.

1.8.4 Research Design

The study adopted a phenomenological case study design. According to (Patton, 2002) this design is a qualitative approach that seeks to understand humans' experiences subjectively on the particular phenomenon. It yields deeper insights into how humans perceive real scenarios. The design helps to generate data about humans' perceptions of their experiences in the real context (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Rakotsoana, 2018). Further, this design allows investigation of complex issues on participants' beliefs, ideas, attitudes and feelings, and clarifies the essence of the phenomena under study (Patton, 2002). It must be understood that this design generates data to understand the universal nature of the phenomena under investigation by exploring the views of people who have practised it, hence it expands humans' knowledge about the phenomena (Patton, 2002). Besides, this design tends to allow a researcher to engage in flexible activities that assist an understanding of complex phenomena (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). This study finds a phenomenological case study design appropriate to investigate the phenomena inquired as experienced by teachers. However, the phenomenological case study design is criticized as laborious and that

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the participants' expressions are often influenced by language barriers, thus, requiring interpretation without biases to provide factual experiences.

1.8.5 Population and Selection of Participants

The study was conducted in the case of one primary school located in the urban area of Mophales' Hoek district in the southern region of Lesotho. Teachers who participated in the data generation of this study were selected reflexively. Reflexive selection advocates selecting participants from the perspective of researchers' self-awareness, to position themselves within the research, and to acknowledge the influences of their views, context, experiences and the role of shaping all aspects of research (Green & Thorogood, 2014). This suggests that the selection should engage the critical observation and interaction with the participants since they influence the depth of data to generate (Patnaik, 2013). Thus, reflexive selection maintains qualitative data and reduces biases since it allows a researcher and participants to reflect on their own perspectives, that they might both influence the interpretation of data (Patnaik, 2013). By way of illustrations, the participants were selected on the assumption of appropriateness to generate required data on the phenomena under inquiry. Hence, they were selected from the point view of the qualifications they hold, experiences in teaching and learning, and in-service training received. To generate data, the study engaged nine teachers who were teaching grades three to six.

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1.8.6 Methods of Data Generation and Instruments

One of the central phases of research is data generation. Data generation is explained as the process of gathering and analysing data from different sources to unfold the facts on the research problem (Taherdoost, 2021). Studies employ multiple methods and instruments to find answers to problems. This study used semi-structured interview (SSI) and a focus group discussion method (FGD) to generate the data.

Semi-structured interviews rely on open-ended questions which have been pre-planned as a guide to direct interview interaction (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The use of this kind of interviews provides participants the opportunity to reveal the meaning they attach to their experiences with no limitation. The researcher preferred to utilize one-on-one interviews to allow an interviewer to interact directly with the participants and to observe their facial expression (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). However, semi-structured interviews seem to lessen validity because of their flexibility and thus promote biases. The study found interview protocol a tool suitable to generate data in SSI. Interview protocol is the directive guide used to generate qualitative data. It includes a set of questions, (Hunter, 2012). Further, SSI relied on notes-taking only from the sources of information.

Focus group discussion yields in-depth data concerning participants' beliefs, views, experiences, and perceptions. FGD assists individuals in gaining insights into human' understanding by encouraging freedom of opinion in an open atmosphere amongst participants (Masadeh, 2012). Therefore, it is believed this method provides insightful data about teachers' perceptions in this study. This method used a focus group discussion guide which contained similar questions as in the interview protocol to generate data. Again, a researcher used notes-taking and audio recording to generate data in this method. First, the

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researcher set a buzz group in the classroom and then the discussion commenced. The researcher also took notes from the participants' responses and the data from audio recording was transcribed. In this way, it was assumed that the interviewer and the participants would gain an in-depth understanding of the problem (Richard et al., 2021) and interpret the situation from different perspectives about teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment practices

1.8.7 Methods of Analysis and Instruments

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data generated by this study. In thematic analysis, data are systematically identified and organised and offer insight into patterns of meaning (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The data was coded and transcript into thematic categories. Again, thematic analysis is associated with qualitative data approach and analysis. Hence it was found suitable for this study. The study adapted Braun and Clark (2012) coding model for collecting data which involves familiarising oneself with data through reading, coding themes; collating data relevant to each theme, searching for themes; collating themes into possible themes, reviewing themes; checking if the themes correlate with the extract, defining and narrating themes; generating names titles for each themes, and producing a report.

In this study, the researcher read notes and listened to audio recordings over and over again to familiarise oneself to data, categorised data into themes, collated the themes and related them to the abstracts, and finally produced the report.

1.8.8 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration are principles that the researcher when conducting research (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). In, this study, ethical principles that were considered included

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informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, and trustworthiness. Research ethics is important in research to protect the rights of the participants, enhance research trustworthiness, maintain academic integrity, and inform further research (Yip, 2016). How the principles of ethical consideration were observed is explained in Chapter 3.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

The fundamental concepts of this study are curriculum, curriculum reforms, teaching and learning, teachers' perceptions, and authentic assessment. These concepts have been defined as they have been used in this study.

1.9.1 Curriculum

Curriculum is a concept that has disparity definitions in the literature. For example, Denman and Al-Mahrooqi (2019) define it as a blend of instructional practices, learning experiences and learners' performance guided by designed learning outcomes of a particular course while Mclachlan et al. (2018) see it as a model that comprises a document, school environment, and teachers' decisions in-regard of the instructional process, society ideas as well as external authorities. On the other hand, Saavedra and Steel (2012) consider curriculum to include teaching methodology, class size, learning hours allocation, learning objectives, assessment, and examination practices. In this study, curriculum is defined in line with (Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2019) who describes curriculum as the content knowledge, learning experience, materials, and assessment that learners and teachers engage in to achieve prescribed educational outcomes. This definition of curriculum includes what to teach (content), how to teach (teaching methods to employ during teaching), and how to assess (strategies used to assess learners to check the success of the intentions of curriculum).

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1.9.2 Curriculum Reforms

Curriculum reform is an attempt to review or update the 'content' of knowledge, including its selection, organization, and issues concerning learning (Gilbert, 2010). Others define curriculum reform as a process or product of making curriculum changes to make learning and teaching more meaningful and effective (Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2019; Potter & Wills, 2021). According to these definitions, curriculum reforms upgrade the standard of teaching in the classrooms. Therefore, as used in this study, the curriculum reform definition aligns with (Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2019; Potter & Wills, 2021) who see curriculum reform as the process that brings changes to teaching and learning objectives and strategies to improve knowledge and skills provided at school.

1.9.3 Teaching and Learning

Teaching refers to interactive process between teachers and learners that aims to guide and develop learners (Rajagopalan, 2019). Others define teaching as the process of attending to people's needs, experiences, feelings, and intervening so that they learn a particular thing and go beyond the given time (Hernandez et al., 2023). This study adopted Sequeira, (2012) definition that teaching is an act of imparting instructions to the learners that enable understanding and application of knowledge, skills, and concepts, and it involves design, content selection, delivery, assessment and reflection. The study finds this definition appropriate since it entails almost all aspects of teaching, however, Hernandez et al. s' (2023) definition explains teaching in general fields while other definitions focus on teaching learners. Teaching can also be viewed as activities done to impart knowledge and skills to learners in a classroom.

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Learning is defined as gaining knowledge and skills, understanding through studying, training, practising, and experiencing something (Merriam-Webster n.d) On the other hand, learning is the process that leads to a permanent change as the result of expertise and experiences brought into learners by a teacher, by employing techniques which aim to develop skills, change attitudes or understand specific laws behind any learning environment (Sequeira, 2012). This study describes learning as the cognitive process that leads to change which occurs as the result of experiences; hence potential is increased for improved performance and future learning (Rajagopalan, 2019). The study finds this definition of learning more applicable since it covers most aspects that are involved in learning. However, the study finds similarity in the definitions in that learning is all about gaining and experiencing something in the particular learning setting although Merriam-Webster dictionary lacks setting detail.

Teaching and learning are described as a process in which there is a change of knowledge and application of skills from teachers to learners (Munna & Kalam, 2021). These concepts also refer to the impartation and acquisition of knowledge (Hernandez et al., 2023). These concepts seem to be interactive concepts such that learning is the outcome of teaching. This study finds an alignment in the definitions that teaching and learning entail knowledge development. Munna and Kalam (2021) emphasise that it is not only about knowledge but also skills' acquisition and application. Therefore, this study describes teaching and learning as interactive processes that involve imparting and acquiring knowledge and skills through classroom tasks and experiences.

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1.9.6 Teachers' Perceptions

Scholars have defined perceptions in a wide range of various disciplines. Perceptions are described as the mental processes in which an individual identifies, understands and interprets visual and auditory phenomena in his environment through the sensory systems, and that results in changes in attitudes, behaviour, beliefs and experiences (Montemayor & Haladjian, 2017). Other scholars define perceptions as how humans organise and interpret the information their senses give them to represent and understand the world (Cherry, 2023). Perception is how humans recognise, select, organise, and make sense of the sensory information they receive from environmental stimuli (Neuliep, 2018; Widiastuti, 2017). All the definitions appear to be complementary in that human mind interprets the stimulus detected by the sensory organs in order to understand what surrounds them. The only difference in their definitions is that Montemayor and Haladjian (2017) detail the outcomes as being changes of thoughts, feelings, and practices. In this study, perceptions are seen in line with all the above scholars hence the definitions have been integrated as the mental process in which a human interprets the information he acquires in real life, trying to make sense of the world.

Teachers' Perceptions are explained as the thoughts or mental images teachers have about their professional activities and learners (Papadakis & Kalogiannakis, 2020). In support, teachers' perceptions are described as cognitive, emotional viewpoints, attitudes and beliefs teachers have on their professional roles, practices and working environment (Demirdag & Efe, 2023). This study adopts Demirdag and Efe's (2023) definition of teachers' perceptions as it specifies quite the number of issues that form their perceptions and what is affected in their professionalism. Nevertheless, the definitions complement each other

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in that teachers' perceptions appear to be formed in an individual mind and act upon sensory information it received towards their classroom tasks. It is believed that teachers' perceptions influence their professional behaviour (Papadakis & Kalogiannakis, 2020). Therefore, they are said to be shaped by different factors such as teachers' background knowledge and life experiences (Ungar, 2016). For example, Widiastuti (2017) confirms that perceptions influence teachers' assessment of their learners.

1.9.8 Authentic Assessment (AA)

Authentic refers to something real and genuine that represents the essence of an idea (Harvey, 2022). Authenticity is the actual or genuine application of teaching, learning, and assessment tasks beyond the classroom (Frey et al., 2012). These two explanations of authenticity indicate the practicality of a particular set of ideas. Nonetheless Frey et al. (2021) emphasise the realism of concepts versus practice in classroom settings and beyond while Harvey's (2022) viewpoint is general. In this study, authentic refers to the realism of classroom tasks that align with learners' experiences and what is taught and assessed (Frey et al., 2021). This study seeks to find perceptions and assessment authenticity in the school environment.

Assessment is one of the aspects that could be defined in a wide range by various scholars both in education discipline as well as other fields worldwide. For example, assessment refers to the systematic process used by the teachers to monitor learners' knowledge and skills using realistic data (Hanson et al., 2023). It is seen as gathering and interpreting information about learners' attainment of learning objectives, intending to identify their weaknesses and strengths to provide support (Yambi, 2018). On the other hand,

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Brown and Race (2013) describe it as an integral part of the learning process that frames what learners learn and can achieve. The researcher finds Hanson et al. and Yambi's explanations of this concept inter active even though Yambi further indicates assessment role in teaching and learning. The study finds Brown and Race definition unelaborated. This study defines assessment as a learning practice that judges learners' understanding and attainment of learning objectives, experiences, and outcomes so that a teacher takes action. This definition has been adapted from Hanson et al. and Yambi.

Authentic teaching and assessment (AA) is one of the approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment. One scholar defines AA as a technique which uses creative learning experiences to test learners' skills and knowledge in realistic situations (Gunasekara & Gerts, 2017). Others view AA as a form of assessment in which learners perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills (Mueller (2018). Further, the explanation shows that AA is a technique that captures the constructive way of learning; individuals construct the knowledge and skills and should use the knowledge and skills acquired at school in different contexts (Azam et al., 2012; Frey et al., 2012). Mueller (2018), Azam et al.(2012), and Frey et al.'s (2012) definitions of authentic assessment seem to complement each other, in that AA is an assessment technique that emphasises engagement of real tasks and application of knowledge and skills in real contexts. Contrary, Gunasekara and Gerts include an aspect of creativity and judgement on real performance. Therefore, this study adopts Mueller's (2018), Azam et al.'s (2012), and Frey et al.'s (2012) definitions.

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1.10 Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of using authentic assessment in Lesotho classrooms. This chapter introduced and gave an overview of this study. First, the chapter gave an introduction to the study, presented the background to the study and the statement of the problem. Then research purpose and questions were presented in line with the aim and objectives of this study. The significance of the study has been explained and an overview of the theories that framed this study and the research methodology used has been presented. The chapter concluded with a description of the Key terms, the summary of this chapter, and the outline of the study. The next chapter reports on the related literature reviewed for this study.

1.11 Study Outline

This study is organized into five chapters. **Chapter 1** introduces and gives an overview of this study. **Chapter 2** reports on the literature that was reviewed for this study. This literature includes a theoretical framework, conceptual framework and studies conducted in this research paper. **Chapter 3** describes the methodology that was used to collect and analyse data for this study. **Chapter 4** presents the findings of the study. **Chapter 5** interprets and discusses the findings of this study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of practising authentic assessment in primary schools in Lesotho. The study also looked into how those perceptions influenced teachers' assessment practices. The previous chapter introduced and gave an overview of this study. This chapter reports on the literature that was reviewed for this study. The chapter is structured into three main sections, which are Introduction (this section), Theoretical Framework, Conceptual Framework, Empirical Studies on Authentic Assessment, and Summary.

The use of both theoretical and conceptual frameworks in this study was essential for providing structured and contextualised research arguments. The choice of a theory offered a broad lens to this investigation, thus guided this research by laying out which aspects to consider when investigating teachers' perceptions. On the other hand, the conceptual framework outlines the relationship between the variables of the study (Maxwell, 2013). That is, the conceptual framework allowed me to translate abstract theoretical conceptualisations into more concrete elements that can be measured, thus guide the study's methodology.

According to Creswell (2014), the theoretical framework situates the study in a wider academic context while the conceptual framework narrows the focus to specific variables being investigated. Thus, According to Creswell (2014), use of both theoretical and conceptual frameworks in a dissertation is essential to ensure that the research is grounded in theory while being directly applicable to the research context. The following section

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therefore, is dedicated to the explanation of how Gregory's constructivism theory of perceptions underpinned this study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study was underpinned by Richard Gregory's constructivism theory of perceptions, which was developed in 1970. As a theory of perceptions, this theory played a pivotal role in guiding this research on teachers' perceptions regarding the use of authentic assessment within Lesotho's schools.

2.2.1 The Gregory's Constructive Theory of Perceptions

This theory, also known as the indirect theory of perceptions, proposes that humans construct and understand the world around them by interpreting the information that sensations detect from the environment based on their prior experiences (Burge, 2024; Demuth, 2013). In other words, this theory emphasises that perceptions are highly influenced by experiences rather than sensory input data alone. This suggests that what an individual learns from experience is more significant than their view (Gregory, 1972).

With this theory, perceptions involve the process of hypothesis testing rather than depending on sensory input data alone. For example, the perceptions develop from making intelligent guesses about what humans see based on what could likely be (Demuth, 2013). That is, when a human being sees something new, they use existing knowledge to recall past experiences and infer the meaning of that particular object (Demuth, 2013). If the inference is correct, humans make sense of their perceptions and integrate them with what they already know about that particular object or phenomenon.

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Further, the theory indicates that sometimes human senses are unable to make a complete picture of what they detect and as a result, the mental processes are unable to make sense of an object. For this reason, the brain fills in gaps for what could be perceived by engaging intelligent guesses (Knowledge Hub, 2022). Hence, perceptions could be viewed as an active process and the product of interaction between sensory stimulus, internal hypothesis, expectations, pre-existing knowledge, and context (Demuth, 2013; Knowledge Hub, 2022). Additionally, Gregory's theory points out that humans tend to view their environment and surroundings mostly from the expected perspectives (Gregory, 1972). For instance, if a human expects to see something they know in a particular frame, they are more likely to perceive it according to their expectations rather than on what is they real.

Gregory's theory further advocates that when humans receive information from the senses, they select and focus only on that they consider important, overlooking other aspects of what they see (Gregory, 1972; Neuliep, 2018). These tendencies are called perceptual sets and they involve top-down processing (Cherry, 2023). Perceptual sets insinuates that human tend to see what they want to see and ignore other sensations which can also provide useful information.

Gregory's theory uses a top-down process for perceptions' development. Top-down processing begins with the most general to the specific information about a particular scenario (Burge, 2024). Thus, the theory raises a point that what humans perceive is not objective truth but rather a subjective interpretation of the world around them. As mentioned earlier, the process involves making intelligent guesses based on previous knowledge and sensation interpretations that humans make. The issue of interpretation explains why humans can perceive the same sensory information differently. The interpretations humans make are

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highly influenced by their anticipations, thoughts, and prior knowledge that may include individuals' states of motivation, cultures, emotions, moods, and attitudes (Zigman, 2018).

Thus, humans develop perceptions on two accounts: first on what humans can see right in front of their eyes, involving the sensory data that occurs naturally; and secondly by relating the pre-experiences with the present data, expectations, and practices. They try to make sense of the new phenomena by integrating the new sensory data with the pre-existing knowledge, which could also be driven by their expectations and the contexts in which they work. The view is that humans develop different perceptions of a singular object or situation. For example, people in the same workplace are likely to perceive what they see, or the new data, or their practices differently depending on factors that influence perceptions.

Application of Gregory's constructive theory of perception within this study. As established in the above discussions, Gregory's constructive theory of perception posits that perception is not a passive process but an active one where the mind interprets sensory input based on prior knowledge, expectations, and experiences. To add more, this theory suggests that individuals construct their perceptions from both sensory information and cognitive frameworks, which integrates past experiences and expectations to make sense of the world. In the context of this research, this theory provided a valuable theoretical lens for exploring how teachers in Lesotho's schools interpret, experience, and apply authentic assessment in their classrooms.

This theory was applied to address the following research questions, which explore how teachers perceive, experience, and evaluate the practicality of authentic assessment in educational settings:

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Research Question One: What are teachers' interpretations of authentic assessment? According to Gregory's theory, teachers' interpretations of authentic assessment are shaped by their prior knowledge, experiences, and personal expectations about what assessment entails. In addressing this research question, it was considered that teachers were luckily to interpret the concept of authentic assessment in relation to their educational backgrounds and educational context, including curriculum goals, cultural orientations, and resource availability within their school. For example, teachers might interpret authentic assessment as a method that emphasises real-world activities, problem-solving, application knowledge in practical scenarios.

However, interpreting authentic assessment may vary depending on how much teachers have been exposed to such an assessment method in their previous teaching experiences. If the teachers have been exposed to more traditional, exam based assessments, they may perceive authentic assessment as a difficult form of assessment to implement. Alternatively, if they have been trained in learner centred approaches, they may view authentic assessment as a natural and beneficial form of assessment method.

