Lesotho secondary school principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that **'Lesotho Secondary School Principals' Perceptions of their Sense of Efficacy regarding their Managerial Competencies'** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved wife, 'Malets'ela Mphutlane, for her unwavering support, motivation, and encouragement. You are my pillar of strength and a source of inspiration when I feel like the load is unbearably heavy. I further dedicate this piece of work to my two children, Lisemelo and Mpharoane, for their understanding when I could not give them all the attention they needed. You two give me a reason to always strive for success.

Additionally, this study is dedicated to my late father, Mr. Vanrooi Mphutlane, who gave me courage to test my limits and belief in myself. His determination and persistence against obstacles, taught me never to give up. It is also dedicated to my mother, Mrs. 'Magerman Mphutlane, who believes in me and never stops supporting me. I do this to make you even more proud of me. I also dedicate this study to my two younger brothers for their support against all odds. I feel blessed that the two of you are my siblings.

And finally, it is dedicated to late grandfather, Mr. Lekhela Mphutlane, for guidance and wisdom he instilled in me. I am forever grateful for having been nurtured by him.

ABSTRACT

Principals are heads of schools and the success or failure of schools depends on their effectiveness. They need to be knowledgeable in different areas of school management, and have strong sense of efficacy in managerial skills in order to manage schools effectively. The purpose of this study was to explore secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies. In order to achieve this, the study investigated competencies necessary for effective school management, determined principals' self-efficacy beliefs regarding managerial competencies, investigated factors that influence principals' efficacy beliefs, and examined the influence of principals' efficacy beliefs on their managerial performance. This qualitative study employed interviews, observations, and document analysis to collect data from seven secondary school principals in Lesotho. Both content and thematic data analysis methods were used during data analysis. The collected data revealed that managerial competencies necessary for effective secondary school management in Lesotho include human resource management skills, instructional leadership skills, and financial management skills. It was evident that principals hold a strong sense of efficacy with regard to human resource management competencies and instructional leadership competencies. However, they struggle with classroom supervision, and have low self-efficacy beliefs in financial management competencies. Moreover, this study argues that sense of efficacy is one of the key components of effective leadership because it affects principals' choice of activities to engage in, goal-setting, and coping strategies in the face of obstacles.

LIST OFABBRIVIATIONS

ECOL	Examination Council of Lesotho
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
TSD	Teaching Service Department

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CHAPTER 1

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school principals in Lesotho. This chapter introduces the study by highlighting the background of the study and statement of the problem. It also specifies research questions and objectives, as well as the significance of the study. A summary of the theoretical framework used in the study is also described in this chapter. Furthermore, the current chapter briefly describes the methods and methodology employed in the study, trustworthiness and credibility, limitations of the study, ethical considerations, and definitions of key terms of the study. It ends with preliminary outline of the study and the summary of the chapter.

1.2. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Schools, like any other organizations, need effective leaders who can direct them towards achieving their ground-laying academic mission. Although there are a range of leadership structures in schools, principals remain the central source of leadership (Wallace Foundation, 2013). They are entrusted to lead schools, and are accountable for schools' improvement and success (Elliott & Clifford, 2014). In Fook and Sidlu's (2009) view, principals create a sustainable school environment that enhance both students' and teachers' productivity because they are not only instructional leaders, but also motivators of their teams. Horng and Loeb (2010) opine that principals have great influence on teaching processes which subsequently improve student learning. Ward (2013) also concurs that principal leadership is the primary contributing factor to increases in student achievement. Wahlstrom, Seashore-Louis, Leithwoods, and Anderson (2010:6) assert that "… leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school related factors that contribute to what students learn at school." In a nutshell, a school's success or failure is both directly and indirectly related to principal leadership and management capabilities (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010).

According to Wallace Foundation (2013), a number of factors such as teaching and learning climate in a school, school culture, and school administration processes contribute to student learning in a school. However, these factors need to be combined so as to have the greatest effect because they have little effect when considered separately. It is the duty of the principal to combine these factors in order to improve the work of teaching and learning. According to Wallace Foundation (2013) report based on the foundation's research and field experiences, effective principals are responsible for shaping the vision of academic success for all students, creating a climate conducive to learning, cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction, and managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement. Effective principals are expected to perform these responsibilities concurrently in order to increase student achievement (Wallace Foundation, 2013). It can be deduced from the above account that principal's role in the success of a school is both critical and complex, and therefore requires both skilled and seasoned candidates to undertake.