Research Question Two: What are the Teachers' experiences of Using Authentic Assessment in Lesotho's classrooms? To address this research question with principle considerations of Constructive Theory of Perception, it was considered that teachers' experiences with AA shapes their perceptions of its utility and challenges. That is, their perception might be constructed through interaction with the authentic assessment environments. In this investigation, teachers may have varying experiences with authentic assessment, ranging from full adoption of portfolio assessments, project-based learning, and peer assessments, to minimal exposure to such practices.

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Any teacher who had a challenge with utilising enough education resources may perceive it as impractical, while the teacher who had enough resources at disposal may perceive authentic assessment as a valuable tool for learning. Therefore, addressing the second research question led to careful considerations of teachers' personal and professional experiences; shaped by their environment in which authentic assessment was practiced.

Research Question Three: How Do Teachers' Experiences Influence their views on the practicality of Using authentic assessment in Lesotho schools? According to Gregory's Constructive Theory of perception, individuals' past experiences frame how one views and uses a tool. In the context of this research, teachers' experiences with implementation of authentic assessment would directly influence how they view its practicality in terms of curriculum demands, student needs, and institutional constraints. On the one hand, a teacher who has positive experiences with authentic assessment may interpret it as an effective method. On the other hand, if there was lack of resources for effective implementation of authentic assessment, which presents barriers for a successful implementation, their view of the practicality of authentic assessment may become more sceptical or more cautious.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

In research, the descriptions of the phenomena that are being investigated form part of the conceptual framework. Conceptual framework refers to a model used to synthesise the relationship between phenomena and constructs that include ideas, concepts and theories within the boundaries of the field of the study (Adom et al., 2018). This framework assists researchers in organizing and clarifying concepts and gives the study a direction. The key

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concepts that framed this study are teachers' perceptions and authentic assessment. The descriptions of these concepts form the conceptual framework of this study.

2.3.1 Perceptions

As it has been discussed in the preceding sections, perceptions involve the way humans view the world. This view is influenced by how individuals interpret the information they receive through sensory organs such as hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting (Montamayr & Haladjian, 2017; Maba, 2017). In general, perceptions could be understood as the cognitive processes that include interpretations of the sensory stimuli.

Perception formation. Perceptions are formed by the data humans receive from their different sensory systems about objects or situations that occur in the environment. Other scholars such as Burge (2024) and Neuliep (2018) believe that the formation of perception involves a process of recognising, restructuring, and interpreting sensory information to give meaning to the object or situation. Supporting this view are Leung and Dance-Schissel (2022) who argue that perception formation involves two processes; the process of recognising stimuli and the process of giving meaning to the stimuli which undergo multi-stepped stages namely stimulation, organisation, interpretation, memory and recall. These stages are outlined hereafter.

- **Stimulation Stage:** It involves sensory receptors stimulated by different stimuli (touch, taste, hearing, sight, and smell) in the surroundings. The information received from the stimuli is sent to the brain for processing.
- **Organisation Stage:** At this stage, the brain processes, organises, and groups the information from the stimuli to make meaning.

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- **Interpretation Stage:** This stage involves reframing or showing one's understanding of the received information. The new meaning is recorded and stored in the memory for future use.
- **Recalling Stage:** Past memories are remembered and used as reference to understand the new stimuli better even in the future.

The formation of perceptions seems to be influenced by how human cognition functions (Demuth, 2013). Therefore, the way humans interpret stimuli differ and as a result, they respond differently towards phenomena. For example, some learners may understand concepts and perform tasks differently because of how they perceive the task.

Perceptions and Reality. Perceptions that humans construct usually become their reality (Betancourt, 2018). They usually result in humans behaving in a particular way or developing an attitude towards the phenomenon which they have formed a perception about. For example, Hommel et al. (2016) support this view by pointing out that perceptions do not only create individual experiences of the world but also allow individuals to act in response to the stimuli within their environments. Their observation is that perceptions and actions interweave and are interdependent. For instance, if one perceives that he cannot achieve something in life, the cognitive processes relax, thus generating inadequate effort upon the action and achievement.

Teachers' Perceptions. Concerning teachers, these perceptions can influence how they conceptualise teaching, learning, and assessment. Thus, teachers' perceptions could be viewed as the way teachers comprehend, interpret, and view their profession (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012). Because perceptions can result in a change in attitudes, behaviour, beliefs,

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and experiences, teachers' perceptions can influence how the teachers teach and assess learners (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012). This is supported by Papadakis and Kalogiannakis (2020), Nordiof et al. (2019), and Maba (2017). These scholars point out that teachers' perceptions often influence their responses and behaviour towards issues relating to their profession such as educational policies, teaching and assessment approaches, curriculum reforms, and the value they place on teaching. For example, teachers can develop positive or negative perceptions towards phenomena and their work in general. Their positive perceptions can attract their readiness and commitment to change relating to their profession. Studies indicate that teachers whose perceptions are positive about change tend to accept and align their practices with the proposed reforms (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012). On the other side, negative perceptions become a barrier to the adoption of change and such teachers are likely to project rejections and resistance towards the proposed changes. Thus, poor performance and inefficacy of teachers could be associated with their perceptions (Maba, 2017). To support this, other scholars point out that teachers make decisions on what, when, and how to teach based on their perceptions about their roles, activities, and responsibilities at the workplace (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012).

Factors Influencing Teachers' Perceptions. For example, humans' perceptions are strongly influenced by several factors including past experiences, education, background, expectation, motivation, emotions, motives, culture, values, and context (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012; Maba, 2017). Other influences could be educational policies, school environment, approved tests, learners' behaviour, a drive for learning, communication, home background, and parent and teacher support (Reye-Sokolowsky, 2020). Further, Reye-Sokolowsky (2020) indicates that in the education setting, these factors influence both

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teachers' and learners' determination towards school, performance, thinking, and practices. The teachers' interaction with other teachers, availability of teaching resources, management, infrastructures, relationships and inadequate skills can shape their perceptions (Elmosaad 2024). Further, workload, support, job commitment, unfavourable workplace, and supervision can affect teachers' emotional, interpersonal, and social well-being (Elmosaad, 2024; Masoom, 2021). Other factors that could influence teachers' perceptions are content, learning environment, management and leadership, teachers' perceptions, time, and finance (Nguyeni et al., 2022).

Educational or school factors that appear to influence teachers' perceptions could be classified into learner-related factors, teacher-related factors, and school-related factors.

Learner Related Factors. Learner's performance is influenced by factors such as academic determination of learners, socio-economic and health, knowledge background of learners, and the support learners receive from their families, communities, and schools (Reyes-Sokolowsky, 2020; Maba, 2017). First, teachers may perceive these factors either positively or negatively. Positive factors enhance relationships among learners and teachers which is a good indicator for school development. On the other hand, research indicates that undisciplined learners could influence teacher's negative perceptions towards them and this could also influence teachers' practice (Nakamura-Thomas et al., 2023). For example, misbehaving learners may influence teachers to develop hatred towards them. As a result, the teacher may ill-treat or ignore such learners. This could end up affecting the performance of a school as a whole. One more learner-related factor that can develop teachers' negative perception towards learners is learners' absenteeism (Nakamura-Thomas et al., 2023).

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Teachers might consider these learners not serious about schooling, resulting in decrease of their effort to assist where required.

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Teacher Related Factors. Factors that are teacher-related and are believed to influence teachers' perceptions include teachers' beliefs about their self-efficacy and expectations (Century, 2023). These are described herein:

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Self-efficacy. One aspect that can influence teachers' perceptions could be self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief that they can perform a particular task or a set of goals successfully (Saler & Fritz, 2023). Developing high self-efficacy begins with self-awareness and understanding one's potential. Thus, it boosts individuals' inherent talents abilities, and self-esteem to master a task or accomplish a goal (Saler & Fritz, 2023). The efficacy humans create could be high or low. High self-efficacy could be explained as the state of believing that a difficult task could be mastered under any circumstances. Teachers with high self-efficacy usually feel optimistic about accomplishing a goal (Nakamura-Thomas et al., 2023). This might suggest that teachers with high self-efficacy have good perceptions and they demonstrate dedication and solidarity to their professional work. Apart from that, these teachers are always ready to take on any challenge using all possible knowledge and skills they have acquired. Enhanced self-efficacy develops positivity that promotes resilience, capabilities; training opportunities, work relationship support, competence, and personal responses to workloads and conditions (Reardon et al., 2017). Thus, high efficacy results in reduced burnout, decreased complaints of fatigue, and fosters better mental health outcomes (Nakamura-Thomas et al., 2023). However, teachers can develop low self- efficacy towards their work in general. Low self-efficacy is often associated with the state of doubting self-abilities, which eventually develops an anxiety to perform tasks because they are believed to be too difficult to achieve (Saler & Fritz, 2023). Low self-efficacy and preceded burnouts often lead to negative perceptions, which deteriorate mental well-being, unrealistic expectations, unhealthy relationships, student misconduct, lack of support from school management, and parents' and peers' misunderstanding (Nakamura-Thomas et al., 2023).

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Expectations: Another factor that influence teachers' perceptions is their expectations. Expectations are believes that something has the chance to occur in future (Panitz, 2021). This scholar explains further that expectations influence humans' perceptions, cognition, and behaviour. When teachers have high expectations, the school experiences high achievement (Nakamura-Thomas et al., 2023). These scholars attest that teachers with high expectations release their potential and perform their classroom roles and responsibilities appropriately. This corroborates the view that humans form perceptions from their expectations (Demuth, 2013). For example, they prioritise their tasks; manage their time and are often engaged, offer specific feedback in advance, create more opportunities for learning and practising the skills, and provide positive reinforcement. However, teachers may start their work with extreme enthusiasm, expectations, and positive perceptions towards teaching at the beginning of their profession (Cristina-Corina & Valerica, 2012), which gradually decline because of increasing burnout and school expectations that continue to put more load on them (Maba, 2017). Thus, this burden may cause tension and stress with time, which often deteriorates positive perceptions and significant practices (Panitz, 2021). Eventually, as teachers' expectations become low, the whole school system is affected negatively.

Other factors that influence teachers' perceptions could be teachers' biases towards learners, ability to engage learners in critical thinking, and the way teachers structure learning and assessment (Century, 2023). The teacher-related factors mentioned earlier are believed to influence teachers' professional identity, occupational commitment and performance, and mental well-being such as their socio-emotions, especially self-efficacy (Carrinus et al., 2012).

- *Occupational Commitment and Performance.* Occupational is defined as everyday activities that human engage in to fulfil the purpose of life (Brown, 2023), which is

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normally for an individual to achieve something in life. Teachers who are committed usually have positive perceptions. As a result, they engage in challenging activities, value time and their effort, and celebrate success. When teachers strengthen their commitment to their professional work that can probably result in the increased self-fulfilment and school performance (Huang et al., 2023). Conversely, teachers who are less dedicated to their work become pessimistic of their work.

- *Professional Identity.* Professional identity refers to individuals' attitudes, values, self-image, knowledge, beliefs, and skills within an occupation and experiences of their career potentials (Matthews et al., 2019). Therefore, professional identity could be defined as perceptions individuals have towards their professional occupation. Chere-Masopha (2018) confirms that professional identity influence teachers, way before and during training and throughout their experiences as teachers. Professional identity assists teachers' to develop a better understanding of their work including content-knowledge, expectations, determination and performance (Zhao, 2022). Thus, their perceptions increasingly become positive. It is assumed that teachers who know their identity are usually motivated to advance their self-being and development. Hence, they unfold their potentials for the benefit of learners and the community at large.

- *Mental Well-being* refers to an individual ability to cope with emotions, social, and cognitive aspects of life. Thus, mental well-being influence humans' potentials, creativity, work production, relationships, and their contribution in the community (De Cates et al., 2015). This implies teachers' with positive mental health have a significant impact on their practices which in turn influence classroom performance and learners' well-being (Falecki & Mann, 2021). Studies established that teachers with higher levels motivate and engage learners, are likely to achieve significantly (Chaudhry & Chhajjer, 2023).

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School Related Factors. Factors that are associated with a school that seem to influence teachers' perceptions include school infrastructure, availability and access to resources, school climate, educational school policies, school management, and learning environment.

School Status Infrastructure. The status of the school infrastructure could be explained as the network of school facilities, physical structural resources and equipment that enable teachers and administrators to offer teaching and learning services within the nation's regulatory framework (Shirrell et al., 2018). School infrastructure could include classroom buildings, furnishers, toilet facilities, playgrounds, electricity, clean running water and adequate sanitation (Makhate, 2020; Yangambi, 2023). The limitation or the absence of any of the mentioned school infrastructure components could decrease teachers' determination to perform their tasks because of working in the unfavourable conditions (Shirrell et al., 2018).

Availability and Access to Resources are basic needs for teachers' performance and quality education (Musili, 2015). These resources which are educational include human resources, physical resources and financial resources such as teaching materials supplementary resources, well-trained teachers, textbooks and laboratories, electricity and money (Wicker & Breuer, 2012). The availability of resources and their effective use can provide a positive perceptions between teachers and learners towards and teachers' professionalism (Somba & Otieo, 2018; Savasci & Tumol. 2013). When teachers' perceptions are positive, they get satisfied and therefore they ultimately increase commitment to their work (Maba, 2017). On the other side, the unavailability of learning resources results in the development of negative perceptions.

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- *School Climate.* As part of the school environment, school climate has shown an influence on teachers' perceptions. Aspects that centre around the school climate are the social process and values of the school, the school's premises and support structure, and internal and external factors (Chiriac et al., 2023). A positive school climate has proven to instil positive perceptions amongst teachers which enhances interpersonal interaction within the school. Teachers whose perceptions are positive usually demonstrate significant working conditions, academic achievement, and well-being (Molinari & Grazia, 2021). In contrast negative school climate can also create conflicts, unsettled disputes and low academic achievement.

- *Educational and School Policy.* Teachers' perceptions are also influenced by educational and school policy. Educational policy guides the school towards the achievement of school goals and objectives (Buyukgoze, 2023). Schools that are guided by their policies usually maintain good governance. If policies are imposed on teachers, teachers tend to be reluctant to perform their professional duties unlike if they are actively involved in the development of such policies from the beginning (Buyukgoze, 2023).

- *School Management.* The other school factors that influence teachers' perceptions are school management and supervision (Tuytens & Devos, 2010). If supervision is reliable, teachers' views of the management become good. As a result, teachers perform their duties accordingly, adopt to changes easily, and release their potential. Those who have negative perceptions of school management usually reject administration decisions, become irresponsible, and resist the reforms that are brought forward and this usually ends in unsatisfactory outcomes (Aliningsih & Sofwan, 2015; Tuytens & Devos, 2010).

- *Learning Environment (LE)* research has established that LE practices contribute to teachers' perceptions towards assessment and success in the school setting. LE

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can be defined as a learning space that provides learning opportunities for teaching and learning to take place using different methods like lectures, discussion, and hands of activities (Fraser, 2015). A proper LE should provide physical, workplace, and virtual space, and social and psychological wellness that supports the process of acquiring, developing, and applying knowledge and skills (Rusticus et al., 2023). Again, an appropriate LE should be engaging, active and interactive. In addition, a good LE usually aligns with the goals of an institution and is believed to influence teachers' perceptions positively. Contrarily, uncondusive LE could affect teachers' professionalism and perceptions negatively.

It is believed that if school related factors are maintained well, teachers' could develop good perceptions towards their professional work. As a result, school effectiveness would advance, (Buyukgoze, 2023) and teaching, learning, and assessment intentions be achieved.

It has been explained earlier in this chapter that perceptions influence how teachers perform their classroom duties. It has also been confirmed that teachers' perceptions are highly influenced by schools', learners' and teachers' related forces either positively or negatively. Authentic assessment is one of the integral duties that teachers should engage in as evidence that learning has occurred. Thus, teachers' perceptions can influence how they view and implement AA. Thus, teachers can accept or reject practices of authentic assessment under the influence of their perceptions. This study anticipates that teachers' views, understandings, and experiences of AA differ globally and that their perceptions can be either constructive or pessimistic

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2.3.1 Authentic Assessment (AA)

Many scholars have attempted to define authentic assessment. However, there is still no universally accepted definition of this concept. For example, others describe authentic assessment as an evaluative strategy that examines whether learners' knowledge and skills are true to life, relevant and applicable in real-life situations (Moria et al., 2018). They claim that teachers who use this strategy use relevant tasks and resources to make this type of judgement. Some studies hold relatively a similar view that AA is an assessment technique that uses creative learning experiences to test learners' skills and knowledge in practical situations (Gunasekara & Gerts, 2017). Again, authentic assessment is viewed as the type of assessment that enhances learners' practices, academic performance and measurements of teachers' potential to provide integration between theory and practice (Ozan, 2018). Thus, AA could be described as an approach to assessment that measures and determines the level of learners' proficiency of defined knowledge and skills that also incorporates learning within the real-world environment (Gulliker, et al., 2014; Winarso, 2018). In this study, authentic assessment is understood as an assessment strategy that actively engages learners. Teachers employ this approach to check that learners' knowledge and skills are constructive and practised in relevant scenarios. Authentic assessment is an approach that supports classroom instructions, collects evidence from multiple tasks, and reflects its value and relevancy to reality (Frey et al., 2012).

Apart from that, Frey et al. (2012) also designed a model to explain AA attributes. In this model (see Figure 2.1) Frey et al. (2012) indicate that AA can be viewed in three categories which are Assessment, Student roles, and scoring

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1) *Assessment*: This model describes authentic assessment as contextual, complex and realistic. According to this model, authentic assessment should deliver a clear set of objectives in real scenarios; assessment tasks should be performed in a real setting. Authentic assessment should aim to promote higher-order thinking skills, including critical and logical thinking, creativity, analysing, and synthesising skills. Besides that AA should provide individuals with opportunities to perform tasks and it should encourage collaborative teamwork in both physical and social contexts. Further, authentic assessment requires high cognition intelligence because of its nature. Also, with authentic assessment, the tasks are often engaging, contextualised, and enable the application of knowledge and skills. Learners who are engaged in learning tasks that are authentic usually become self-regulative.

2) *Student roles*: Learners' assessment is highly valued in this assessment approach. This assessment should grant learners an opportunity to work together and to inform themselves about the process and progress of what they have constructed so that they can justify their products. For example, learners should work together to perform learning tasks to produce something that will indicate that learning has taken place. In this assessment, learners' performance should be treated with just, without displaying any unfavouritism. Teachers should choose appropriate methods that suits learners' individual interests. Again, teachers should treat assessment processes and outcomes equally for quality results. In addition, AA can identify learners' weaknesses and strengths which should be remedied and reinforced equally.