Shantal, Halttunen, and Pekka (2014) identify four broad roles and tasks of the principal as pedagogical leadership, administrative function, financial management, and network management. For principals to perform these roles and tasks effectively there is a need for them to be professionally trained to equip them with management and leadership knowledge and skills (Farah, 2013). On the other hand, Mathibe (2007) observes that many schools in South Africa do not perform well because principals are not appropriately skilled and trained for school management and leadership. Therefore, there is a need for professional development of school principals. According to Hutton's (2013) mixed method study on the effectiveness and impact of training programs for secondary school principals between 2006 and 2009 in Jamaica, principals' professional development plays a vital role in their work performance. The Jamaican study participants affirmed that formal training helped them to develop confidence in themselves, improve their ability to manage human resources and budget more effectively, build effective networking with other principals, and understand the role of stakeholders. Hutton (2013) asserts that a significant improvement in the leadership abilities of trained principals was realized as a result of the knowledge and skills acquired from the programs.

On the other hand, Federici and Skaalvic (2011) argue that the exercise of school management responsibilities requires a strong belief in one's ability to successfully perform those

responsibilities. Leadership preparation programs should therefore provide experiences and support structures that build aspiring principals' sense of efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2007). According to Zulkosky (2009) self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their capabilities to perform certain activity in order to get certain results. Lunnenburg (2011) postulates that self-efficacy affects learning, motivation, and performance because people learn and perform tasks that they believe they can perform successfully. According to Bandura (1977), efficacy beliefs are vital because they determine how much effort one will exert as well as how long they will sustain that effort when faced with obstacles.

Faced with complex, and demanding leadership, administrative, management, and instructional roles, principals need strong self-efficacy beliefs in their ability to perform their duties (Mesterova, Prochazka, & Vaculik, 2015). According to Ozer (2013), principals who have a strong sense of self-efficacy are more determined to achieve their goals and are more flexible to adapt themselves to changing situations. Their sense of efficacy affects the efficacy of teaching-learning activities by influencing the kind of goals they set for themselves, their efforts, and resilience and compliance against challenges. Mesterova et al. (2015) further opine that leaders who have strong sense of efficacy transfer their efficacy to their followers, resulting in the successful achievement of set goals.

In Lesotho, for one to qualify for the position of school principal, they are required to have a Bachelor's or Master's degree in education plus at least five years experience as a senior teacher (Ministry of Education and Training Circular notice 22 of 2011). That is, unlike in the United States of America, Scotland and Australia where candidates for the position of a principal are required to have gone through formal leadership training (Taipale, 2012), there is no leadership qualification needed for this important position in Lesotho. Any qualified teacher who holds a Bachelor of Education degree or more, with or without the educational management and administration formal training, can be appointed to the position of principal if they have required work experience. In a nutshell, there are no school leadership preparation programs in Lesotho; therefore, schools are led by people who have no leadership training. This is the case despite the Ministry of Education's observation since 1984 that ineffective school management and administration is one of the causes of poor student performance in examinations (Lekhetho, 2013).

It can be argued that Lesotho education system still holds the traditional view that a competent, experienced teacher is well-equipped for the tasks and demands of a school principal position. It is expected however, that an incumbent for this position should have the following competencies: Leadership, vision, and managerial skills; Strategic planning and organizational skills; Human resource and financial management skills; Management skills for complex information systems; and school management planning skills (MOET, 2010). Training in the above competencies is not considered a prerequisite for the position of principal. As a result, any teacher who possesses a degree in education or more, and five or more years working experience as a teacher, qualifies for the position of a secondary school principal in Lesotho.

To counter principals' incompetence with regard to school management in Lesotho, Motsamai, Jacobs, & de Wet (2011) report that the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) holds training workshops for principals. These workshops are meant to help principals improve their management skills, especially financial management, instructional leadership, and school administration. One would expect that with the workshops that are meant to enhance their performance, principals would have the capacity to successfully manage schools. However, according to Motsamai et al. (2011), schools continue to have the problem of poor management. It cannot be said therefore, that these workshops are effective and helpful to principals.

In addition to workshops, MOET inspectors make several visits to schools to advise principals on what to do to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools (Motsamai et al., 2011). In other words, MOET inspectors keep an eye on principals' instructional leadership so that teaching and learning may run smoothly. However, very little evidence of the effectiveness of these visits is realized in schools as many schools' academic results remain poor (Motsamai et al., 2011).

Moreover, to assist principals further, Motsamai et al. (2011) point out that the MOET, with the assistance of the British Government's Overseas Development Administration, developed a Manual for Principals of Secondary and High Schools. The manual was intended to provide knowledge of and guidance in school management and administration. All principals should be having this manual, and therefore know what they have to do in the management of schools.