3) *Scoring*: In this assessment, learners' performance is graded and scored collectively. This assessment approach encourages the use of self-assessment, assessment criteria, and subjective scoring systems. The scoring criteria are used to judge learners'

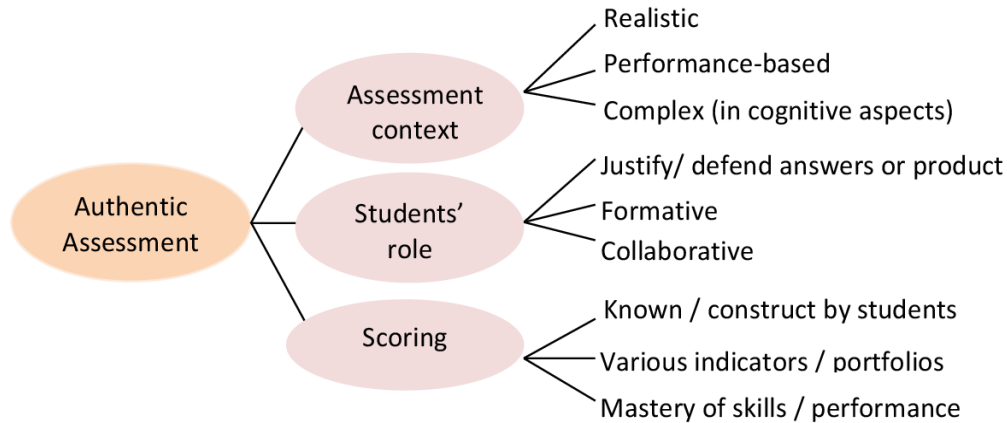
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mastery of skills in the process and on the product they created. Therefore, scoring and grading are done based on learners' performance and a product created. For example, learners' academic performance is categorised into advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic levels.

Because scoring AA could be subjective and require pre-determined standards for judging the learners' performance for accuracy, validity, and reliability, it is important that teachers or assessors develop scoring rubrics (Yusri et al., 2019). The rubric should explicitly describe the criteria that a teacher or an assessor should use to evaluate the level of achievement of learning outcomes. A well-developed assessment-scoring rubrics can effectively measure the psychomotor aspects of learners' competence (Nathan et al., 2017). This means that the scoring rubrics should provide detailed criteria for assessing and measuring learners' work on the given tasks. The criteria for each performance level should precisely describe the skills and proficiency a learner is expected to demonstrate at that particular level (Goodwin & Kirkpartricks, 2023). This suggests that when developing assessment criteria for the end product, teachers should engage learners by informing them what is expected of them. In this way, learners are likely become motivated to perform to their best in their attempt to achieve the criteria. Again, AA encourages immediate feedback and regular self-reflection.

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Figure 2.1: Characteristics of authentic assessment



Authentic Assessment Strategies. Many assessment strategies are associated with authentic assessment. According to Villarroel et al. (2018) these strategies could be classified into performance-based assessment strategies and task -based assessment strategies.

Performance-based Assessment Strategies (PBAS). Performance-based-assessment strategies measure learners' knowledge skills, and competencies that are acquired in the process of learning (Maier et al., 2020). Performance-based strategies include debate, presentations, assessment portfolios, learning projects, performing arts, exhibitions, and fairs (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). These authentic assessment strategies require learners' high level of understanding of concepts. The assessments based on these strategies are subjective, product-orientated, complex, and time-bound in nature (Moria et al., 2018). They create opportunities for learners to apply, create, analyse, and synthesise concepts. One more benefit of PBAS is that by being actively engaged, learners absorb and comprehend the concepts at a much deeper level while developing their competences at the same time (Maier, et al., 2020). Again, performance-based strategies are believed to be good at integrating two or more concepts.

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Task-based Assessment Strategies (TBAS). Task-based assessment strategy is a type of assessment that emphasises learners' ability to use language in real-life situations (Moria et al., 2018). Moria et al. (2018) suggest that it involves some kind of communication performance. This class of strategies often requires learners to demonstrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills during classroom activities and beyond (Villarroel et al., 2018). For example, they can require learners to write assignments, case studies, and essay questions, write and keep journals, organise and conduct interviews and conference, develop portfolios, observe and prepare reports, and self or peer assess (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). However, Wigglesworth and Frost (2017) indicate that these strategies are alternatives to performance-based assessment. The next section reviews related studies on authentic assessment.

2.4 Studies on Teachers' Perceptions of Using Authentic Assessment

There has been a growing research interest in authentic assessment. Many studies have investigated this phenomenon from different angles that include 1) teachers' interpretation of authentic assessment; 2) factors influencing the successful practice of authentic assessment; 3) teachers' experiences of using authentic assessment; and 4) the influence of teachers' experiences on their perceptions of implementing authentic assessment.

2.4.1 Teachers' Interpretations of Authentic Assessment

Studies that have investigated teachers' interpretation of authentic assessment include Trisanti (2014), Nazli (2021), and Frey et al. (2021). The studies used qualitative methods such as observation and interviews to generate data. The findings by these studies established that teachers' understanding of authentic assessment is associated with the use of rubrics and

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their knowledge and skills relating to authentic assessment. These studies indicated that teachers' understanding of AA is contextual and generally, teachers had limited knowledge of AA.

Trisanti (2014) and Nazli (2021) conducted the studies in Indonesia to explore teachers' understanding of authentic assessment, to identify AA strategies that could be applied, and to determine how teachers implement this strategy. Trisanti's (2024) study established that the concept of authentic assessment seemed very new to teachers. However, teachers linked authentic assessment to a grading device 'rubrics' that is used to guide teachers to score learners' performance without being biased. However, the study confirmed they had difficulty to design the rubrics. The use of rubrics indicated that teachers might have been using AA approach in their classrooms without being aware. Another study conducted by Nazli (2021) established that teachers understood AA as one of the most significant forms of assessment that reflects learners' assessment, achievement, motivation and behaviours in classroom activities. Frey et al.'s (2012) study reviewed scholarly research articles from different levels of education, schools, and areas in the United States to describe how teachers' interpret authentic assessment. The findings indicated that teachers understood authentic assessment as a strategy that requires a learner to create a relationship between school life and the real world.

They also interpreted AA as an approach in which learners should be aware of their abilities thus, encouraging their selves-knowledge. Therefore, teachers should engage learners in tasks that can allow them to judge learners' potential in the classroom.

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2.4.2 Factors Influencing Successful Practice of Authentic Assessment Strategies.

A group of studies that investigated factors influencing the successful application of AA include Hu and Liu (2023), Nugrahera et al. (2020), Azim and Khan (2012), Kankam et al. (2014), Butarbutar and Saragih (2018), and Moria et al. (2018).

Hu and Liu (2023) investigated the requirements of AA and its application to enhance English language use in China. The findings were that designing authentic tasks and rubrics could enhance the comprehension of language proficiency. Teachers in this study further reported that tasks, particularly based on the teaching content, objectives, and assessment strategies enhanced English Foreign Language (EFL) authenticity. Similar findings were revealed by Nugrahera et al. (2020) who also investigated English teachers on factors affecting the implementation of AA in Indonesia. The findings established that teachers' good determination to use AA principles including proper production and application of rubrics affect their practices of authentic assessment positively. For example, teachers' revealed that their efforts to fulfil the principles and criteria of authentic assessment including knowledge of the concepts, proper assessment preparation, developing performance tasks, and the use of proper teaching resources have a good influence on the proper implementation of AA. In the similar vein, Frey et al.'s (2021) findings affirmed that the mastery of AA and reflective feedback contributed to the success of AA implementation. This suggests that if teachers comply with AA principles and show commitment, the use of AA could be achieved in schools.

Another study was by Azim and Khan (2012) who examined the process of implementation of AA as a tool to enhance learning in Pakistan. The study confirms that active engagement in planning and using rubrics were found significant for both teachers and

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learners to obtain desirable outcomes. The findings further revealed that desirable perceptions and practices of both teachers and learners contributed to the success of AA practices. That teachers and learners' involvement and perceptions are influential to effective practices of AA which aligns with Kankam et al. (2014). In general and according to these studies, AA requires knowledge of rubrics, positive perceptions, determination, and proper preparation to achieve its implementation.

The findings by Nugraheni et al. (2020), Hu and Liu (2023) and Azim and Khan (2012) are relatively similar on that teachers' knowledge of AA principles is essential for AA application. Nonetheless, the studies used different approaches and methods in different contexts to generate data. Distinctively, Nugraheni et al.'s (2020) study went quantitatively with the use of observation, questionnaires and SPSS for data generation. Hu and Liu (2023) used experimental and interviews while Azim and Khan (2012) utilised observation and interviews to generate data.

The Indonesians, Butarbutar and Saragih (2018) and Moria et al. (2018) further investigated factors that influence successful implementation of AA. For example, Butarbutar and Saragih (2018) studied how AA was supported using observation, questionnaire, documentaries, and interviews. The findings indicate that the way teachers packaged assignments and understand learners' personalities supported the success of the implementation of AA. Hence, teachers in Butarbutar and Saragih's (2018) study indicated that learners' characteristics influence the implementation of AA.

A study by Moria et al. (2018) that focused on how teachers perceived and applied authentic assessment model for writing skills used an observation and a survey as methods of

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data generation. The study revealed that authentic assessment model could be used to enhance learners' writing skills and well-prepared teachers can influence the effective use of AA. Teachers emphasised that AA model that suits their needs is significant to enhance the successful implementation of AA in the classroom. These findings are supported by Nugraheni et al. (2020) who further discovered that teachers' needs are mostly driven by their attitudes and beliefs. Teachers' attitudes was found to have a significant influence on the successful implementation of AA. The findings suggest that teachers' perceptions, use of AA guides and templates, or models, can promote teachers' competence to present and utilise AA principles. Thus, it was also found that classroom performance could also promote the success of AA practices.

The findings of the aforementioned studies affirm that multiple factors including planning, perceptions, learners' personality, teachers' competence, and knowledge of AA principles influence the successful implementation of AA. For example, Hu and Liu (2023), Moria et al. (2018), and Nugraheni et al. (2020) emphasise that successful use of AA requires teacher's full preparedness, determination, and commitment, knowledge and mastery of AA principles including rubrics and strategies. On similar line, Azim and Khan (2012) have observed that perceptions and dedication have a positive influence on achieving AA. Nugraheni et al. (2020) study confirmed teachers' attitudes to affect the use of AA that makes it different from other studies.

Butarbutar and Saragih (2018) findings demonstrated a distinctive influence from other studies. The established that learners' nature and their perceptions also contribute to the successful application of AA which could be agreed upon. This was further supported by Azim and Khan (2012) that teachers should know their learners' characteristics. For example,

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it was discovered that some learners who are often eager to gain more knowledge are usually driven by their characteristics. Conversely, it was indicated that some characters are likely to invite negativity towards the practice of AA which might lead to unsuccessful application of AA. Further, Butarbutar and Saragih (2018) attested that teachers' support of the implementation of AA could lead to its effective use.

2.4.3 Teachers' Experiences of Practising Authentic Assessment

In this section, the findings from related studies to teachers' experiences are presented as: strategies teachers used for authentic assessment, benefits and opportunities of authentic assessment experienced by teachers, and teachers' experiences on the challenges of authentic assessment in the classroom.

Strategies Teachers Use for Authentic Assessment. The studies that explored the experiences of teachers in the practice of authentic assessment strategies include Zoubi (2024) and Ukashatu et al. (2021). Their findings indicate that teachers have knowledge of authentic assessment even though some strategies take preference over others.

Using a questionnaire, Zoubi (2024) examined authentic assessment strategies and tools used by English language teacher and the degree to which those strategies were used in Jordan schools. The use of about 23 forms of strategies were examined in this study. These forms were categorised into five AA strategies. For example, 1) performance-based; presentation, performance, demonstration, speech, simulation, role play, debate, and exhibition, 2) pencil and paper; quizzes, worksheets, tests, open-ended answer, problem-solving, 3) observation; random and systematic observation, 4) communication; conference, interview, and question and answer, and 5) self-reflection; peer and self-assessment, journal,

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portfolio and projects. The assessment tools that were examined included learning log, rubrics, rating-scales, anecdotal records, and checklists. The findings that emerged from this study revealed that teachers use all strategies but they vary in degree of use. The pencil and paper strategies were commonly used more than other strategies while performance-based and communication were moderately preferred. Observation and reflection assessment were used at the low degree. In general, the report established that the degree of teachers using authentic assessment strategies was moderate.

Similarly, Ukashatu et al. (2021) explored the use of authentic assessment strategies. The strategies included performance assessment, project assessment, portfolio assessment, and written assessment; oral writing story or test retelling, writing samples, teacher observation. The findings established that using a variety of strategies secures learners' general performance especially when teachers use them progressively in different contexts. The study further revealed that implementation of AA strategies required teachers to display competence. Thus, proper training for the use of AA was recommended. In a similar way, Nazli (2021) indicated performance assessment, portfolio assessment, and project assessment as the most feasible AA strategies for teachers to use and assist learners to apply knowledge and skills in real life setting.

In summary, Ukashatu et al. (2021) revealed that teachers were determined to use AA strategies because of the benefiting experiences they gained from those strategies. According to Zoubi's (2024) study, teachers use AA strategies modestly.

Teachers' Perceptions on the Benefits and Opportunities of Using Authentic Assessment. Studies that have been reviewed included Sokhanvar et al. (2021), Mohamed

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and Lebar (2021), Koh et al. (2019), Wahyuni et al. (2020), and Ozan (2019). According to these studies, AA practices mostly create opportunities for learners than teachers. Therefore, most studies focused on the benefits related to learners.

Sokhanvar et al. (2021) investigated the benefits and opportunities of practising AA in Iran. Teachers in this study indicated that when they use AA, learners' experiences are enhanced through learning engagement. Hence, the findings revealed that educational goals could be achieved with the use of AA. Another opportunity teachers indicated was that learners are equipped with essential skills such as problem-solving, self-awareness, critical thinking, communication skills, and self-confidence in their present and future scenarios. The study carried out by Mohamed and Lebar (2021) in Indonesia shared similar findings. They established that teachers have observed an improvement in learners' cognitive ability and high order skills such as logical and critical thinking. The study further attest that this assessment approach promotes learners' systematic thinking which enable them to solve problems that require them to investigate or collect information needed to create and evaluate their products.

The other study conducted by Koh et al. (2019) investigated the role of authentic assessment activities in problem-based learning in Canada. According to this study, student teachers believed that engaging activities provide an opportunity for learners to take ownership of their learning, to reflect on their learning, and to self-assess their progress. The findings also indicate that teachers believed that AA could motivate active learning and persistence on complex tasks and assist learners to develop professional competency. According to the findings by Villarroel et al.'s (2018) study, teachers were of the view that AA creates learning and assessment opportunities for learners to interact with the

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environment, perform tasks independently, and create products. Murthy et al. (2017) also established that AA practices promote learners' ability to judge the quality of their work, discern good performance, judge their own performance, and regulate their learning. The findings suggest that learners whom are assessed authentically are likely to improve learning performance and overcome life challenges in general.

Wahyuni et al. (2020) affirmed that teachers view this assessment approach valuable since it allows them to assess learners' knowledge and proficiency in a more meaningful and relevant manner. The study also established that AA provides accurate information about learners' academic progress. The findings further demonstrated that teachers' knowledge of learners' academic performance assist them to make decisions about their teaching and the right choice of strategies and activities to employ. In support, Wahyuni et al. (2021) established that teachers' positive perceptions of AA were linked with increased development of learners' cognitive abilities and psychomotor skills, and academic performance in teaching. The findings also indicates that AA creates opportunities for learners to develop their competence to the maximum. Ozan (2019) conducted the study in Turkey to explore the effects of practicing AA in teaching and learning using mixed method. The findings reported that teachers observed an improvement in learners' academic performance and increased positivity towards learning. In general, the findings confirm that the use of AA is beneficial for both teachers and learners. Mohamed and Lebar (2021), Sokhanvar et al. (2021), and Ozan (2019) findings on the benefits and opportunities of AA concur that AA promotes skills development and academic performance. Apart from that, Koh et al. (2019) further indicate that AA promotes working on tasks independently; that is taking ownership of individual work. Equally, Murthy et al. (2017) study established that AA encourages team working.

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Wahyuni et al.'s (2020) study indicated that AA practices assist teachers to make decision about learners' performance.

Teachers' Perceptions on the Challenges of Practicing Authentic Assessment.

The related studies to challenges experienced by teachers included Ridwan et al. (2023), Khairiyah (2019), and Saputra et al. (2019) Aziz et al. (2020) Aliningsih and Sofwan (2015) Huang and Jaing (2020). The challenges established by these studies towards ineffective practices of authentic assessment were mostly related to the nature of AA which made it difficult for teachers to implement it.

Ridwan et al. (2023), Khairiyah (2019), and Saputra et al. (2019) used qualitative approach to explore the challenges encountered by teachers when implementing AA in Indonesia. Ridwan et al. (2023) focused on the problems teachers encounter in preparing authentic tasks, developing assessment, and using scoring rubrics criteria. The findings indicated that teachers' problems with implementing AA emanated from of the issues of authenticity. The findings also revealed that problems identified by teachers were a lack of knowledge of the attributes of authenticity, a lack of learners' vocabulary mastery, a difficulty for teachers to assign appropriate tasks in response to learners, teachers' lack of confidence and time limitations. Besides, Ridwan et al. (2023) also found that teachers did not apply a scoring procedure in assessing learner. As a result, learners did not know how they were assessed. The related findings that emerged from Ayu's (2021) study indicated that the scoring systems used in AA was also impractical when the number of learners was large.

These findings were supported by Khairiyah (2019) who explored teachers' problems of the teachers in teaching and assessing speaking authentically. The findings established that

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teachers' practices towards authentic assessment lacked the standard of authenticity. Hence, teachers in this study indicated that time to administer assessment tasks, improper use of rubrics and teachers' mind-set of rubrics, being unable to access authentic assessment guidance books and training, lack of assessment procedures, and providing irrelevant tasks to authentic assessment hindered the effective use of authentic assessment. Aliningsih and Sofwan's (2015) study shared similar findings that teachers do not apply AA properly because they cannot put authentic assessment principles in to practice. Generally, the study reviewed have established that most teachers are challenged to practice because of limited knowledge and application of AA principles.

Saputra et al. (2019) confirmed that teachers experienced some challenges related to both teachers' and learners' issues that included large numbers and their proficient level, time and effort-consuming assessment, validity issues, reliability, resource administration, evident transformation, and maintaining subjection in the practice of authentic assessment. Murthy et al. (2017) had similar findings that time constraints, learner resistance, crowded classrooms, unavailability of resources, and complicated administration inhibit effective AA practices. Ridwan et al. (2023) shared similar findings with Saputra et al. (2019) that learners' characteristics such as passiveness and fewer responsibilities also hindered teachers from applying AA.

In the same way, Aziz et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study in Malaysia which focused on the challenges encountered by teachers in preparing for AA. The report indicated that teachers encounter difficulty in preparing authentic lessons because they had no clear guiding principles on how to use it, lack of support, burdening teaching hours, and devastating assessment documents. This is supported by Huang and Jaing (2020) findings on

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teachers' perceptions in China. The report indicates that teachers' demonstrated reluctance to engage in AA tasks. This resulted from high-stake assessment instructions, scarce resources and exhausting tasks, teachers' competence and conceptions they have about learners' capabilities. This was further supported by Aliningsih and Sofwan (2015) whose findings established that teachers' tend to perform teaching and assessment tasks that are simple and achievable as they avoid applying some assessment practices that can become burdens on them.

The findings by Saputra et al. (2019), Ridwan et al. (2023), Khairiyah (2019), and Aziz et al. (2020) on the challenges of AA as experienced by teachers seem to align. Their findings indicate that teachers' problems with implementing AA emanate from the characteristics of authenticity that teachers find it difficult to apply AA. Although these studies used different methods to generate data, they shared similar findings that AA principles inhabit its proper implementation. Remarkably, all studies conducted in Indonesia used similar methods for generating data, except by Ridwan et al. (2023) who also included documentary. Equally, the study by Aziz et al. (2020) used observation and interviews only to generate data in Malaysia. All these studies utilized thematic approach to analyse data.

2.4.4 The Influence of Teachers' Experiences on Their Views of Practicing Authentic Assessment

Scholars such as Kankam et al. (2014), Asante (2023), Adawiyah (2023), Ozan (2019), Aziz et al. (2020) and Alfian and Wiyayati (2022) established the influence of teachers' experiences on their views of using AA. This section also indicates the gap in this study.

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Studies conducted in Ghana include Kankam et al. (2014) and Asante (2023). These studies sought to find out teachers' perceptions, knowledge and practices of the AA techniques. Kankam et al. (2014) focused on Social studies teachers' perceptions using documentary and interviews in data generation. This study established that the use of AA in Social Studies classroom improved learners' performance. Hence, teachers became optimistic of AA practices. They believed that authentic assessment provided significant information about their teaching and learners' achievement. Teachers used the information to improve teaching and learning, although it could increase the workload. Along similar line, Asante (2023) indicated that teachers believed that they were conversant in applying AA practices because what they practice in the classroom showed relevance with the real life scenarios. Conversely, the findings that emerged from this study revealed that if teachers are not conversant in applying AA, classroom academic performance is usually affected negatively.

Other studies indicating that teachers demonstrated positive perceptions of practicing AA include Ozan (2019), Adawiyah (2023) and Aziz et al. (2020). Ozan (2019) used mixed method to investigate the effect of authentic assessment teachers' attitudes towards academic achievement and their opinions on AA in Turkey. The study reported that teachers' enthusiasm of AA promoted their academic achievement and attitudes towards AA practices. Adawiyah's (2023) study also revealed that teachers with positive perceptions had good competency, engage complex assessments, provide feedback in advance, and engaged learners in authentic tasks. Likewise, the study conducted by Aziz et al. (2020) showed that because of the significant experiences of AA in the classroom, teachers with positive opinions of AA increased their attitudes towards AA strategies. Besides, the findings maintained that teachers who are optimistic about using AA usually design and provide

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activities that force learners to demonstrate their ability and skills on the real-world context, meet their expectations for 21st-century skills, and the needs of the people.

Alfian and Wiyayati (2022) also conducted the study in Indonesia and found that teachers had different views about using AA. Because teachers in this study had the knowledge of AA that its practices are helpful, they had positive attitudes that AA can promote teaching, assessment, and school performance. Those who had negative attitudes stated that AA is demanding, therefore, they preferred using traditional assessment approach. Nonetheless, teachers valued the implementation of AA irrespective of the challenges they encounter.

In general, the reviewed studies revealed that teachers' views of authentic assessment differ. It was reported that teachers whose views of authentic assessment were positive made attempts to practice it effectively. Thus, teachers began to choose tasks and strategies that closely mirror the real-world, incorporate learners' engagement, and activate learners' interests by providing relevant activities. It was also established that other teachers were pessimistic about the use of AA.

Study Gap. Different scholars have investigated the concepts of perceptions of authentic assessment in different angles using different methods. However, studies that addressed the phenomenon under this study using similar methods to generate data were not located. Even so, studies conducted in Lesotho do not document teachers' perceptions of practicing authentic assessment as observed by the researcher. For example, the studies that were located investigated how postgraduate student teachers used authentic learning and assessment in the instructional designs (Chere-Masopha & Sebatane, 2018). Other studies

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explored alignment between teaching and assessment strategies (Letele et al., 2013); instructional and assessment strategies employed in integrated curriculum (Ralebese, 2018); teachers' experiences of using portfolio for teaching, learning and assessment (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2021), and teachers' application of formative assessment on curriculum (Lesitsi, 2022). My study investigated teachers' perceptions on practising authentic assessment in Lesotho primary schools using focused groups and interviews.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has reported on the literature reviewed for this study. The literature included a theoretical framework underpinning the study, namely Gibson direct theory and Gregory Constructivism theory. These theories advocate that knowledge exists and waits for human beings to discover through interaction with their environment. The chapter also described the main concepts of this study, which are teachers' perceptions, and authentic assessment. This chapter also presented and discussed studies on authentic assessment that were reviewed for this study. In the next chapter, the methodology that was used to collect and analyse the data of this study is described.

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Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of teachers on using authentic assessment. The previous chapter (Chapter 2) reviewed related literature, focusing mainly on the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and the existing studies on authentic assessment. This chapter, Chapter 3, describes the methodology that was used to investigate teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment practices in Lesotho classrooms. This chapter also describes the research orientation, research designs, population and selection of participants, methods and instruments of data generation, piloting, data generation procedure, methods for data analysis, and ethical consideration, and outlined the summary of the study.

3.2. Research Approach

This study adopted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research approach produces profound insights into actual problems by investigating participants' perceptions, experiences, attitudes, and behaviour (Tenny & Brannan, 2022). As Creswell (2013) viewed, a qualitative approach explores and describes phenomena under inquiry and how people experience, perceive, and understand the world. Further, this approach responds to open-ended questions. Mainly, it investigates how people make sense, or interpret the phenomenon, or assign meaning to events or objects. It asks questions that require answers that explain phenomena that are difficult to measure (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016; Tenny & Brannan, 2022). Because this approach constitutes studying things in their natural settings, it can generate new ideas for research (Rakotsoane, 2018).

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Due to the benefits associated with qualitative research as discussed in the above paragraphs, it is considered appropriate to associate the current study with qualitative research as it aimed at investigating teachers' perceptions of AA. That is, the study aimed at gathering teachers' views and experiences concerning the use of AA in schools, which are non-quantifiable variables that underpinned the results that emanated from this research (Creswell, 2013).

3.3 Research Orientation

This section describes the philosophical perspectives which framed this study. The qualitative research approach used in this study is grounded in constructive perspectives and the interpretive epistemological philosophy that seek to deepen humans' knowledge, experiences, and beliefs by interpreting the world around us. These are described hereafter:

Paradigm: Constructivism

A research paradigm that oriented this study is constructivism. This paradigm was framed from interpretivism philosophy. A research paradigm is a set of shared beliefs and agreements regarding how problems should be understood and addressed (Elsami, 2013). In research, the paradigm assists researchers to understand and articulate beliefs, opinions, and attitudes about the phenomenon and what can be known about them. A paradigm further helps researchers to perceive reality and find answers to research questions.

The most common paradigms are positivism, pragmatism, and interpretivism. Positivists (those who ascribe to positivism) believe in a single truth and that the only valid knowledge lies in facts and evidence that can be observed and measured (Ugwu et al., 2021). They seek for the cause-effect relationships between the variables (Kivunja & Kivunja,

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2017). Hence, the studies that believe in this paradigm use a quantitative approach that provides empirical evidence for the results (Ugwu et al., 2021). These studies utilise surveys, questionnaires, experiments, and documents to generate statistical data. Interpretivists or constructivists (those who subscribe to interpretivism or constructivism) believe in multiple truths. They attach meaning to any scenario being investigated. Since the studies that subscribe to this paradigm seek to find reasons behind a problem, they use qualitative research methods such as interviews, case studies, focus groups, and observation to generate data (Ugwu et al., 2021). On the other hand, pragmatists (pragmatism followers) believe that reality is unpredictable and continuously interpreted regarding the disparity of the scenarios. They believe that the value of knowledge depends on the practical application (Kivunja & Kivunja, 2017). This paradigm uses both qualitative and quantitative research approaches to generate data. These approaches are associated with empirical interviews, surveys, observations, and experiments

This study is situated in the constructivism paradigm. Thus, constructivists believe that individuals create knowledge through their experiences, beliefs, active participation, and reflection on those experiences. Further, individuals interact with each other in the social context and, therefore, construct different meanings to different phenomena (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Constructivists seek to understand phenomena through the perceptions of people under investigation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). They believe humans do not receive imprints of objects or facts but interpret these through individualised perception schemas. This research paradigm often uses interviews, focus groups, and observation instruments to generate qualitative data. The study found this paradigm suitable for this study that sought to understand the perceptions attached to classroom assessment practices.

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Research Epistemology: Interpretive Epistemological Perspective. This study was influenced by interpretive philosophy. Interpretive is one components of paradigm. Interpretive philosophy is based on the views of the relativists who believe in multiple realities. Interpretivists (relativists) believe that there is nothing like absolute truth. Rather, multiple truths exist and are constructed by individuals who try to understand their realities (Furlong, 2013). The interpretivists believe that, as people interact with their environment through their senses, they create their interpretations of truth and reality (Eshafie, 2013). For example, Elsami (2013) explains that, since the existence of truth is constructed in people's minds, individuals can interpret the same phenomenon differently and hold different realities. Thus, to the interpretivists, truth and reality are subjective and vary from one individual's perception to another. According to Eusafzai (2014), individual's perception of reality is influenced by conscience originating from social, cultural, ideological, and environmental influences. Thus, when this study investigated teachers' perceptions, it sought to find true answers to their perceptions on the practices of authentic assessment.

3.4 Research Design

This study used a phenomenological case study to investigate teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment practices in Lesotho schools. Research design is a framework that explains methods, procedures used to generate and analyse data (Hilsen & Olsen, 2021). It provides a specific direction towards achieving the aim and objectives of the study and answering research problem (Creswell, 2014). The qualitative research designs include:

- Action research that seeks to solve practical problems (Powar, 2021);
- Ethnographic design that describes, analyses, and interprets cultural-based scenarios (Powar, 2021);

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- Grounded theory that explains a particular phenomenon such as incidents. It also allows for theory development (Kabir, 2016);
- Phenomenological case study that requires a comprehensive investigation about humans' experiences and enable data generation in the actual context of the phenomena (Creswell, 2014);
- A historical study that involves a wide examination of past occurrences, meanings, and documents to integrate past data that would allow future predictions and establish facts that can defend or refute a hypothesis (Rakotsoane, 2018). Here, people's past are examined in depth.

The phenomenological case study research design was found appropriate for this study because, as insinuated in the main objective of the study, this study sought to examine the diverse human experiences and perceptions in the real life context (Taherdoost, 2021). This design studies peoples' lived experiences and aims to obtain data on how humans perceive scenarios (Patton, 2002). Also, this design allows data generation in the real context where the phenomena is practised (Cresswell, 2014). It helps obtain information concerning the phenomena when much is unknown (Rakotsoane, 2018). The design is also popular for its flexible activities that allow description of the formation of the phenomena accurately. Furthermore, this design usually uncovers the underlying meanings of individuals' experiences, how they experienced them, and the implications of the problem under study (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Cresswell, 2014). Phenomenological case study design acknowledges that a researcher comes to the field already holding pre-existing beliefs about the phenomenon. As such, when using this design, caution should be taken during data generation and analysis to avoid biased interpretation of data. The design involves methods such as interviews, conversations with participants, observation, focus meetings, and action

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research (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022; Patton, 2002). The study finds this design helpful to obtain how teachers' perceive authentic assessment practices.

3.5 Population and Participants' Selection

This section describes the population and participants selected to generate data of this study. Population in research refers to individuals or elements that share a common characteristics (Thacker, 2019). This could include geographic location of school where data was generated and people who participated in the study. Reflexive method of selection of participants was used for this study to uncover teachers' practises of the phenomenon under investigation. These are described hereafter.

School Selection and Description. The school from where data was generated is located in the Mophales' Hoek district in the southern region of Lesotho. There are 1478 primary schools in Lesotho. This school was selected amongst 169 primary schools in the district. The participants in this study were selected from one primary school in the lowlands of Mophales' Hoek. Since this is a case study, this school was found suitable to generate insightful data. Besides, having working experiences in this school, there is the increased knowledge of teachers working in this school. Therefore, it is believed that real perceptions and practices of teachers can be obtained from this school.

The school in which data was generated is owned by an Anglican Church (ACL) offering foundation phase education from Grades 1 to 7. Seven subjects including Sesotho, English, Mathematics, Science, Personal Social and Spiritual, Art, and Life skills are provided. The school has two blocks of buildings. There are four classrooms in an old block and three in the new block. Altogether, there are seven classrooms in this school. Generally, the schools' infrastructure is poor with limited facilities and resources. As a result, most

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learners who attend this school are vulnerable and poor, and come to school with inadequate stationary for learning. Usually, learners' roll in this school ranges from 460 to 500 with an overall of 14 teachers. Teacher to learner ratio in this school is usually one 1 to 40.

Selection of Participants. Reflexive technique was used to select the participants of this study. Reflexive selection technique selects participants from the perspective of researchers' reflective practices (Patnaik, 2013). The reflexive practices include self-knowledge and that of the research setting to acknowledge the influences of views, context, and experiences to generate in-depth data (Green & Thorogood, 2014). This suggests it was vital to self-introspect experiences and understanding the context, research questions and objectives, and theoretical framework of the study before and during data generation.

This technique also emphasises a purposive selection which allowed refinement of participants to yield rich data and insights into the phenomenon being investigated. The selection included positioning the researcher into the research context and judging participants practices especially their determinations and potentials that they would assist to generate required data. This selection method of the participants was basically driven by the insights and understanding of the phenomena under inquiry to select the right participants.

Since, this is a phenomenological study which used reflexive method to recruit participants, teachers' experiences, qualifications (knowledge), and exposure to continuous professional development were found significant in selecting the right participants. Those are explained hereafter.

Experiences. Teachers with five or more years of teaching experiences were selected for data generation in this school. Thus, the selected participants' teaching experience ranged from 6 to 29 years. The selection of participant depended on the view that teachers had used assessment strategies long enough to have identified those that work best and probably

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respond to learners' individual needs. Moreover, teachers who have taught the foundational phase in the lower and upper classes (1-7) were selected.

Qualifications. Most teachers in this school have advanced their studies. For instance, seven teachers hold bachelors' degree while two were enrolled in Master's program, and only five teachers held diploma in primary education. Only five teachers holding bachelor's degree and four teachers with diploma in education were selected to participate in this study.

Exposure to Continuous Professional Development. Most participants in this study claimed to have received training on general assessment strategies in the last five years. The participants indicated the training aimed to boost learning literacy. However, they pointed out they never received any training on authentic assessment.

Using the criteria explained earlier and reflexive selection method, only nine teachers were recruited from a selected school. All selected teachers participated in focus group discussions and the three of them also participated in the interviews. For anonymity, teachers who were engaged in a focus group discussion were pseudo-coded as F1 to F9.

Teachers who engaged in interviews were selected amongst the nine teachers who participated in FGD. The selection was purposive and the interest was primarily on the teachers who had recently advanced their studies within the period of the implementation of curriculum and assessment (2012). It is assumed that institution of education should have begun to train teachers in respond of the policy and that should include the aspect of authentic assessment in their curricular. Therefore, the presently graduated teachers should be informed about AA. This suggests the presently graduated teachers should by now implementing authentic assessment in their classrooms. Using this criteria 3 teachers were found suitable for interviews.

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3.6 Methods and Instruments of Data Generation

In this section methods and instruments that were used to generate data are described. Generating data involves collecting, organising, extracting, and recording data from people, objects, or events on different phenomena using various methods (Goldkuhl, 2019). The methods used for data generation include observation, interviews, documentary, and focus groups (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014). These methods are associated with qualitative research approach and a phenomenological case study design. This study used focus group discussions (FGD) and interview methods to generate data. The instruments used for data generation for each method are also described in this section.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Focus group discussions are planned discussions and in-depth interviews with a small group of participants with similar backgrounds, generally conducted by a moderator (Mishra, 2016). FGD collects views from a group of people (Richard, 2021) that usually comprises a minimum of five (5) to a maximum of 12 participants. However, small groups are often preferred over large groups to allow in-depth data generation and to avoid individual participants dominating others (Taherdoost, 2021).

Within this study, FGD was considered appropriate, based on the merit that it would assist in gaining collective insights concerning teachers' understanding of AA as an assessment strategy they might have used in their everyday practice (Mishra, 2016; Taherdoost, 2021). Through open-ended questions, focus group discussions, generated collective views, and the meaning behind those views of the participants. Importantly, this strategy allowed the participants to speak their minds and share their experiences as a collective (Mishra, 2016; Zull, 2016). Hence, their responses provided rich that explicitly addressed the research questions provided in Chapter 1 of this report.

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Instruments for Focus Group Discussion The study employed focus group discussion guide. Focus group discussion guide is the scripted instruction that directs an interviewer in engaging the participants from the beginning to the end of the discussion (Ahmed & Akyildiz, 2021). It includes an introduction of the study to the participants, giving the objectives of the study, and narrating ethical expectations. This also includes a set of questions that guides the discussion for insightful data generation. It should be noted that focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews (SSI) especially 'one on one' are synonymously seen as interviews (Nyumba et al., 2018). Thus, the study used similar questions for both methods to generate data.

Interviews: An interview could be described as a conversation between two or more people with the intention of an interviewer to obtain the opinions, feelings, experiences, and perceptions of the participants in a study (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Interviews usually involve social interaction in which questions are responded to orally. Questions for interview are often purposive and structured in line with the aim and research questions of the study (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). Interview allows a flexible exchange of opinions, analytic elaboration of ideas. Thus, an experienced interviewer can obtain in-depth data from this interaction (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Interviews could be face to face or virtual and can last to a maximum of two hours (Taherdoost, 2021). There are different types of interviews and these are structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. This study used semi-structured interview.

Semi-structured Interview (SSI) relies on open-ended questions, which have been pre-planned as an interview guide to direct the interaction (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This kind of

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interview provides participants with a degree of flexibility to express their ideas, opinions, attitudes, and feelings (Kabir, 2016). A semi-structured interview allows participants to reveal the meaning they attach to their experiences with no limitation, thereby providing the interviewer with deep knowledge and comprehension (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Kabir, 2016). Thus, the study used semi-structured interviews to generate data.

Instruments Used for Semi-structured. To guide the interaction during the interview the study used an interview protocol. Interview protocol is a guide that is used to generate qualitative data. It usually includes the set of interview questions and procedural level of interviewing (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). This instrument is often viewed as a script of what would be communicated before and after the interview. These set of questions prompts the interviewer to generate informed consent, and to focus on the interests of the study (Hunter, 2012; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

For this study, the interview protocol was developed specifically for this study that aimed to collect data about teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment practices in a selected school. The interview protocol sought information about participants' profiles that included their formal training, teaching experience, and in-service training. It also included questions intended to generate data that would assist to answer the research questions of this study. For reference, the interview questions are attached as Appendix A.

Other Supporting Instruments. The focus group discussion guide and interview protocol were supported by the use of audio recording and field note-taking.