However, all these efforts have proven futile to a large extend as schools still experience the problem of ineffective management and leadership (Motsamai et al., 2011).

Despite the weight given to principal's sense of efficacy for successful school management and leadership, an electronic and library search did not yield any positive results on principals' self-efficacy beliefs in Lesotho. This study is therefore aimed at closing the gap in literature pertaining to Lesotho secondary school principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy with regard to their managerial competencies.

1.3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Lekhetho (2013) posits that effective leadership is vital for creating productive and success-oriented schools. However, principals in Lesotho do not have adequate management and leadership skills. This is because they are appointed only on the basis of their teaching experience and educational qualifications (Motsamai, Jacobs, & de Wet, 2011).

It cannot be denied that school management is both demanding and challenging. The required competencies for a school principal position in Lesotho, and anywhere else, call for a formal training for one to acquire and implement them successfully. Without being formally capacitated to run schools through leadership training programs, it is not clear how school principals in Lesotho acquire required competencies for school management. Poor students' performance in examinations as observed by Lekhetho (2013) and lack of financial management skills noted by Motsamai et al. (2011) provide an idea of the kind of school management and leadership found in some Lesotho secondary schools.

Given the intensity and complexity of school leadership and management, principals' beliefs in their ability to successfully perform their responsibilities are paramount in performing their school management tasks (Santamaria, 2008). Principals who have low sense of efficacy are likely to shy away from school management functions they consider themselves inadequately equipped to perform. This may hamper the general performance of their schools and impact negatively on teaching and learning processes. Despite the researchers' awareness that principals in Lesotho

assume their leadership role without formal preparation programs, studies on principals' sense of efficacy in Lesotho are lacking. It is for this reason that this study is undertaken to gain in-depth understanding of Lesotho secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main question of this study is: What are secondary school principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies? The main research question is divided into the following sub-questions:

1.4.1. What are managerial competencies necessary for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho?

1.4.2. What are the school principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies?

1.4.3. What factors influence Lesotho secondary school principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies?

1.4.4. How do the principals' efficacy beliefs influence their management of secondary schools in Lesotho?

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to investigate Lesotho secondary school principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies. The specific objectives are:

1.5.1. To investigate competencies necessary for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho.

1.5.2. To examine Lesotho secondary school principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies.

1.5.3. To investigate factors influencing Lesotho secondary school principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies.

1.5.4. To determine principals' efficacy beliefs influence on their management of secondary schools in Lesotho.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

School principals are charged with the duty to spearhead change in schools. They are cornerstones of good schools; and without their leadership efforts to raise students achievement and the level of expectation for teachers and students, schools cannot succeed (Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, 2004). Therefore, care needs to be taken to ensure that suitable candidates are appointed for this important position. The study seeks to determine Lesotho secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies; the area which previous studies conducted in Lesotho have not addressed. Understanding secondary school principals' self-efficacy beliefs may contribute to close the gap in literature pertaining to Lesotho principals' perceptions of their sense efficacy regarding their managerial competencies.

The findings of this study reveal the relationship between principals' managerial performance and training. This information could help the MOET to review the requirements for secondary school principals' position. The ministry could also use this information to develop mentorship programs for newly appointed principals.

The findings of this study have also shed light on the training requirements of principals. Teacher training institutions can therefore use the findings of this study to devise pre-and in-service leadership training programs that may increase principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies.

Moreover, this study has yielded information on the influence of self-efficacy on principals' performance in school management, as well as information on the factors that influence principals' self-efficacy beliefs. This information can inform the principals on the measures to be taken to increase their self-efficacy beliefs and their school management in general.

1.7. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Given the complexity and demands of school leadership, and the fact that in Lesotho principals are not formally prepared for leadership role, it is important to investigate their views on their beliefs in their ability to successfully perform their leadership roles. Bandura's (1977) Self-efficacy theory was used as a lens through which to view Lesotho secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies, and understand how their sense of self-efficacy affects their behaviour and general school management.

Bandura (1977) argues that self-efficacy incorporates two aspects: first, the belief that one can achieve the desired goal; and second, the belief that one has personal capacity, which is knowledge, skills, and resources, needed to successfully execute a given task. Bandura (1977) posits that such beliefs have direct influence on the choice of activities and determine how much effort people will apply when trying to accomplish specific tasks and goals, and how long they will persist when faced with obstacles. People's self-efficacy levels can have either a positive or negative impact on their motivation to perform given task (Zulkosky, 2009). People who have strong sense of efficacy set challenging goals for themselves and are committed to them; on the contrary, those with low sense of efficacy doubt their capabilities and either withdraw from activities they consider threatening or challenging, or slacken their efforts (Bandura, 1994).