Generally, using the focus group discussion guide and interview protocol during data generation allowed the researcher to have an opportunity to observe the participants' non-verbal behaviour such as expressions, attitudes, and opinions.

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3.7 Piloting

The instrument for data generation was piloted before the study was conducted. Piloting of an instrument is done on a small scale to test whether the instruments collect data that conform to the study (Lowe, 2019). Piloting aims to improve the efficacy and quality of the instruments and prevent the occurrence of flaws that can be expensive in time and finances if not attended in advance. (In, 2017). Those flaws could include omissions, punctuation, and grammar errors, and gathering irrelevant information.

The interview protocol or guide was piloted on two (2) teachers who shared similar features as the targeted group. These teachers were selected from teachers who agreed to participate in the study. However, such teachers who were selected for the pilot phase did not participate in the actual study.

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of piloting the study was to check the flaws and whether the methods and instruments used for generating data conform to the research. The findings from the piloting indicated that some questions needed some modification so that they could focus on authentic assessment rather than authentic learning. Other corrections and modifications made were restructured. Thus, teachers' feedback was utilised for the improvement of the instruments (In, 2017; Lowe, 2019).

3.8 Data Generation Procedures

In this section, the research procedures that were carried out to generate data of this study are described. Research procedure refers to a process or a step-by-step guide that ensures that all angles of research are achieved (Manawis, 2023). It ensures that data

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collected is reliable and presented accordingly. The data generation procedures that were used during focus group discussions and interviews are described hereafter.

Procedures for Focus Group Discussion

Firstly, focus group guide was developed in English language but translated in the mother tongue (Sesotho). The permission to conduct the study was sought from the targeted participants in April 2023. On the day of the interview, the setting for discussion was prepared where participants were shown their seats and welcomed with refreshers. In the meantime, participants were made to fill in the consent forms. After that, they were given template forms to fill in their personal information (see Appendix B).

Just before the discussion commenced, the participants were asked politely to keep their cell phones silent and to avoid unnecessary movements during the progress (Mishra 2016). The permission to use audio recording during the discussion was sought from the participants. They were also advised to speak in moderate voices, control excitement and speak in turn to allow the audibility of the audio device. Thereafter, the mobile phone's audio recording was switched on and spot checked to ensure proper operation. The mobile phone was then placed at the centre of the panel and the discussion began.

During data generation, elaboration, clarification, emphasis regarding the questions was made. Although focus group discussion was intended to take one (1) hour, it exceeded to one hour and twenty minutes. As a result, the participants became restless, impatient, and began moving in and out of the room. The movement disturbed the discussions. Nevertheless, the participants were calmed by apologising for their wasted time and were informed that the discussion was towards completion and that they should spare some minutes. They were also given an opportunity to decide if the discussion should be postponed for the next day. The group decided that it was important that the session is completed as initially planned.

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Thereafter, the obstructions eased and the session proceeded. However, the session was successful since the discussion was elaborative and manageable.

At the end of the discussion participants were asked to give their views and ask questions relating to the session. One of the participants wanted to know if they were going to gain anything from the discussion. They were told that this was for the academic purpose only. Nonetheless, they were informed that they had an opportunity to inspect the data generated in the study. Thus, the inspection provided them with opportunity to reflect on their perceptions, which could benefit them. The participants showed their gratitude that the session was informative and wished it could be done again. The session was then closed with gratitude.

Procedures for Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews adhered to similar procedures as focus group discussions for data generation. This included preparing the interview protocol, preparing the setting for interviews, communicating ethical issues and time frame, generating data, analysing, and presenting a report.

The study initiated one-on-one interview which each was planned to take 30-45 minutes. The participants' responses were brief and precise to most questions which resulted in less time consumption. Nonetheless, the interviews went well because the participants' responses provided required data. Each participant was shown appreciation for participation in this study at the end of the interview session.

3.9 Methods for Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was found suitable to analyse data generated for this study. Thematic analysis is often considered when investigating subjective information such as

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experiences, views, and beliefs of participants (Crosley, 2021). Because the study sought to explore teachers' perceptions as underpinned by a theory of perceptions, thematic analysis was found appropriate as it offered advantage in analysing and arranging the data into themes that could easily be accessible by the audience/researchers.

Thematic analysis can be inductive or deductive, semantic or latent. According to Braun and Clarke's (2012) inductive analysis determines meaning and creates themes from the collected data without any expected outcome. In comparison, deductive analysis generates data using an already set of outlined themes.

Thematic analysis is grounded in an inductive approach. An inductive thematic analysis approach is a process in which multiple principles that are believed to be accurate are combined to create a specific conclusion, generalisation, and or theory (Gabriel, 2013). This study adopted Braun and Clarke's (2012) six steps model of analysis which include 1) being familiar with data, 2) generating initial coding, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing potential themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) writing a report. These steps are explained hereafter.

Familiarity to Data. This process involves a researcher immersing in the data by repeatedly reading transcripts on interviews, listening to audio-recordings, or watching video tapes data until content knowledge of data is exhaustive. Familiarisation to data aims for a researcher to become conversant with the content of the data. At this stage, the researcher begins to notice data that is relevant and irrelevant to the aim of the study.

At this stage, in this study, the audios were listened to and transcribed and translated into a single language. The transcripts were also re-read several times to acquaint with the data and to identify if the responses adhered to the aim and objectives of the study.

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Generating Initial Coding. Coding identifies and labels data relevant to the research questions. Coding is usually done at the semantic and latent level of meaning to describe data content and the meaning attached to participant's responses. Likewise, re-reading the transcript and listening to audio repeatedly was considered before coding all the data. In this study, data was filtered and the relationship between data points were identified. For example, relevant data was highlighted in relation of the data content and for any relevant data to major codes. The coded database was reviewed repeatedly to identify other potentially relevant extracts. An illustration on how initial coding was generated is provided hereafter:

Table 3.9; Illustrative example indicating how codes were derived

FGD extracts	Codes
<p>I prepare the materials required in teaching, for instance 'floating and sinking' in advance, let learners manipulate them prior teaching and learning, give instructions and ask them probing questions to test the knowledge and skills they might have attained while they engaged in activities. As thus learners construct their own understanding</p>	<p>Resources Engagement Facilitator Oral questions Application</p>

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Searching for Themes. This step also involves reviewing the coded data to identify similar, overlapping codes, and explore the relationship between themes. The main focus in this phase is to identify patterns across the entire data codes. Themes were categorised into digestible units and patterns and meaningful insight of data identified. There was also a time when re-reading and listening to datasets was required before, during, and after clustering codes to themes. When developing the themes, the concepts and issues identified in the literature review were brought in. Since some themes from literature review were found significant, some codes were incorporated. For example skills, activities, and resources were merged into 'strategies'.

Reviewing Potential Themes. In this step, coded data is further organised and refined into themes, reviewed and transcribed in response to the research questions and other emerging issues. This also involves reflection on coding to determine if some codes link to different themes better than in their first category. Therefore, the datasets theme are placed into categories where they fit very well. Some new codes kept emerging and re-coding continuing as familiarity to data kept improving. The extracted codes under each theme were further categorised into clustered themes and sub-themes. As a result, some thematic codes were merged with other main themes and restructured while some were discarded. For example, engaging activities, facilitating learning, and application of skills fitted better under the benefits of authentic assessment rather than authentic assessment strategies. A theme 'activities for authentic assessment was discarded'. 'Oral questioning' remained under 'strategies'. 'Resources' were mostly discussed as inhibiting factor which was merged into 'challenges'.

Defining and Naming Themes. In this phase of analysis, relevancy, and consistency were reworked. The themes were further refined by reading through all the themes, sub-

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themes, codes, and extracts. Thereafter, some clarity was made, some titles modified, and some themes deleted. This allowed refining data into required content, themes, and titles that align well with data the study required. Concepts derived from the major themes were defined and thematic data was translated into a story. For example, themes like 'benefits of using authentic assessment' was modified as 'Benefits and opportunities as experienced by teachers', while 'resources used for authentic assessment' was deleted'. Finally, strategies, challenges, and benefits experienced by teachers in the practice of authentic assessment were observed as 'Teachers' experiences of using authentic assessment'.

Writing a Report. This is the final phase of thematic analysis. It involves communicating the findings of the study. Once the data was processed, coded, and thematised, the findings were narrated into a story. The report included introducing themes to establish the aim, questions, and objectives of the study. Examples of extracts were also included, and conclusions and implications communicated in a report. The report was revised and finally a report of findings was produced.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

This section describes ethical issues that were considered when generating the data for this research. Ethical issues explain activities that should or should not be carried out, that include how people should be treated in data generation (Bryman, 2012; Yip et al., 2016). For emphasis, ethical considerations are critical in educational research and must not be ignored (Bryman, 2012; Maree, 2011). They protect participants by considering their respect, dignity, autonomy, and right to participate voluntarily (Kumar, 2019; Yip et al., 2016). Thus, ethical issues contribute positively to the success of a study (Yip et al., 2016). The ethical issues

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considered in this study were informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality, and trustworthiness. Those ethical issues are described herein:

Informed Consent. This issue concerned faculty of education, school principal, and teachers' approval to participate in the study. In this study, teachers' consent for generating the data is presented in two phases; approval before and during data generation. These phases are discussed hereafter.

Prior Data Generation. First, an approval and ethical clearance to conduct the study was made from the Faculty of Education at the National University of Lesotho (NUL) before the study was conducted. An approval letter was submitted to the school principal before conducting the study (see Appendix C). The school principal informed the teachers about the study and solicited for their cooperation. These teachers were also informed and their permission was sought for their participation (Euwijk & Angehrn, 2017). An introductory letter for teachers to participate in the study briefly explained ethical issues that would be considered during the investigation (see Appendix D).

Data Generation Period. When the investigation commenced, the participants were again informed about the purpose of the research. It was explained to them that the study intended to generate data for academic purposes only. Teachers who agreed to participate were then asked to sign a consent form to justify that they agreed to participate in the study under all requirements and informed considerations (see Appendix E). The permission to use audio-recording device during data collection was also sought from these teachers. It was explained to them that the device was used specifically to support data collection and not for any other purpose. These teachers were also advised that if they felt uncomfortable using the device at any point during the discussion they should express their concern.

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Language Used for Communication. The interview protocol and focus group discussion guide were prepared in English language. However, to enhance their comfort and participation, the participants were allowed to use the language of their choice, English or Sesotho, or to code-switching if they so wished (Maree, 2011). Freedom of language usage further encouraged effective communication, and freedom in participating in this study (Bensen & Cayusoglu, 2013; Kabir, 2016).

Voluntary Participation. The participants were made aware that they had the right to choose to participate without any pressure. Further, teachers' willingness to participate and their right to withdraw should they want to do so even though a consent form was already signed were emphasised (Bryman, 2012).

Anonymity. The participants in this study were assured that their identities and ideas would be kept anonymous and confidential throughout and beyond the study (Bryman, 2012; Fleming & Zeqwaard, 2018). They were assured that their identities, physical characteristics, and data would be pseudonymised, making it impossible for readers to link them with any information provided by the study (Bryman, 2012; Stahl & King, 2020).

Confidentiality. To ensure confidentiality, the participants were guaranteed that the ideas and details of the focus group discussion and interview would be reported and interpreted honestly and would not be made known to anybody other than for the purpose of study (Fleming & Zeqwaard, 2018). Thus, the participants' ideas and thoughts were fully acknowledged, and any information that revealed identity was eliminated. The participants were also given contacts that include telephone numbers and email addresses of the supervisor, the coordinator of the postgraduate program, and the dean of the faculty in case they have issues, misunderstandings, or concerns they might want to report regarding the study.

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Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness of a study is described as the degree of confidence in interpreting data and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Polit & Berk, 2014). The findings of the research were reported with all trustworthiness. The study established protocols, guides, and procedures worthy of ethical consideration (Amankwaa, 2016). The questions that were found to be sensitive and likely to cause psychological, social, physical, and legal harm were avoided (Yip et al., 2016). Trustworthiness in research establishes the principles, which have been described hereafter;

Credibility. Credibility guarantees the truth and accuracy of the findings of the study. Thus, two (2) theories, Gibson's direct theory of perceptions and Gregory's constructive theory of perceptions framed this study to ensure accurate findings that align with the phenomenon being investigated. Further, qualitative methods for data generation and analysis and procedures complemented the theories which guided this study. Also, the data in this case study was generated from the primary sources who experienced teaching and assessment in the real context (classroom). Again, the study used qualitative instruments which are believed to provide facts and accurate and rich information.

Transferability. Transferability is the extent to which findings are helpful to individuals in other situations (Connelly, 2016; Polit & Beck, 2016). The study's findings could apply to other fields, schools, and teachers apart from the targeted participants and setting in this study. Perceptions of teachers towards authentic assessment are the issues that concern all schools across the globe (McArthur, 2023; Aliningsih & Sofwan, 2015). Again, the methods used to in this study have been explained explicitly to assist the reader in judging the trustworthiness of this study. Thus, the findings of this study could be helpful in other studies or contexts besides Lesotho classrooms.

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Dependability. Dependability refers to the extent to which other scholars could repeat the study and the consistency of the findings (Connelly, 2016). This principle assures the reliability of the study that, if any researcher replicates the study, the findings will be similar (Pilot & Berk, 2014). To establish dependability in this study, the audit trails were maintained depending on individual experts to review and examine the research process and data analysis. According to Polit and Berk (2014), audit trails are all researchers' notes used in the research process and decisions about aspects of the study such as who participated. Further, the findings of this study were discussed with colleagues in the master's programme and scrutinised by a supervisor to ensure that interpretation and conclusions align with the generated data. Lastly, this work was subjected to (turnitin) anti plagiarism software (see Appendix F) and edition (see Appendix G).

Confirmability. In research, conformability refers to the degree of neutrality that the study's findings portray participants' responses (Connelly, 2016). The research findings were audited to confirm the accuracy of data generation and interpretation. During data analysis, an attempt was made to control biases and self-interest in the study that could have influenced the findings (Stahl & King, 2020). In addition, every step of data analysis has been described in this study.

3.11 Summary

This chapter described the methodology that was used in this study. The Chapter is structured into three main sections which are Introduction, Research Methodology and Summary sections. In this study, research methodology is the main section that reports the research paradigm, research epistemology, research approaches, research designs, research setting, population and participants' selection, methods and instruments of data collection,

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methods of data analysis, and Ethical consideration that were used to generate the data. The next chapter presents the findings of the data obtained through the data generation methods used in this study.

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Chapter 4: Presentation of the Findings

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions concerning authentic assessment in Lesotho classrooms. In the previous chapter, the methodology that was used to generate and analyse data for this study was described. This chapter presents the findings of this study. Thus, this chapter is structured into four main sections: Introduction (this section), Participants' Profiles, Findings, and Summary.

4.2 Profile of the Participants in the Study

The participants in this study were selected from one primary school in Lesotho. Only nine teachers participated in this study. The real names of the teachers who participated in this study have been pseudo-coded as F1 to F9. All teachers participated in the focus group. Amongst them, three teachers (F2, F4, and F5) also participated in semi-structured interviews. The demographic data, in table 4.1 and profile of teachers who participated in this study are outlined hereafter.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data of Participants

Participants	Age	Gender	Highest Qualification	Institution Obtained	Number of Teaching years	Grades Taught	Current Teaching Grade
F1	48	F	B.Ed	NUL	19	4-7	4
F2	41	M	B.Ed	NUL	17	4-7	6

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F3	32	F	DEP	LCE	7	1,3,5,7	7
F4	45	F	B.Ed	NUL	16	1-4	3
F5	33	F	HD.Ed	NUL	8	4-7	6
F6	40	F	DEP	LCE	6	2,3,5	5
F7	45	M	B.Ed	NUL	18	4-7	5
F8	47	F	B.Ed	NUL	22	1-7	1
F9	56	F	DIP	LCE	29	1-4	3

F1. This teacher was a female who was 48 years of age. She held a Bachelor of Education (Primary) (B.Ed Primary) from the National University of Lesotho (NUL). She had 18 years of teaching experience. She had taught upper grades (4 to 7) of the foundational phase. She was teaching grade four when the study was conducted. In this study, she participated in a focus group discussion only.

F2. This participant was a male teacher who was 41 years old. He held a B.Ed (Primary) from NUL. He had 17 years of teaching experience in the upper grades of the foundational phase. He was teaching grade six when the study was conducted. This participant was engaged in a focus group discussion and interviews.

F3. This participant was a female who was 32 years old. She had a Diploma in Education Primary (DEP) from Lesotho College of Education (LCE). The teacher was in the 7th year of teaching experience and has taught in the foundational phase. This participant was teaching grade seven. She participated in a focus group only.

F4 was a 45-year female teacher. She obtained a B.Ed degree in adult education from NUL and was pursuing a DEP at LCE at the time the study was conducted. She had been working as a teacher for 16 years and had teaching experience in the lower grades (1-4) of the

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foundational phase and was teaching grade three. She participated in a focus group discussion and interviews.

F5 was a female who was 33 years of age. This teacher had a Higher Diploma in Education (HD.Ed) obtained from NUL and was pursuing B.Ed in NUL at the period of conducting this study. The participant had a teaching experience of eight years in the foundational phase and was teaching grade six. This participant engaged in a focus group only.

F6. This participant was a female who was 40 years old. She obtained a DEP from LCE. The teacher had eight years of teaching experience in the foundational phase. This teacher was teaching grade five. She participated in a focus group discussion only.

F7. This teacher was a male 45 years old. The participant held B.Ed (Primary) obtained from NUL and had 18 years of teaching experience in the upper grades of the foundational phase and was teaching grade six then. He engaged in a focus group discussion.

F8. This was a female teacher of 47 years. This teacher had a B.Ed (Primary) from NUL. The teacher had been teaching for 22 years in the foundational phase. She had three years of teaching experience acting as the principal and was teaching grade one. This participant was engaged in focus group discussion only.

F9. This is a female teacher who is 56. She held a Diploma in Education (DIP) obtained from LCE. She had been teaching for 29 years in the foundational phase. She was teaching grade three when the study was conducted. She participated in a focus group discussion.

In summary, this study engaged two male and seven female teachers whose ages ranged between 32 to 56 years, and who had teaching experience that ranged from seven to 29 years. Their qualifications also ranged from a Diploma in Education to a Bachelor Degree in Primary

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Education. About three (3) participants also participated in the interviews. A summary of these participants is also provided in Table 4.1.

4.3 Findings of the Study

This section presents the findings from the analysis of the data generated for this study. The findings in this section are presented according to three main questions which form three main themes namely,

1. Teachers' interpretations of authentic assessment.
2. Teachers' experiences of using authentic assessment in the classrooms of Lesotho.
3. The influence of teachers' experiences on their views about the practicality of using authentic assessment in Lesotho schools.

4.3.1 Teachers' Interpretations of Authentic Assessment

In order to address the first research question, teachers' interpretations and understandings about authentic assessment were investigated. Consequently, their responses established that teachers defined authentic assessment differently. Two female teachers defined it as an evaluation of what has been taught. Four teachers; two males and a female defined it as an application of learners' knowledge and skills in different settings to grant learners opportunity to create and produce something, thus, indicating that learning has occurred.