Bandura (1977) identifies four sources of self-efficacy as past performance, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. According to Bandura's self-efficacy theory, people's sense of efficacy is created and strengthened through mastery experiences. Bandura (1994) argues that for one to have a strong sense of efficacy, they need to have experience in overcoming obstacles through persistent effort. The theory argues that successes raise sense of efficacy while failures lower it (Bandura, 1977).

The theory also postulates that self-efficacy is developed through vicarious experiences provided by social models (Bandura, 1994). According to the self-efficacy theory, observing similar others succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too can successfully perform the given task (Bandura, 1994).

The third way to raise and strengthen sense of efficacy is verbal persuasion (Bandura, 1994). Through suggestion, encouragement, and exhortation, people's beliefs that they too have what it takes to succeed may be raised (Bandura, 1977).

According to Bandura (1994), the fourth way to raise people's self-efficacy beliefs is to reduce people's stress reactions and change their negative emotional propensities and misinterpretation of their physical states. Bandura (1994) posits that people may rely on their physiological states in judging their capability. They interpret stress reactions as vulnerability to poor performance.

Self-efficacy theory is relevant for school management because if principals believe in their managerial capabilities, they would not shy away from performing any management function. On the other hand, if principals doubt their capacity to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools, schools would not serve the purpose for which they are established. In this study, the theory provides the lens through which the researcher examines what really influences principals' sense of efficacy.

1.8. METHODOLOGY

This section focuses on the research methodology used for the current study. Research methodology refers to the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underlie any study (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Research methods on the other hand, refer to the techniques and procedures researchers follow when conducting research, and are determined by research methodology (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). As a result, in this section the following are discussed: research paradigm, research design, population, sample, sampling procedure, data collection techniques, data processing and analysis, reliability and validity, and limitations of the study.

1.8.1. RESEARCH PARADIGM

The study followed the interpretive paradigm. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), the interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the subjective world of human

experience. The interpretive theorists assert that reality differs from person to person; that is, individuals develop varied and multiple meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2014). This paradigm allowed the researcher to gain depth understanding of secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies.

Moreover, Creswell (2014) posits that interpretive researchers conduct their studies in the natural setting of their participants in order to make sense of their understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Application of this paradigm allowed the researcher to interact closely with the participants in their natural setting to form a clear understanding of the meanings they attach to their lived experiences.

1.8.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study took the qualitative approach. Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) posit that qualitative research focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world around them. It aims at understanding social reality of individuals, groups and cultures. Therefore, this approach is used to study people's lives, lived experiences, behaviours, perceptions, and feelings, focusing on the meanings they construct from their lived experiences (Creswell, 2003). In the present study, the qualitative approach allowed the researcher to interact with secondary school principals in their natural settings so as to make sense of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies.

1.8.3. POPULATION

The total population for this study was all secondary school principals in Lesotho. The researcher believed that principals would bring richness and depth understanding of the phenomenon under study because the study was about their view of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies.

1.8.4. SAMPLE

A number of factors such as time, expenses and accessibility prevent researchers from collecting data from the whole population; therefore, they sample a smaller group of the total population for their studies (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). According to Creswell (2014), a phenomenological study takes a sample of three to ten participants. However, Oppong (2013) argues that a sample size in qualitative research is determined in line with theoretical saturation. For the current study, the number of participants for the current study was determined by theoretical saturation. That is, data was collected until no new material was provided by research participants.

1.8.5. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Sampling is a process in which researchers select participants who will take part in their research investigations (Oppong, 2013). The most widely used sampling method for selection of information-rich participants in qualitative research is purposive sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015). The current study employed purposive sampling technique in the selection of participants who were likely to provide rich and depth understanding of the information related to research questions. A brief description of purposive sampling method is presented below.

1.8.5.1. PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

The sample of this study was drawn from secondary school principals using purposive sampling technique. In purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately selects participants who will best help understand the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2014; Kothari, 2004). It enables the researcher to build a sample that will satisfy specific needs of the study (Creswell, 2014). For the current study, participants were chosen from both church-owned and government-controlled schools. The researcher foresaw a likelihood that principals from the two categories could have varying sense of efficacy based on resources and support availed by their proprietors.

Participants who had been in service for at least five years as principals were purposefully selected to participate in this study because they had experience in the position and could be in a position to reflect on their efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies. Their participation was highly informative and assisted in understanding their interpretations of their lived experiences as principals.