Authentic Assessment as an Evaluation of What has Been Taught. There were about two teachers who defined authentic assessment as judging learners' performance. They mainly

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explained it as an assessment that evaluates learners' performance. For example, during the interview F2 said;

"I understand AA as an overall evaluation of what learners have learned, to check their abilities and skills."

This was supported by F5 who explained that:

"This assessment refers to evaluating learner's unique performance which is done gradually."

Authentic Assessment as Knowledge and Skills Application.

Those who defined authentic assessment as application of knowledge and skills were four. From the view point of these participants, authentic assessment is a type of assessment that requires learners to apply knowledge and skills in real-life context. This is particularly explained in the response of F8 who said;

"It is that kind of assessment that requires learners to use the knowledge and skills they acquired during teaching and learning, not only around the school campus but also somewhere through their daily life."

F4's understanding of authentic assessment (AA) did not differ much from F8's definition. This is how she framed her understanding,

"I view it as an assessment approach that force learners to apply skills attained during the class lessons in their present and future life."

F2 described it as an assessment approach that drives learners to use acquired knowledge and skills in the classroom or outside the classroom (in their immediate current contexts) and

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future lives to solve their daily problems. He indicated that AA incorporates creativity to necessitate learners to exhibit what is learned. He explained:

"This is so difficult! What can I say? It is a type of assessment that assesses whether learners can produce something as a way of demonstrating that learning has occurred. For example, a child may be engaged in projects, essays, or creative tasks that uniquely apply the learned material. This could mean designing something or composing music, depending on the subject."

Distinctively, F2 emphasised that he found the concept of authentic assessment challenging to comprehend. This participant confessed that he did not know about this concept until this discussion. Even though, his definitions in both FGD and interviews align that AA judges knowledge and skills learners acquired in learning, it is more elaborative in FDG that AA is productive.

During the interviews F2 further compared authentic assessment and traditional assessment (TA) in his definition. He explained it as involving application of knowledge while TA concerns memorising and retrieving knowledge. This is how she put it,

"Authentic assessment does not only include memorising what is learned but what has been learned should be applied."

No Knowledge of Authentic Assessment

About four teachers could not describe how they understood authentic assessment. According to these teachers, they could not define this concept because the concept was unfamiliar to them.

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These findings were consistent from data collected by the interviews and focus group discussion. For example, during the group discussion different definitions of authentic assessment emerged. It also emerged that there were some teachers who could not describe this concept.

4.3.2 Teachers' Experiences of Using Authentic Assessment in the classrooms of Lesotho.

At the commencement of the interview, majority of the participants stated that they were not practising AA. However, as the discussion continued, some of them changed their views. They believed that they were practising authentic assessment in their classrooms. This change of view came after they were asked to describe strategies they used for assessing. About eight teachers, two males and six females expressed their experiences on the use of AA strategies. The strategies they listed included question and answer, quizzes, demonstration, group discussion, dramas or role-play, presentations, projects, and debates. The strategies the participants claimed to use are discussed hereafter:

Question and answer. The participants revealed they used questions to explore the subject matter with their learners. They said they used this strategy when they wanted their learners to critically think about what they were learning. Many of them pointed out that they also value this strategy for formative assessment. For example, F5 supported by other participants asserted:

“When I teach, let's say I teach English Language, I use oral questions, and I let them respond to these questions orally. In this way, I can check if they understand the content taught.”

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F2 emphasised:

"I always make them write something at the end of the lesson to check their understanding. However, they usually do well in objective questions such as short and filling in questions than subjective questions."

Even so, participants indicated that learners tend to struggle when asked questions that demand high order thinking skills. When interviewed, F2 explained that:

"However, learners usually struggle to answer how and why questions."

Quizzes. Using quizzes emerged as one of the preferred teaching strategies by the participants. They said this strategy promotes learners' understanding and application of the knowledge they gained through teaching. This is how F1 responded:

"I use weekly quizzes as a means of promoting learners' engagement with the content and abilities to answer questions."

Dramas or Role-play. Three participants said they use activities associated with this strategy to assess learners' ability to apply concepts and communicate effectively. This strategy appeared to be preferred, particularly by those teaching languages. They claimed that this strategy allows learners to act out scenes from a book, demonstrating their comprehension and interpretation. As they asserted this sometimes leads to learners writing and playing their scripts. F1 explained this by saying:

"I let my pupils act out the prescribed drama books; when they understand what drama is. I then let them write their drama scripts,

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rehearse and perform dramas. That enhances their listening and speaking skills."

In elaboration, F2 also stated:

"We ask learners to act out the prescribed drama books like Bophelo ba Lillo and other stories."

Further, F4 pointed out that a role-play strategy can be used to demonstrate authentic assessment. She expressed that:

"Also, we can realise authentic assessment when we instruct learners to role-play what has been taught in the class. This way, we can tell if learners can use the knowledge and skills acquired during the lesson."

Presentations. Further, two participants conveyed that they were using presentations because they enable learners to present the research findings, projects, or solutions to a given problem in class. They claimed that AA develops their abilities for organising information, conveying ideas, and engaging an audience. F3 affirmed:

"I use presentations after I give my learners group discussion tasks to allow them to develop essential skills required at the workplace, such as teamwork, critical thinking, and presentation abilities."

F2 supported this by saying, "We make our learners present the concepts learned in classes or recite poems at the assembly."

Projects. Five participants proclaimed that assigning learners to carry out real-world projects and work on extended tasks allows them to demonstrate their problem-solving, research,

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and collaboration skills. They pointed out that projects allow learners to design and conduct experiments to test their hypotheses or assumptions. In particular F5 said:

“Depending on a teaching topic in art, I let them design, develop, and present their projects before class. Even in Science, they conduct projects and present their results in class. So, the nature of the projects makes the learning experience more meaningful and relevant to learners, leading to increased engagement and skills acquisition.”

In support, F7 mentioned that he employs problem-solving activities, especially in writing, modelling, gardening and sewing projects. This view was in line with F4 who articulated in interviews:

“Strategies that I use include tasks like prevention of pollution, reusing and recycling waste to produce dustbins and bags. These activities equip learners with communication, manipulation, critical thinking and creativity skills”

The participants in this study also indicated that they find this strategy useful. This was particularly claimed by F4 who said:

“Mostly, learners develop many skills when engaged in project-based activities. They indicated that learners become logical and critical thinkers and maybe decision-makers.”

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Participant F4 shared similar views with F1 who also claimed that activities and resources they use for project-based assessments enable learners to demonstrate their knowledge in more practical and tangible tasks. F1 asserted that:

"Learners' participation is usually stimulated by hands-on activities hence, they rejoice when they realise their abilities and accomplishments, and that enhances their determination and devotion."

Debate. The participants in this study declared that hosting debates on relevant topics encourages learners to develop critical thinking, argumentation, and public speaking skills. It also helps learners to consider and accept various perspectives on an issue. Again, it strengthens their ability to defend their positions. This was particularly voiced by F2, who said the following:

"I give my learners a topic to debate at class or school level. This strategy helps them to be argumentative and look at any phenomenon from two sides."

Conversely, two of the interviewed teachers indicated that they rarely use AA approaches but mostly use traditional assessment methods. Those methods they claimed authentic in the focus discussion, they actually claimed traditional in interviews. In interviews, assessment methods that F4 and F5 claimed traditional were demonstration, discussion, and question and answer. For example, F5 attested:

"I hardly use authentic assessment approach. I often use traditional assessment strategies such as discussion, and questions and answer. The only subject that demands

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manipulation and application, which forces learners to apply knowledge and skills is Art. For example, painting engages them and could be applied in other settings."

This participant went further to explain why she does not often use authentic assessment strategies. This is what she said:

"I usually get exhausted when I use engaging strategies because I overwork myself and allocated time usually extends from 40 minutes but achieves a little. Thus, causing inconvenience to other lessons. I think learners don't cope well with authentic assessment strategies since they are demanding, hence their performance is often unimpressive. One usually regrets time wasted for the little accomplishment."

In summary, teachers' claims that they used AA strategies in focus group was in conflicting with what they said during one on one interviews. During the interviews, two participants (F4 and F5) claimed to use traditional assessment strategies while the other participant F1 could not give even one strategy which he used. Instead, he illustrated the strategies with examples of tasks and resources associated with AA strategies.

No Knowledge of Authentic Assessment Strategies. Only one participant (F6) did not give her experiences of using AA strategies in a focus group discussion. According to this participant, other participants had mentioned strategies that she used.

Benefits and Opportunities of Using Authentic Assessment as Experienced by Teachers. Even though most participants demonstrated a lack of understanding of authentic

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assessment, they all asserted that they believed that AA is beneficial to teaching and learning by allowing learners to apply what they have learned at school to other contexts, promoting their skill development and relationship with teachers and other learners, stimulating their motivation, and enhancing their competencies. These benefits are described hereafter as declared by eight participants.

Authentic Assessment Allows Learners to Apply What They Have Learned in Other Contexts. Two participants indicated that authentic assessment enables learners to apply knowledge in diverse contexts, promoting practical understanding and meaningful application. For example, F3 asserted that:

"I teach learners measurement in Mathematics. Some learners showed good application of the concept in Home Economics. They normally apply measurement concepts when they cook. They measure the ingredients appropriately."

This assertion suggests that the participants viewed AA as being more than rote memorization, as it allows learners to demonstrate deeper comprehension by integrating what is taught in the classroom into real-life application of knowledge. F3 was supported by F5's affirmation:

"In the Arts and Entrepreneurship Learning Area (AE), I instructed learners to bring sewing tools to make stitches and designs. The next day, most of them had begun to mend their torn school uniforms, which showed I had achieved something."

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Teachers maintained that application of authentic assessment can promote learner participation and lifelong learning which could contribute to the socio-economy of the nation development.

Authentic Assessment Promotes Skill Development. Some participants asserted that authentic assessment develops skills in learners by evaluating their ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world situations. They explained that it achieves this because it incorporates problem-solving tasks and practical applications for success in various aspects of life. According to these teachers, when appropriate classroom strategies and activities are used for authentic assessment, learners can develop and demonstrate their ability to observe, manipulate, report, inquire, experiment, and predict.

Participant F1 supported this by pointing out that this type of assessment can make learners thoughtful in what they do. That is, it can assist them to develop and demonstrate critical thinking, creativity, communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. Thus, it assists learners to unfold their abilities which enables them to excel in their studies and apply the skills they have developed to earn a living. Emphasising this point, F4 indicated that AA practices could benefit learners who are not able to finish school. This participant was supported by F3 who argued that learners who become exposed to this type of assessment. This was evidenced by the following response:

“Can make artefacts using natural resources such as brooms to sell in large numbers and may grow vegetables, and as their produce increases, employ others.”

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Generally, the participants pointed out that learners who could not complete schooling could be productive and create jobs as a result of the skills they developed in the classroom. Summing this up, F6, further pointed out that authentic assessment, *"helps both teachers and learners to develop skills such as self-esteem, and confidence."*

Authentic Assessment Promotes the Relationship between Teachers and Learners and Among Learners. Another benefit of authentic assessment that was drawn from the discussion was that it promotes the relationship between teachers and learners and among learners. These participants revealed collaborative tasks promotes positive and meaningful relationships among the classroom players and mutual respect while allowing them to co-create tasks, and celebrate their efforts and accomplishments. The participants also pointed out that authentic assessment allows teachers to engage in meaningful conversations about learners' growth and areas for further development, ultimately fostering a more positive teacher-learner relationship. F6 summed this up by saying:

"This thing enhances the relationship between learners. It also builds relationships among teachers as there is collaboration among learners and teachers as well." F1 affirmed this by saying:

"These assessments encourage active participation, personalization, and cognitive development that is fostered in a more supportive learning environment."

It was emphasised that teachers' relationship with learners' also promotes self-reflection and builds trust /among themselves, capturing their interests and creating room for personalized learning. F3 affirmed:

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"This creates a conducive environment for teaching and learning. In this environment, a teacher could understand learners' needs better, facilitate learning, and provide constructive feedback."

AA Makes Teachers and Learners to Interact with Environment. The participants argued that maintained relationship allows collaborative interaction in the classroom. In interviews, F2 and F4 indicated that AA allows learners to interact with the environment including classmates, communities, and the physical world. They emphasised that learners' interaction with the physical world drive them to apply the knowledge and skills they acquired in the classroom and in their future setting. This is what F2 attested:

"For example, learners can work together to reduce the greenhouse effects to sustain an environment."

This view was supported by F4 that interacting with the environment promotes skill development. This emerged from the following response:

"When learners work together, their moral and self-esteem develop and as a result, teaching and learning knowledge and skills improve."

Authentic Assessment Stimulates Learners' Motivation

Other participants indicated that, because it is engaging, and everyone is always curious to complete the task and see the outcomes, AA can stimulate learners' motivation to achieve something. This participant indicated that teachers can tap into learners' natural curiosity and desire to make a meaningful impact by incorporating authentic assessment practices. According to these participants, this fosters intrinsic motivation which is a powerful driver for sustained learning, deeper understanding, and a lifelong love of learning. This is how F2 explained:

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"This assessment promotes learners' motivation and willingness to engage actively in their work. It promotes intrinsic motivation, which is a powerful motivator for learning, deeper comprehension, and a lifelong love of learning."

Participant, F6 shared similar views that AA does not only motivate learners but also teachers to become self-reflective. This is her expression:

"I like this approach. It provides learners with opportunities for self-development and teachers to become reflective professional practitioners. Reflective practice encourages teachers to do more, assist more and apply more effort in teaching and assessing learners. As a result, we develop skills, enthusiasm, and good attitudes towards assessment, and become devoted to our work. We are encouraged to improve our practices when we see progress and achievement."

Authentic Assessment Enhances Teachers' and Learners' Competencies. Some participants indicated that AA enhances teachers' and learners' competencies when used efficiently in the classroom. They affirmed that authentic assessment empowers both teachers and learners by promoting a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Thus, nurturing growth and shaping the learners' mind set, and fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. They said it transforms a learning experience into a dynamic and enriching process for those involved. For example, F9 said:

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"Authentic assessment helps me become more assessment literate. I learned to use formative assessment effectively to monitor learners' progress and adjust my teaching accordingly. It has enhanced my overall competence as a teacher."

F8 supported this by saying:

"The feedback learners receive from an authentic assessment is detailed and specific. It helps them understand their strengths and areas for improvement, making them more confident in their abilities, so their competencies are likely to be enhanced."

No Experiences on the Benefits of Practising Authentic Assessment Strategies. One participant could not give the benefits of using AA. It was explained that the benefits he knows have already been mentioned by other participants. Therefore, he avoided repetition.

Challenges of Practicing Authentic Assessment as perceived by Teachers. The participants of this study outlined some challenges they associate with practising authentic assessment. These challenges include limited resources and infrastructure, teachers' limited knowledge, skills, and exposure, class size, and learner calibre. Six teachers gave challenges they encounter in practising AA. These are the participants' views:

Resources and Infrastructure. The participants argued that compared to other assessments, authentic assessment requires unique and specific materials to replicate real-life scenarios. They found it difficult to practice AA when resources are scarce and facilities such as classrooms and computers absent. Thus, three participants indicated that resources are inadequate in schools and inaccessible for an individual learner to access in large classroom

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sizes. They also emphasised that it is time-consuming to complete AA tasks. For example, this is

F9's assertion:

"Resources are limited, and those available are inadequate for each learner to manipulate. Some of them are not available at all. Mostly, we have to improvise, which also demands some skills which we don't have. We also have few classrooms for our roll and sometimes the space is inadequate for performing activities."

This was supported by F5 who pointed out that improvising some resources is often challenging. The participants argued that other improvised resources are not made perfect to promote intended knowledge and skills. Consequently, they might convey unpredictable outcomes, distort intended outcomes and cause dissonance. When interviewed, F5 responded that:

"In the Personal Social Science Learning Area (PSS), one learning outcome suggests we should improvise short-put and javelin. If such resources are improvised they are either too heavy or light to land and function accordingly, and that suggests learning and assessment might not be achieved as intended."

The participants further indicated that teachers sometimes demonstrate inability and incompetence to use the resources available to assess particular concepts. Thus, F2 affirmed that they ignore learner assessments that require the use of such resources. This is how F2 put it:

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"Through my teaching experience I have not bothered to use resources like puzzles 'morabaraba' because I have no idea when and how it is used, I just ignore it."

Teachers' Limited Knowledge, Skills, and Exposure. The findings of this study established that participants believed that AA challenges most because of their lack of knowledge and skills, and not being exposed to AA practices. First, they maintained that many teachers often use traditional assessment methods. They claimed uncertainty about developing and evaluating authentic tasks effectively. They pointed out that this is because these teachers have not been sufficiently trained or exposed to the design and implementation of authentic assessments. Four participants claimed that even where resources and infrastructure permit, teachers often demonstrate incompetence in their practices of authentic assessment. This was particularly pointed out by F3 who said:

"I feel overwhelmed by the concept of authentic assessment because I don't have enough knowledge about its various methods and strategies. I know it's essential to move away from traditional tests, but I'm not confident in my ability to prepare meaningful and valid assessments that align with authentic learning experiences."

The findings from the discussion aligned with the interviews' findings. The participants attested that one of the ever-existing challenges in any reforms in the nation has always been that teachers' incompetence. They seem to have limited knowledge and skills of the principles of AA

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and how it should be implemented. In cases, where it is used it consumes time, even the resources are limited to access overcrowded classrooms. Participant F2 argued:

"I'm unfamiliar with the concept and do not exactly know what it requires. I find it inapplicable in my classroom especially because I am uncertain of its requirements, besides I teach a large number of learners."

F4 shared similar views as the other two participants in interviews. This is what she said:

"In my opinion, this assessment cannot be practised in 70 learners' classrooms but it can only apply effectively when the teacher-learner ratio (1:30) is appropriate. How do you reach the other 40 learners? The ratio is so high to even try to practise individualised assessment strategies or identify some learners who need remedies or special attention."

These participants emphasised that teacher teacher-learner ratio in their classes prevents them from using AA of which they already have limited knowledge of how they should implement this concept.

Class Size: The findings of this study revealed that most participants blamed large class sizes for not effectively implementing or preferring authentic assessment. They attested that creating and assessing individualised authentic tasks for many learners is challenging. For example, F4 pointed out that, "Having a larger class size sometimes limits the variety use of authentic tasks we can assign to learners." It also emerged that because of the large classrooms, teachers find AA tasks time consuming. For example, two participants who claimed to use AA

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held the view that one of the challenging issues with the use of AA is time consumption. They complained that the syllabus is demanding, yet less time is allocated for activities and the strategies proposed to be used. For example, during the interview, F5 claimed:

"In cases where I found myself using AA, especially in Art or Science practical activities, I usually consume other lessons periods, which interferes with timetable allocation and scheme and record of the book. Therefore, it becomes challenging to cover other planned concepts within a week, unit or year as intended."

These participants indicated that the whole issue of delayed concepts to attain in specified time affects learners' assessment performance in general since they are usually behind the syllabus for quarterly, session, or end-term assessments. Participant, F4 emphasised that classroom management is challenging whenever AA strategies are used especially in overcrowded classrooms, *"managing the large classroom is stressful and exhausting."*

Learner Calibre. The participants indicated that their learners come from diverse backgrounds with varying abilities and prior knowledge. Hence, designing authentic assessments that are fair and equitable for all students can be complex and laborious. Participants indicated that some learners have demonstrated a drive to fully participate while some of them usually reserve their involvement and abilities. They were concerned that some learners had demonstrated reluctance, unwillingness, lack of self-esteem, and incompetence to active involvement and they usually become passive. F7 explained:

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"In this paradigm, very few learners appear determined to do their schoolwork. For instance, they have a tendency not to respond to questions that demand the use of high-order thinking skills and most show reluctance even to engage and complete performance tasks such as assignments, research, and projects. They seem to lack learning drive, knowledge and skills. I think they lack intrinsic motivation."

On the other side, F3 was aware that learners may have uniqueness in learning and approaching the tasks, and therefore their proficiency might differ depending on the individual learning style that suits them.

During the interview, F4 also demonstrated concerns about learners' interest in assessment. This participant contended that more often, when engaging learners in authentic tasks they become eager and energetic in manipulating resources and performing the tasks. Relatively, their interests focus is not the subject matter but just manipulation, losing track of what was intended to be achieved. Her expression was as follows:

"Sometimes learners enjoy manipulating resources not necessarily focusing on the outcome of the tasks whilst performance assessments' outcomes become unrealistic from what was observed and anticipated."

No Experiences on the Challenges of Practicing Authentic Assessment. Three participants did not contribute towards teachers' perceptions on the challenges of practicing AA.

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It is believed they did not use AA in assessing teaching and learning. Therefore they were not aware of the challenges associated with it.

Factors Influencing Successful Practices of Authentic Assessment Strategies. Five teachers; a male and four females in this study pointed out that there are several factors that contribute to the successful implementation of authentic assessment. Some of the factors that lead to the successful practices of AA as viewed by teachers were teachers' related practices. They viewed infrastructure and resources, teachers' competency, classroom supervision, self-introspection, and collaboration with others significant for successful implementation of AA. These factors are discussed hereafter:

Infrastructure and Resources. Other participants viewed infrastructures and resources as the most important factor that lead to the successful and effective practices in any field. According to two participants, F4 and F5 the resources are the most critical motivation for successful implementations of teaching and assessment reforms in schools. For example, According to F4 affirmed that:

"Assessing learners seems challenging because of limited resources, so I think those responsible should supply adequate resources to schools, and teachers be trained to use some."

F5 asserted that:

"Most often, I fail to use group discussion because the classrooms are not spacious, maintaining and building spacious classrooms will assist us use AA strategies successfully."

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Teachers' Competency. From the perspective of three participants (F5, F2, and F9), teachers' competence contributes positively to the successful implementation of AA strategies. These teachers emphasised that the knowledge of the subject matters in the successful practices of any reforms. For example, F5 voiced that:

"There is no way in which learners can know what they should know if teachers are incompetent of the subject matter."

Classroom Supervision. The findings established that principals sometimes conduct classroom observations to provide feedback to teachers on their work in general. Teachers affirmed that this factor assists them in understanding how their classroom strategies are implemented and received. F5 confirmed that:

"Sometimes my principal observes me when I teach and assess learners. I use the feedback I get from supervision to improve my professional work including teaching and assessing learners."

Self-introspection. One participant claimed that self-introspection is considered one of the factors that influence the successful use of AA strategies. For instance, F8 said:

"I ask myself questions like: Did the assessment method assess what was intended? Were the learners engaged and interested? Was the assessment method used appropriate? Which method could be used next time?"

Collaboration with Colleagues. One participant specified that they sometimes collaborate with other colleagues and discuss their approaches and experiences to assessment by

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using different strategies. This insight-sharing leads to a better understanding of what works best in their various assessment situations. This is F1's affirmation:

"I usually share teaching and assessment experiences with my colleagues which I find it helpful because they can give me their views."

Learners' Feedback. Some teachers showed learners' feedback to influence AA practices. They maintained that learners' perspectives can provide valuable insights into how well the strategies they used worked and whether adjustments must be made. F1 explained that:

"Feedback enables us to engage learners even more in performance tasks. Since, a feedback provides the information about learners' achievement that encourages us to do more. Hence, we are able to identify areas that require reinforcement."

In support, F2 indicated learners' performance feedback is required to identify patterns and trends related to the effectiveness of her assessment strategies. During the interview, F2 stated that:

"I always observe learners as they engage in performance activities and from that only I manage to analyse their abilities and therefore use various strategies appropriate to judge my teaching."

No Knowledge of Factors Influencing Successful Use of Authentic Assessment Strategies. Four participants did not demonstrate knowledge of factors influencing the success of AA practices in the classroom. According to these participants, they could not identify the factors contributing to successful practices of AA.

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4.3.3 The Influence of Teachers' Experiences on Their Views about Practicality of Using Authentic Assessment in Lesotho Classrooms

This section discusses the influence of teachers' experiences of practising authentic and their perceptions on the practicality of AA in Lesotho schools. Teachers who were positive of practicing AA believed that AA is significant in developing learners' abilities and promoting entrepreneurship therefore it could benefit Lesotho classroom. For example, F4 indicated that teachers who are optimistic about AA were likely to develop positive attitudes. According to this participant teachers' curiosity and commitment enhance their abilities to assist learners to achieve and perform well in their studies. This is how F4 put it: *"Teachers who demonstrate dedication to their professional work including learner assessment are more likely to practise authentic assessment effectively than those who are hesitant."* This participant accentuated that optimistic teachers shine and become role models to their colleagues, learners, and the community at large. From the generated data, it also emerged that teachers who are positive about the use of authentic assessment are motivated to engage learners in practical scenarios that allow meaningful involvement. For example, this is how F5 expressed her views:

"What I have seen is that we connect and understand each other better when we work together and we don't have to push them [learners] to do tasks."

This was supported by F1 who indicated that using AA strategies have assisted them in becoming more of the facilitators rather than instructors. This is what F1 said:

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"I think I have begun to like this approach since I have observed my colleague using it in English and Arts. My work has lessened since my learners have started taking ownership of their work. My role is to check that they are doing things right and offer assistance when needed."

Teachers who believed that they were incapable of applying AA displayed a negative attitude towards this approach. These teachers believed that AA requires laborious activities and this puts a lot of pressure on teachers and results in increased anxiety. F5 affirmed that:

"Some teachers tend to avoid and ignore tasks and strategies that they think are laborious and practice those that are simple to achieve."

Teachers' Perceptions on the Practicality of Authentic Assessment in Lesotho Schools. The findings of this study established that the participants positively perceive AA practices even though they believed they could not be applicable in Lesotho classrooms. They highlighted that it could be applicable only where the teacher-learner ratio is reasonable, teachers are equipped with knowledge and skills, and the government resource supply unit provides enough assessment materials to schools. When interviewed, F5 indicated that:

"This assessment could be practical in Lesotho only if the challenges that hinder its effective practices are attended to and eradicated."

These participants believed that if practised in Lesotho schools, authentic assessment could also assist learners who do not complete schooling to become functional and productive in their communities. This is so because they believed AA prepares learners for the world of work.

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Therefore, there could be more opportunities for learners who leave school even before they complete the school programme. This is how F4 shared her views:

“Some learners drop out of school before they could complete high school level. So, such learners could create something to earn a living. For instance, the grade 7th who would soon transit to the next level would likely apply knowledge and skills outside the school to generate income. They will not idle in the street but they will be self-reliant and productive, and design clothing in large quantity to the extent that they can own factories and hire more people.”

Even though the participants' views were positive about the opportunities that authentic assessment can bring in Lesotho education system, they were quick to point out that the conditions that exist in Lesotho classrooms were not yet favourable for this assessment strategy. For example, they pointed out that first the teachers' and learners' mind set should be prepared to adopt authentic assessment strategies. Teachers should be equipped with knowledge and skills that would allow them to competently and effectively implement this strategy. Also, the status of resources and facilities in the schools should be improved. For example, this is what F2 said:

“This approach is good but honestly, looking at most of Lesotho primary schools' conditions especially, in the rural, I don't think it can work.”

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During the interview session, F4 argued that it is highly impossible to implement AA in Lesotho schools because the challenges in schools are extreme and might require some years to be addressed. F4 attested:

"This issue of how practical AA is in Lesotho schools is contextual. In my view, it could only be applicable in private schools because the teacher-learner ratio is appropriate and resources enough for the class. I think public schools are very disadvantaged to AA practices."

F3 supported this argument that the government cannot avoid the needs of all the schools overnight. Rather, the needs could be responded to gradually. This is what the participant said:

"I think, the funds might be limited to respond to all schools' needs and to avail resources and facilities, to train teachers for effective implementation of authentic assessment, and to establish regular workshops to support teachers for professional development and betterment of quality education."

One participated suggested that teachers should be provided with in-service training. This was supported by F4 who suggested that teachers should be exposed to in-service training. This is what she said:

"I think all Lesotho teachers should be prepared for this approach. We need to be informed through the workshops or seminars about this approach. From this discussion, I learned a lot about this assessment approach and realised its benefits, but

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I think it is not enough that we can say Lesotho schools are ready to implement it effectively. Hmm...! I think even the institutions that provide teacher education, should incorporate it in their student-teacher courses."

Nonetheless, the participants indicated that AA cannot be applicable in some settings, especially in schools where the class roll is large and in rural schools.

4.4 Summary

This study explored teachers' perceptions of using authentic assessment in the classrooms in Lesotho. This chapter presented the findings of this study. The chapter first presented the profile of a school from where this study was conducted, the profiles of the participants, and the findings from the analysis of the participants' responses on teachers' interpretation of authentic assessment, teachers' experiences of practicing AA, and influence of teachers' experiences on their views of practicing authentic assessment. The next chapter presents a discussion of the findings and the recommendations.

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Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings, Conclusion, Limitations of the Study, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The study investigated teachers' perceptions of authentic assessment in Lesotho primary classrooms. The study was framed in interpretivists' philosophy and guided by a phenomenological case study design ideology to study teachers' experiences in the real context. The perceptions of these teachers were investigated using a qualitative approach in which semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion were used to generate data and a thematic approach for analysis.

Teachers who participated in this study were (2 males and 7 females), whose ages ranged from 32 to 56 years. Their highest qualification was a Bachelor of Education Degree, many of which had been obtained from NUL. Their teaching experience ranged from 6 to 29 years.

During the interviews and focus group discussion, teachers shared their interpretations, experiences, and views on authentic assessment. The previous chapter, Chapter 4, presented the findings from the analysis of data generated from the discussions and the interviews. This chapter discusses these findings and draws conclusions. The limitations of this study are outlined and the recommendations are based on the conclusions made. The chapter is structured as follows: Introduction (this section), Key Findings, Discussion, Conclusion, Study Limitations, Recommendations, and Summary.

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5.2 Key Findings

The findings of this study have been presented in Chapter Four in three major themes which are teachers' interpretations of authentic assessment, teachers' experiences of authentic assessment, and the influence of teachers' experiences on their views on the practicality of authentic assessment in Lesotho. This section presents the summary of the key findings in table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Summary of the key finding

a) Teachers' interpretations of authentic assessment:	<p>Definition: teachers defined authentic assessment as an evaluation of the learners' application of knowledge and skills in different scenarios</p> <p>Strategies teachers associate authentic assessment with: question and answer, demonstration, quiz, group discussion, projects, dramas, role-play, and debate</p>
b) Teachers' experiences of authentic assessment	<p>Opportunities to use authentic assessment: Teachers believed that authentic assessment provides learners opportunity to acquire and apply skills in different contexts; promotes collaboration and competence among teachers and learners; and stimulates learners' motivation.</p> <p>Challenges teachers face when practising authentic assessment: limited knowledge and skills; limited resources; teacher-learner ratio, and learner calibre.</p>
c) The influence of teachers' experiences on their views on the practicality of authentic assessment in	Teachers are optimistic and believe that practising authentic assessment could be successful in Lesotho classrooms if the following conditions are met: providing teachers with related in-service training;

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Lesotho	making resources available to teachers; engaging strategies that motivate learners to learn; and providing and engaging supervisory and mentoring.
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5.3 Discussion

In this section, the findings are discussed in line with the research questions of this study, which were:

1. How do teachers interpret authentic assessment?
2. What are teachers' experiences of practising authentic assessment?
3. How do teachers’ experiences influence their views on the practicality of authentic assessment in Lesotho schools?

5.3.1 How Teachers Interpret Authentic Assessment

Teachers’ interpretations of authentic assessment were determined through their definitions and the strategies they associated with this mode of assessment. Even though teachers were finally able to interpret authentic assessments, they initially struggled to do so. Many of them claimed that they had never come across this concept before they participated in this study. Similar findings were also established in Indonesia (Trisanti’s, 2024) that the concept of authentic assessment is not popular to some teachers. Their defining approach to this concept was by first explaining their understanding of the words “authentic” and “assessment”, then “authentic assessment”. From their understanding, authenticity is something that is real and factual, while assessment is checking or evaluating something. According to these participants, authentic assessment is an act of checking or evaluating the reality of something. When asked to

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relate this to teaching and learning, it was observed that the participants had developed a common understanding of authentic assessment. They viewed it as an assessment approach that allows learners to demonstrate what they had learned. This mode of assessment requires learners to create or develop a product, applying knowledge, and skills attained. This mode of assessment may require learners to demonstrate this in the classroom, in their immediate everyday environments, or in the world of work.

Teachers' definition of authentic assessment appeared to align with Moria et al. (2018) and Mueller (2018). Mueller (2018) explain authentic assessment as a type of assessment that allows learners to demonstrate an acquisition of a skill by creating or developing a product. These participants view AA as an approach for learners to comprehend their skills, judge their' understanding, potentials, and application of the skills while performing and engaging in tasks progressively. Moria et al. (2018) explain that this mode of assessment examines whether learners' knowledge and skills are realistic, relevant, and applicable in the real world.

The teachers in this study claimed that even though they previously knew very little about authentic assessment, they believed they had been using the strategies that are associated with authentic assessment. The strategies these teachers associated with authentic assessment strategies included question and answer, demonstration, group discussion, quizzes, dramatization and role-play, projects, presentations, and debates. Among these strategies, they appeared to mostly prefer oral questioning, demonstration, and quizzes. Their justification for their preferences was that an assessment that is done through oral questioning enables them to judge learners' instant understanding of the concepts being taught. From their viewpoint, the strategy requires an instant response, it does not give learners a chance to consult other sources (such as

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textbooks, other learners, etc.) for a response. Rather, it forces them to give an instant response that reflect their individual understanding of a concept. The participants' responses that understanding how learners respond to questions helps validate authentic assessments correspond with Zumbo and Hubley (2017).

With the demonstration method, teachers believe that it enhances learners' understanding of the complex scenarios they are exposed to. Teachers' justification for using quizzes was that quizzes can trigger learners' high levels of thinking and promote their continuous involvement with the content.

Despite teachers' justification for preferring oral questioning, demonstration and quizzes, further discussions indicated that the way these teachers implemented this mode of assessment does not allow learners to engage with the assessment tasks and content as they claim. That is, for both oral questioning and quizzes, teachers tend to use low-order questions, which limit the development and promotion of learners' critical thinking skills.

Other strategies that teachers associated with authentic assessment and identified in their discussion were dramatization and role-play, group discussion, presentations, projects, and debates. They associated these strategies with authentic assessment because from their view point, they provide learners with opportunities to engage in authentic activities such as developing artefacts, carrying out experiments, demonstrating different perspectives on a concept, and presenting and exhibiting the products they have developed. The teachers explained that the complexity of these assessment strategies influences learners to develop and demonstrate multiple and complex skills required in a real-life situation. These skills include understanding of concepts, communication, imitation, organisation of ideas, development of logical thinking and

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decision-making, collaboration and team working, problem-solving, and presentation in front of large crowds, developing, persuading and defending arguments, and accepting defeat where necessary.

Teachers believe that these strategies also fuels learners' motivation to be more engaged when they realise their thoughts can be heard and valued. These teachers further the skills that these learners are exposed to by the authentic strategies learners require in their real-life context. These findings are supported by Abbas and Yusefi (2018, Braun and Clarke (2023), Brumbaugh's (2013), Moria et al. (2018), and Mueller (2018). These studies established that the afore-discussed strategies, that teachers claim to employ, promote authentic and performance-based assessment. They compel learners to be actively involved in the assessment tasks that require them to produce products.

Even though teachers mentioned many assessment strategies which they claimed to use for learner assessment, some results indicate that they do not use most of these strategies. For example, some participants claimed they often use question and answer, demonstration, and discussion which they explained as traditional assessment strategies. It is believed, these teachers used strategies at the lower-order level of understanding, and hence, they were not seen as authentic assessment strategies. The findings are supported by Zoubi (2024) that teachers use authentic assessment in the varied degree where question and answer seemed to be mostly preferred.

5.3.2 Teachers' Experiences of Authentic Assessment

Regarding their experiences of practising authentic assessment, the teachers' discussion in this study focused on the teaching strategies they claimed to be using in their practices. In their

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discussion, they indicated that the strategies they were using, which they associated with authentic assessment, provide learners with opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in different scenarios. As a result, the strategies make learning interesting to their learners, particularly when they are required to apply what they have learned in their immediate environments. Teachers' beliefs of the methods associated with authentic assessment are in line with the study of McArthur (2023). McArthur (2023) established that learners' interest increases when they establish a connection between what they learn at school and its application in real life. Winarso (2018) has a similar view that authentic assessment tasks motivate learners to take responsibility for their learning. As such, learners' realization of the relevance of knowledge and skills they learn at school to their needs outside the classroom unleashes their potential to develop intrinsic motivation. Teachers in this study also observed that the assessment methods that are associated with AA, require learners to apply complex skills such as critical thinking, communication, observation, inquiry, information manipulation, problem-solving, and decision-making. In the process, their self-esteem is boosted. This has also been established by Wahyuni et al. (2021) that AA strategies assist learners to develop high-order thinking skills that enable them to function well in their communities.

The other lesson teachers in this study learnt from their experiences is that AA strategies enable them to give learners feedback that is based on their performance in real-world scenarios. Consequently, they believe that if AA tasks and strategies are effectively used, learners could gain more knowledge and skills that enhance their participation in their communities. They have realized that the assessment strategies they use incorporate many skills which both learners and teachers need to solve their problems even outside the classrooms. The teachers believe AA

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enable learners to see the relevance of classroom learning with the real world. This view is in line with the study carried in Ireland by Murthy et al. (2017) who established that authentic assessment promotes learners' capabilities to evaluate their own performance.