1.8.6. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

In qualitative research, researchers collect data through interviews, observations, and audiovisual material (Creswell, 2014). For this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews for data collection to generate rich and in-depth understanding of principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies. Semi-structured interviews allow researchers to ask questions meant to elicit participants' views, beliefs, opinions, and behaviours on the subject being studied (Creswell, 2003; Nieuwenhuuis, 2010). As a result, interviews enable researchers to see the world through the eyes of the participants. According to Nieuwenhuuis (2010), interviews allow the researcher to probe and get clarification of answers in order to gain a clear understanding of how participants make sense of the phenomenon under study. In this study, the semi-structured interviews focused on what principals regard as necessary competencies for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho; principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies; factors that influence their sense of efficacy in relation to school management competencies; and how principals' efficacy beliefs influence their management of secondary schools in Lesotho.

The researcher developed an interview protocol in which there was a set of semi-structured interview questions to guide him during the interviews. During interviews, the researcher probed, guided, and encouraged participants to share their efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies.

In addition to interviews, the researcher used observation technique for data collection. In Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) view, observation technique enables the researcher to gather live data from naturally occurring events. It also allows the researcher to look directly at what is

happening than rely on study participants' interpretations; and therefore yields more valid and authentic data.

In qualitative observations, the researcher takes field notes in which he records the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site in an unstructured or semi-structured way (Creswell, 2014). For the present study, the researcher developed an observational protocol for recording information in an unstructured manner while observing. There was a section for descriptive notes such as accounts for particular activities or events, and one for reflective notes such as personal thoughts, feelings, and impressions. This technique enabled the researcher to determine if principals' self-efficacy beliefs were well calibrated. That is, it offered the researcher the opportunity to assess if there was correlation between principals' sense of efficacy regarding school managerial competencies and their actual performance in school management.

Document analysis was used in data gathering for this study. According to Creswell (2014), during data collection, a researcher may take both public and private qualitative documents such as official reports, newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports, and private journals and diaries. This data collection technique, according to Bowen (2009), is used in combination with other data collection methods as a means of triangulation. In this study, data collected from documents was used to corroborate data collected from interviews. Data was collected and analyzed from academic records, clock books, scheme and preparation books, classroom observation records, financial records, staff demographics and qualifications. These documents provided needed information that helped the researcher to ascertain whether principals' self-efficacy beliefs were well calibrated.

1.8.7. DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) note that "Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for, and explaining data." That is, it entails making sense of data according to participants' understanding of the phenomenon being studied, noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities. On the other hand, Hilal and Alabri (2013) posit that qualitative data analysis aims

at finding the relationship between categories and themes of data so as to increase the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

During data processing and analysis for this study, each interview was transcribed verbatim, while field notes were typed, and then given a reference number for easy retrieval when needed. The researcher then thoroughly read through the transcriptions and typed field notes to make sense of respondents' responses and interpretations, as well as observations made at research sites. Collected documents were also read thoroughly and reviewed in order to identify emerging themes.

Having read through the transcriptions, typed notes, and collected documents, the researcher colour-coded the data manually; that is, organized it into categories which were given names (Creswell, 2014). Coding allowed the researcher to put participants' responses into a limited number of categories to make them manageable for analysis (Kothari, 2004). Having coded each interview, field notes, and collected documents, the researcher generated themes across the study and discussed them in a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis.

1.8.8. *TRUSTWORTHINES AND CREDIBILITY*

Simon (2011) posits that in qualitative research validity refers to trustworthiness, while reliability refers to dependability. Whereas trustworthiness relates to the accuracy of research findings from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, or the readers of the report, dependability refers to the extent to which findings could be similar if the research could be conducted in a similar context (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). To ensure both trustworthiness and credibility in the current study, the researcher used member checking, triangulation, and pilot testing.

In this study, the researcher used member checking to ensure accuracy of the research findings. Member checking involves taking transcribed data back to participants to determine whether the participants feel that the data are accurate. It provides the participants with the opportunity to correct both errors of fact and interpretation (Simon, 2011; Creswell, 2014).

Moreover, the researcher used triangulation to ensure dependability of the study findings. Babbie and Mouton (2006) opine that the best way to elicit different constructions of reality is to collect data from different points of view. To achieve this, the researcher used three data collection methods, interviews, observations, and school documents analysis, to generate reliable evidence.

The researcher conducted a pilot study with two principals to ensure that interview questions were well framed to be easily understood by participants and to see if they could be administered with ease. Hazzi and Maldaon (2015) opine that a pilot study improves the quality and efficiency of the main study. This is because its results informs the feasibility of the main study and allows the researcher to assess if each interview question will give adequate range of responses. For the present study, the pilot study further enabled the researcher to see if documents and observations could provide useful data that would allow the researcher to interpret principals' self-efficacy beliefs regarding school management competencies.

1.9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study is the self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school principals in Lesotho. One of the limitations of this study is that it is subjective; therefore, its findings cannot be used to make generalizations. However, the study findings are still relevant because the data collected from selected participants was interpreted to give a picture of the prevailing situation in the leadership of secondary schools in Lesotho.

Another limitation of this study is the sampling technique employed when gathering data. The researcher opted for purposive sampling technique which is famously known to lead to non-representative samples as it only relies on the subjective consideration of the researcher than on objective criteria (Bless and Higson-Smith, 2000). This technique was used despite the critic for it enabled the research to select participants who can provide rich, in-depth information to answer the research questions.

1.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Creswell (2014), researchers need to think about ethical issues that may arise during their studies. It is important to write about these anticipated issues because researchers need to protect their research participants; to secure their trust; and to promote integrity of research. For the present study, the following ethical considerations were observed: approval by the university review board, gaining access to the field, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, and honesty in reporting results.

The researcher sought permission to conduct research from principals of the schools which were selected for the study. This is in line with Cohen et al. (2007) assertion that one of the ethical consideration is to gain official permission to conduct a research in the target community. The purpose of the study was disclosed fully, and participants were asked to voluntarily participate in individual interviews. Additionally, participants were made aware that they had a right to pull out of the study even if already engaged if need arose.

Moreover, participants were assured confidentiality with regard to what was seen and said by anyone involved in the study. The researcher respected participants' anonymity and privacy; as Creswell (2014) suggests, no uniquely identifying information was attached to data so that it may not be traced back to the individual who provided it. The researcher codified data obtained and kept separate file with the code linked to uniquely identifying information, and once the necessary data collection and analysis were completed, the separate file was destroyed.

Apart from that, the current study has avoided plagiarism. All sources of data and information are acknowledged within the text and in the list of references. Neither falsification nor fabrication of results was committed in this study. All findings of this study were reported truthfully.

1.11. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Bandura (1997:3) defines self-efficacy as "…beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments." For this study, self-efficacy refers to as a person's belief that they can successfully perform a given task (Bandura, 1977).

Principal self-efficacy refers to "…the principals' judgments of their capabilities to plan, organize, and execute tasks and deal with their relationships with people and institutions in the environment" (Federici & Skaalvik, 2011:578).

Competencies refer to skills, knowledge, attributes, and behaviours needed to perform given activity successfully (Teodorescu, 2006).

A principal is a leader of a school (Farah, 2013). In this study, a principal is referred to as a person who is employed as a leader and chief accounting officer of a school.

In Lesotho, secondary school level is between primary school level and tertiary level. It is divided into lower and upper secondary. Lower secondary consists of Form A to Form C, which is equivalent to Grade 8 to Grade 10; while upper secondary consists of Form D to Form E, which is equivalent to Grade 11 to Grade 12. In this study, secondary school refers to both lower and upper secondary schools.

1.12. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study by providing the background of the study and statement of the problem. The research questions and objectives, as well as the significance of the study, are clearly stated in this chapter. Furthermore, a summary of theoretical framework that underpins in the study also appears in this chapter. The chapter provides a description of methods and methodology adapted for this study, as well as preliminary outline of the study and summery of the chapter.

Chapter two mainly focuses on review of related literature and the theoretical framework that underpins the study.

Chapter three focuses on research approach, methodology and methods. It outlines the philosophical underpinning of the study and the research design used for the current study. Population sample and the sampling procedure used in the study, as well as data collection procedure, as well as data processing and analysis.

Chapter four focuses on presentation and analysis of data gained through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Chapter 5 provides discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.13.   SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the study by highlighting the background of the study and statement of the problem. It has also specified research questions and objectives, as well as the significance of the study. A summary of the theoretical framework used in the study is described in this chapter. Moreover the current chapter has also described the methods and methodology that will be employed in the study, and provided definitions of key terms of the study. It ends with preliminary outline of the study and the summery of the chapter. The next chapter focuses on the review of relevant literature and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature related to the importance of principal's sense of efficacy within the framework of self-efficacy theory. In order to gain in-depth understanding of principal's efficacy beliefs regarding managerial competencies, attention must be given to school management competencies, as well as the role of principals' efficacy beliefs in school management. As a result, this chapter is divided into four sections. First, school management competencies set the context of this literature review. Second, the role of principals' efficacy beliefs in school management is discussed. Third, factors that influence principal's efficacy beliefs are reviewed. Finally, the self-efficacy theory is examined as the core of this study's theoretical frame.