Teachers in this study also observed that the assessment methods that are associated with AA strategy also create opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their teaching skills. They have learnt that these methods influence them to collaborate with other teachers and stakeholders who have a common view of developing and improving learners' competencies. Teachers' observations are in line with Fathurohman and Cahyaningsih (2021) who observed that teaching and assessment strategies that are associated with AA support teachers to develop teaching competencies and have a healthy relationship with learners. They further explained that where this strategy is used, there is a harmonious interaction and collaboration among the participants, whether it is among learners, between learners and teachers, or just among teachers. According to these scholars and the teachers who participated in this study, AA strategy creates a situation that cultivates deep understandings among the participants (teachers and learners) that enables them to respond positively and effectively to each other's' needs. Supporting this observation are Mohamed and Lebar (2021) who claim that teaching strategies that are associated with AA also support teachers' development of the competencies that are required in contemporary classrooms. These competencies include proficiency to evaluate learners' strengths and weaknesses relating to what these learners are being taught and how they develop understanding and knowledge of concepts and targeted skills. AA strategy enable a teacher to track and monitor learners' knowledge and skill development.

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Teachers in this study indicated that using authentic assessment strategies also create opportunity for teachers to constantly reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of their own classroom practices by the use of the learner performance analysis and feedback. These teachers also established that their competence, infrastructure and resources, classroom supervision, are significant to the application of AA strategies (Nugraheni et al., 2021). Mueller (2018) and Winarso (2018) believe that these elements can assist teachers in using effective and relevant strategies for authentic assessments. Teachers claims about factors that contribute to the successful practices of strategies of authentic assessment are in line with other findings in countries such as Naperville (Mueller, 2018), USA (Lowman-Sikes, 2020), Indonesia (Winarso, 2018) that the success of AA depends on various aspects such as team working, self-introspection, learners' feedback, and teachers' competence.

Teachers in this study also experienced some challenges when using strategies that are associated with AA. These challenges include limited or unavailable resources, teachers' inadequate knowledge and skills required to implement the strategies, and the calibre of the learners they had in their classrooms.

With reference to resources, teachers in this study pointed out that their schools are barely furnished with teaching and learning resources that could allow them to practice authentic assessment. They pointed out that school infrastructure and facilities are elementary or almost absent to enable the successful practice of the AA strategy. Another limiting resource they pointed out was time consumption and jam-packed syllabus which is so demanding in terms of content to assess and time frame. So the demands of the syllabus do not allow teachers time to use other assessment strategies. Teachers' experiences appear to be in line with Murthy et al.

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(2017) whose observation was that limited resources could negatively affect the practice of AA in schools.

From their experiences, teachers observed that they did not have enough knowledge and skills to practice authentic assessment effectively. From their viewpoint, AA strategies require teachers to be knowledgeable and creative in designing and implementing assessment tasks. They have observed that they lack these qualities. As they explained, their limited knowledge and skills also hinder them to use resources that could be available in their schools. Teachers' challenges of properly implementing curriculum in Lesotho schools have also been established by Chere-Masopha (2022). In the study that explored teachers' perceptions of using a learning portfolio, Chere-Masopha (2022) reported that teachers were sceptical of their knowledge and skills for using a portfolio strategy for learning and assessment activities. Chere-Masopha's discovery was also supported by Chere-Masopha and Sebatane (2018) who also established that, in Lesotho schools, many teachers were not using strategies that are associated with authentic learning and assessing strategies because of their limited knowledge and skills. Existing studies show that it is not only in Lesotho where this situation exists. Even in other countries such as Malaysia (Aziz et al., 2020), and Indonesia (Aliningsih & Sofwan, 2015; Khairiyah, 2019; Ridwan et al., 2023; Saputra, 2019), and China (Huang & Jaing, 2020), teachers' lack of knowledge and skills relating to authentic learning were reported.

Another factor which teachers identified inhibiting the successful practice of AA was large class sizes. According to teachers in this study, an average class size in Lesotho schools could comprise 40 learners. This class size is often crammed in small classrooms that are crowded with desks, which, in most cases, do not allow teachers to engage learners in

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individualised and varied ways, hindering the effective practice of authentic assessment. Kankam et al. (2014) have also reported this challenge. Teachers indicated that some learners in the school where the study was conducted, have low self-drive to learn and demonstrate resistance to adopting high standard of learning. This finding aligns with Kankam et al. (2014) and Moria et al. (2018) that learners are often unprepared to engage in authentic teaching and assessment. This suggests that planning for learners with diverse proficiency in the overcrowded classroom could be challenging for teachers. Thus, even though teachers may find AA helpful, the class conditions often force them to view it as impractical and as a result, end up using traditional assessment.

5.3.3 The Influence of Teachers' Experiences on Their Views on the Practicality of Authentic Assessment in Lesotho

The teachers were optimistic about the use of AA in Lesotho classrooms. First, they explained that they found this approach important because it is associated with meritorious effects. They saw it as a constructive approach that encourages profound understanding, skills development, and mastery of lifetime learning. These findings are in line with other studies such as Kankam et al. (2014), Asante (2023), Ozan, (2019), Aziz et al. (2020 and Alfian and Wiyayati, (2022). These studies have established that teachers are positive of using AA though they found it challenging to implement. These teachers indicated that teachers who practice AA are usually self-reflective a determined to engage more in authentic assessment tasks. The findings complement that teachers' determination to fulfil the practice of AA strategies influences their perceptions either positively or negatively towards using AA (Elmosaad, 2024; Maba, 2017; Reye-Sokolowsky, 2020). However, because of some challenges believed to hinder

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AA practices, some teachers develop negative attitudes that could be easily conveyed to learners. It was observed that teachers' negative perceptions of practicing authentic assessment can force them to avoid demanding tasks or ignore them completely and therefore decide to unburden themselves by using achievable tasks. These findings are supported by Alfian and Wiyayati (2022) that teacher' negativity towards learning, teaching, and assessment affect their practices.

However, despite the observed positive perceptions teachers have towards using AA in the classrooms, these teachers emphasized that using AA in the context of Lesotho classrooms could be quite challenging and impractical. Their concern was mainly on the lack of knowledge and skills about this strategy among teachers and the school conditions that are defined by the scarcity of resources, poor facilities, large classes, overcrowded classrooms, and learners who have low morale. The views of these teachers were that unless these conditions are improved, they could not imagine how the practice of authentic assessment strategy could be successful in Lesotho classrooms. This is yet another evidence to indicate that teachers were not practising authentic assessment and that if they were, it could have been for purposes such as participating in the science fairs, quarterly projects, and end-of-year assessment projects.

Based on the major findings of the present study, it is evident that teachers who participated in this study lack a deep understanding of AA principles. This may be rooted in the fact that majority of these teachers have used strategies loosely aligned with AA. The results of this study further indicate that teachers associate AA with several learning strategies, yet their preference to use traditional methods like oral questioning and quizzes reflects that there is a gap between the understanding of AA and its enactment.

Implications

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The significance of these findings is that teachers reveal a pressing need for professional development and strategized support to enable teachers to enact authentic assessment effectively for learners' growth. If this gap remains unaddressed, learners may miss opportunities to develop skills required for personal and academic growth. Furthermore, these findings imply that policy makers and education stakeholders need to prioritize AA in curriculum reforms and teacher training centres

5.4 Conclusion

From the findings and the discussion of this study, it could be concluded that teachers who participated in this study had some knowledge about authentic assessment strategies. This was perceived when they could define it and outline the benefits that are associated with it. Conversely, it seemed that teachers were unmindful of the concept 'authentic assessment' and they practised it without noticing. One teacher even mentioned having difficulty to define it since it was the first time hearing about it. With their limited knowledge, they were still positive about practising authentic assessment in the classroom. They believed that authentic assessment could benefit both, themselves and learners. These teachers believed that the strategy could effectively develop learners' knowledge and skills they need for life outside the classroom.

The teachers in this study falsely claimed that they were using the AA strategy in their classrooms. For example, they mentioned such methods as school or classroom debates, role-playing, presentations, and projects. These teachers even explained factors that contribute to the effectiveness of these strategies. Thus, the picture these teachers painted suggested that they were successfully using this strategy in their practices. Contrary to their claims, the challenges they claimed were encountering suggest otherwise. For example, these teachers explained that

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they lacked knowledge and skills relating to this strategy. This was also observed when they were asked to define the concept of authentic assessment. Their responses suggested that they were interpreting this strategy by 'the book'. Further, these teachers complained about schools lacking resources and infrastructures, overcrowded classrooms, and learners who were used to the traditional way of teaching that requires learners to listen and take notes. Thus, with the challenges these teachers claimed they were facing, it could be concluded in this study that teachers were not using this approach. As it is sometimes the case, these teachers wanted to appear to be using the methods that they believed were acceptable to others. For example, these teachers may have been exposed to the current views about teaching, learning and assessment, which demands learner-centred approach strategies to be used.

Another piece of evidence that may suggest that the teachers were not using authentic assessment strategies is associated with the teachers' claims of practising some of the methods that are associated with traditional methods of assessment. Most of these teachers claimed that they used oral question-and-answer method to assess learners. They explained that they did this specifically for learners to recall what they had been taught. The use of this method is often associated with a long-existing assessment practice that often requires learners to regurgitate the information they have learned from their teachers. This study concludes that teachers in this study had positive views of practising AA yet they practised it in a limited way.

Teachers in this study also believed that the current conditions that exist in Lesotho classrooms do not enable teachers to practice AA.

Overall Perspective. The essence of the study's findings lies in the recognition that AA holds significant potential to support teaching and learning in Lesotho's primary schools.

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However, its success in enactment depends largely on systematic aspects of education like resource availability, teacher training initiatives, and policy limitations. As highlighted in Chapter 4, teachers value AA for fostering practical and critical thinking skills of learners. However, its practicality remains constrained by structural and contextual bottlenecks.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The limitation of this study is mainly in the methodology. The study used a qualitative approach using a phenomenological case study design. Generally, a phenomenological case study usually engages a small number of participants that cannot be claimed to be a representative of the whole population. The participants in this study were selected reflexively from one school. Further, the study used semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion only to generate data that is often difficult to analyse. These methods could have been supplemented by other qualitative methods such as observations. As also observed, Davis et al. (2011) used a multiple methods approach that produced findings that are more robust, rich and compelling because they enable integration of data from different sources. Thus, other methods that could validate or triangulate the results could have been used. These could have included measurement of teachers' perceptions, evaluation of teachers' assessment documents, and other professional books, and classroom observations.

The other limitation of this study is that it investigated teachers' perceptions only. Perceptions are not the only factor that could influence teachers' classroom behaviour. Also, the results that rely on the analysis of perceptions only may not be reliable because many factors influence an individual's perceptions.

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5.6 Recommendations Based on the Major Findings

Based on the findings and the conclusions made in this study, the following recommendations were made. The following:

5.6.1 Recommendations for Policy

The findings of this study established that teachers are unaware of the contents of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy of 2009 that advocate for the use of AA. It is therefore necessary, that the Ministry of Education, with the help of policymakers develop and supply schools with policy copies, ensuring that every teacher has a copy and is familiar with the contents of this document. Also, the Ministry should hold a series of workshops for teachers in Lesotho that educate about the current educational policies, particularly those relating to teaching, learning and assessment.

5.6.2 Recommendations for Practice

This study also established that using AA can be productive in equipping learners with knowledge and skills that can be ideal for aligning what is taught in the classroom with what is required in the real world. Therefore, teachers need to be equipped with professional development through in-service training on authentic assessment for comprehensive understanding and successful practice. Secondly, it is recommended that schools be supplied with necessary resources and facilities. For example,

- NCDC should develop guiding templates for schools that detail how teachers should implement authentic assessment.

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- MoET and other governing bodies should provide schools with the required support including supply of resources, classroom construction, computer laboratory, in-service training and instructional supervision.

5.6.3 Areas for Future Research

Having evaluated the limitations of the present study, the following aspects remain unaddressed, thus are areas for future research:

- Future studies could investigate the impact of authentic assessment strategies on learners' academic performance, motivation, and academic readiness,
- Investigate how policy adjustments, resource availability or allocation, and curriculum reforms influence the adoption of Authentic Assessment,
- Explore how digital tools and platforms can support AA in resourced schools.

The current study primarily employed qualitative approach to examine teachers' perceptions concerning AA, which limited this research only on examining opinions, experiences, and thoughts. As such, it is recommended that future research on the same issue should use other research approaches such as quantitative or mixed methods approaches for insightful findings.

5.7 Summary

This study investigated teachers' perceptions of using authentic assessment in Lesotho schools. In the introduction of this chapter, the profiles of the participants were presented, the research questions outlined and a summary of findings presented. The chapter also discussed the findings of this study under the major themes of this study, which are Teachers' interpretation of authentic assessment; teachers' experiences of practising authentic assessment; and teachers' views on the practicality of authentic assessment. Further, the discussion compared the findings

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of the study with other studies that were conducted before this one. Also, the conclusions of the study were drawn from the discussion presented in this study. Again, this chapter presented limitations of this study and recommendations for policy, practice, and further studies.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol/ Focus Group Discussion Guide

1 Teachers' Interpretation of Authentic Assessment:

- 1.1 In your own words, can you please tell me your own understanding of authentic assessment.
- 1.2 How do you assess learners in your classroom?
 - 1.2.1 Explain to me some of the authentic assessment activities in your classroom.
 - 1.2.2 Which strategies do you use for authentic assessment?
 - 1.2.3 Which resources do you use for authentic assessment?
 - 1.2.4 How do you ensure the effective use of authentic assessment strategies and practices in your classroom?

2. Teachers' Experiences of Using Authentic Assessment in the Classroom;

- 2.1 What are the benefits of using authentic assessment in the classrooms?
- 2.2 What are the challenges of using authentic assessment in the classrooms in terms of;
 - 2.2.1 Availability of resources for example; (materials, time)?
 - 2.2.2 Teachers' knowledge and skills?
 - 2.2.3 Learner calibre?
 - 2.2.4 Learner-teacher ratio?

3 Teachers' Views of Using Authentic Assessment in Lesotho Classrooms;

- 3.1 What are your personal views on using authentic assessment strategies in Lesotho classrooms?
 - 3.1.1 What do you see as opportunities?
 - 3.1.2 What would be advantages/benefits?
 - 3.1.3 What would be the challenges?

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- 3.2 How could authentic assessment benefit school graduates in Lesotho classrooms?
- 3.3 How practical is it to use authentic assessment in Lesotho classrooms? In terms of:
 - 3.3.1 Availability of resources (material and time)?
 - 3.3.2 Teachers' knowledge and skills?
 - 3.3.3 Learner calibre (interest, abilities, motivation)?
 - 3.3.4 Learners teacher ratio?

4 CLOSING QUESTIONS

- 3 Is there anything we have not talked about that you would like to share with me?
- 4 Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you for your participation.

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Appendix B: Participants' Profile Template

1 Personal Profile

1.1 Name of the school

1.2 Gender

2 Professional Profile

2.1 Formal Training

2.1.1 Highest Qualification

2.1.2 Institution Obtained

2.2 Teaching experiences

2.2.1 The number of years taught

2.2.2 List the grades you have taught

2.2.3 Grades you are currently teaching?

2.3 Professional Development

2.3.1 Workshop or short courses on teaching and assessment that you have attended in the last five years:

Date	Workshop Title	Duration of the workshop	Hosting institutes

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2.3.2 Did you ever attend a workshop on Authentic Teaching and Assessment?

	Y
	ES
	N
	O

2.3.3 If YES, Which authentic assessment skills and strategies were you equipped with?

2.3.4 Are you using any skills or strategies you were equipped within the classroom?

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Appendix C: Consent Letter for Principal

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

Telephone: +266 22340601/3631
Fax: +266 22340000
<http://www.nul.ls>



P.O. Roma 180
Lesotho
Africa

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Foundations
Phone: 57756658- juliachere@gmail.com

26 February 2023

Dear Principal

RE: Introducing Ms. Mahlape Tšoana

My name is 'Mathabo Julia Chere-Masopha, the supervisor of Ms. Mahlape Tšoana who I would like to introduce to you. Ms. Mahlape Tšoana (200705143) is a postgraduate student in the Faculty of Education. As part of her studies, Ms. Mahlape Tšoana is *Investigating Teachers' Perceptions of Practising Authentic Assessment in Lesotho Schools. The case of One School in Mohale's Hoek District*. Her research proposal has been approved by the Faculty. She has identified your school for possible data collection.

On behalf of the Faculty of Education and Ms. Mahlape Tšoana, I am making a request that your good office gives her an opportunity to collect data for her study in your school.

Should you require additional information, please contact Dr Chere-Masopha through one of the following:

Mobile #: 5775 6658, or Email address: juliachere@gmail.com.

Yours Faithfully,

Julia Chere-Masopha (Ph.D)

Investigating Teachers' Perceptions of Practising Authentic Assessment in Lesotho Schools: A Case of One School in Mophale's Hoek District

Appendix D: Introductory Letter for Teachers

Dear teachers

I am Ms Tšoana (200705143), a postgraduate research student at the National University of Lesotho Faculty of Education. I am currently researching *Teachers' Perceptions of Practising Authentic Assessment*. I now request your approval to conduct a case study in your school. You were selected as the possible participants in this study. I believe your participation in this study will provide relevant and valuable information required for this study.

Please take your time to read the information below and feel free to ask any questions before signing a consent form. Your participation will be involuntary, and please feel as accessible as possible in responding to the questions. You are assured that your identity and ideas will be protected and held with respect and confidentiality and shall not be shared anywhere but for academic purposes if you agree to participate in this case study. You should not or can decline to respond to the questions that make you feel uncomfortable or that your rights have been violated. Where you feel uncomfortable with anything concerning the discussion or this case study, you can withdraw at any time and or can place your complaint to one of the following people;

➤ Dr Chere- Masopha (My supervisor and Postgraduate Research Programme Coordinator), juliachere@gmail.com

➤ Dr Tlali (Head of Educational Foundations Department) tebello58@gmail.com

➤ Dr Mosia (Dean of Faculty of Education), mosia296@gmail.com

Also, note that the discussion session in this study will be recorded to assist in gathering the information so I can concentrate on our discussion. However, you should feel

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free to object to the audio recording if you are uncomfortable, I will take some notes as we talk.

The discussion session is intended to take a maximum period of 1 hour. Your participation will be highly valued.

Yours Faithfully

Mahlape Ts'oana (A scholar)

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Appendix E: Consent Form

I agree to participate in the study investigating teachers' perceptions of practising authentic assessment. I agree to participate and adhere to the terms and conditions of this study. I have not been pressured or compensated to participate in this study.

Date

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Appendix F: Turnitin Plagiarism Report

Mahlape Tsoana

Teachers' Perceptions of Practising Authentic Assessment

 Master of Education Dissertation-2023
 Postgraduate Research
 National University of Lesotho

Document Details

Submission ID	128 Pages
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Appendix G: Editor' Letter



National University of Lesotho
Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Foundations
P O Roma 180
Lesotho

13 September 2024

Dr. J Chere-Masopha
The Faculty of Education
Department of Educational Foundations
National University of Lesotho
P O Roma 180
LESOTHO

Dear Madam

Re: Copy-editing of Ms Mahlape Ts'oana's MEd dissertation titled: *Investigating Teachers' Perceptions of Practising Authentic Assessment in Lesotho Schools: A Case of One School in Mohale's Hoek District*

I have copy-edited the above captioned dissertation by Ms. Ts'oana's to the best of my ability. If there are any errors, omissions and other mistakes are solely the responsibility of the author.

Yours sincerely

Tankie Khalanyane (Mr)
Senior Lecturer, EDF