2.2. MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

Principals are heads of schools and the success or failure of schools depends on their effectiveness (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). They are the pillars of successful schools and without their leadership, teaching and learning processes in schools are unlikely to succeed (Tschannen-Moran & Garies, 2007). School principals are responsible for the smooth running of teaching and learning processes and have to ensure that ineffective practices are curbed (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007). Therefore, they need to be knowledgeable in the areas of school improvement, and possess skills to effectively put their plans into action (Herrera, 2010). It can be inferred from the above account that schools need effective principals who are equipped with necessary competencies to raise student achievement levels.

Bitterova, Haskova, and Pisonova (2014) posit that managerial competencies necessary for successful running of a school are divided into four spheres: strategy creation, teaching process administration, ensuring and developing school as an institution, as well as managing human resource development. On the other hand, Ikegbusi (2016) identifies instructional leadership skills, personnel management skills, and financial management skills as necessary competencies principals need to possess for effective administration of secondary school. Though expressing them differently, the scholars cited above are in agreement on what constitute necessary school management competencies which principals must possess.

Regarding strategy creation, Bitterova, Haskova, and Pisonova (2014) postulate that school leaders must possess skills in the development and implementation of common school vision, creation of motivation strategies based on shared values of the school, goal-setting strategies, and ensuring sustainable development of the school. Gurr (2015) concurs that principals establish a shared vision and act as guardians of the vision and champions of change. This is in line with The Wallace foundation's (2013) assertion that one of the responsibilities of school principals is to shape the vision of academic success for all students, and set rigorous goals for the improvement of the teaching and learning processes. Mendels (2012) also concurs that effective principals develop vision of commitment to high standards and the success of all students. According to Lunenburg (2010), principals' ability to develop the school vision and set goals is important because without clear plans and goals, staff would not be cognizant of what is expected from them and would therefore be inefficient and ineffective. Based on the above accounts, it is safe to say principals' ability to create strategies that improve the teaching and learning processes is crucial for effective running of a school. Being key agents at school level for tone and direction setting, principals' inability to draw plans and set goals can have detrimental effects on learner achievement and general school effectiveness (Tschanen-Moran & Gareis, 2007). Briefly speaking, principals need to have the capacity to shape the school vision, strategically plan and set goals for the school, and develop strategies to achieve the set goals.

In a case-study on leadership practices of a first year principal conducted over a period of one year in Southern California using participant observations, document analysis, interviews, and survey technique, Ward (2013) identified three principal leadership behaviours that have a significant

impact on student achievement. These are: setting direction; developing people; and redesigning the organization to develop one that supports the performance of the principal, teachers, and learners. With regard to setting direction, Ward (2013) found out that setting targets and direction is one of the leadership practices that have positive impact on student achievement. The principal worked collaboratively with teachers and staff to develop the school vision and establish the direction for the school. What resulted from this collaboration was a shared vision and goals for the year which culminated into improved student achievement. In short, having the vision developed and goals set, provided staff, teachers, and students a road map to follow; and they therefore worked towards the same direction in order to improve student achievement levels. This study provides a basis from which it can be said that the ability to set direction is one of the necessary competencies necessary for effective school management.

Another competence mentioned by Bitterova et al. (2014) is the principals' ability to administrate the teaching process at school level. It is necessary for principals to have instructional leadership skills in order to manage the teaching and learning processes in schools (Ikegbusi, 2016). This is realized when principals create and develop a learning environment effective for students' learning, and employ strategies that improve the quality of the teaching process (Bitterova et al., 2014). This competence is in line with The Wallace Foundation's (2013) argument that principals are responsible for improving instruction and creating a hospitable working climate for teachers and learners in order to realize desired outcomes. Furthermore, Mestry (2017:271) also found out in a study on Principals' perspectives and experiences of their instructional leadership functions to enhance learner achievement in public

Schools that principals' … "instructional leadership role includes developing a shared vision, providing appropriate resources, creating a conducive learning environment, undertaking classroom visits, setting high expectations for staff and learners, coaching and mentoring teachers." Besides that, principals are expected to coordinate the curriculum, supervise instruction, evaluate the academic programme, and monitor learner progress (Mestry, 2017).

Basically, principals cannot do all the work alone; they depend on teachers' competence to achieve the teaching and learning goals of the school (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). As a result, principals need to influence teachers and the other members of the school community to use their

knowledge and skills in order to implement drawn plans (Lunenburg, 2010; Mendels, 2012). To achieve this, it is incumbent that principals understand the importance of motivation and communication for schools to achieve their set targets (Lunenburg, 2010). According to Wahlstrom, Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, and Anderson (2010), effective principals communicate set goals with teachers and encourage them to join in because they understand that teachers' motivation is positively related to student achievement. Mutie, Masinda and Makewa's (2015) study on principals' performance as human resource managers revealed that principals can motivate teachers by rewarding them, catering for teachers' needs, treating teachers equitably and fairly, and creating conducive working atmosphere. Based on the above account, it is incumbent that principals are able to motivate their staff to ensure improved teacher performance.

Moreover, to ensure effective teaching and learning processes, principals need to understand and practice clinical supervision. Sarfo and Cudjoe (2016) posit that supervision is a leadership function therefore principals need to be knowledgeable and skilful in clinically supervising their staff in order to achieve set targets. According to Veloo, Komuji, and Khalid (2013), Sarfo and Cudjoe (2016), and Okorji and Ogbo (2013), clinical supervision is a process of helping, directing, advising, informing and stimulating growth in teachers, as opposed to merely finding faults in their teaching. It enables teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and make amendments in order to become more effective (Zaare, 2013; Veloo et al., 2013). In conformity, a quantitative study conducted by Okorji and Ogbo (2013) revealed that clinical supervision brings about greater teacher performance as well as improved learner performance. It can be drawn from the above account that principals' ability to implement clinical supervision in their schools is critical in the overall academic performance of the school. So, in addition to principals' ability to create and promote a hospitable teaching and learning atmosphere, they also need competencies in clinical supervision to ensure improved learner achievement.

Bitterova's et al. (2014) study on managerial competencies further finds principals' ability to run schools like professional institutions necessary for a successful school management. This managerial competence includes principals' ability to create and develop organization structure; clear distribution of powers and responsibilities; creation of a safe environment for teaching and learning; promotion of a school culture that supports team-work; and cooperation and good relation

with the school environment (Bitterova et al., 2014). It involves establishing policies and chain of command, departmentalization, reporting patterns, and various administrative and subordinate duties (Lunenburg, 2010). This competence aligns with The Wallace Foundation's (2013) assertion that one of the principals' responsibilities is to cultivate leadership in others. Principals cannot be a jerk of all traits; they need the skills and expertise of other members of staff to successfully run the schools. As a result, they need to be skilful in developing organization structure, line of authority, and distributing powers and responsibilities according to need.

The last managerial competence in Bitterova's et al. (2014) findings is managing human resource development. In this sphere, the researchers highlight the need for principals to be skilful in leading and controlling their staff; encouraging continual development and further professional training; as well as team-building and development. In conformity, Mutie, Masinda and Makewa (2015) revealed in a study on principals' performance as human resource managers that principals encourage teachers' professional development by sponsoring them to attend seminars, and participating in staff discussion forums. Moreover, they empower teachers by appointing them to leadership positions in their departments, and help them improve on their skills, knowledge and performance.

On the other hand, Lunenburg (2010) and Mendels (2012) postulate that principals are tasked with the duty to hire competent personnel; and when necessary, develop their staff in the skills required to carry out their task assignments. Horng and Loeb (2010) concur that effective principals strategically hire and know how to retain effective teachers while developing or removing underperforming ones. In concurrence, findings from Emily's (2015) survey on the roles of school principals as human resource managers in Nandi County, Kenya, indicate that principals recruit staff in schools, encourage team work, empower staff, and encourage them to develop their careers. Furthermore, Versland and Erickson (2017) report that principals share leadership with others by developing capacity, and publicly recognising strengths and skills in others. In short, principals manage people; and so they need to be equipped with the necessary expertise to perform this task effectively.

Apart from that, principals' ability to communicate effectively with their staff and other relevant sectors is important for the successful running of schools. A study by Tyler (2016) on communication behaviours of principals of high performing Title 1 elementary schools in Virginia revealed that information sharing with staff and collaborative decision-making are important for effective running of a school. Tyler's (2016) findings reveal that it is important for principals to be skilful in communicating with staff using several modes of communication such as emails, face-to-face and personal communications, minimal use of whole-school meetings, and principal participation in grade level meetings. Additionally, this research concluded that communication skills are necessary for building trust between school principals and teachers, because trusting relationships are vital for leading teachers toward effective instruction.

Another study that bears evidence to necessary managerial competencies for effective performance of school principals is the quantitative study on management competency needs of principals for effective administration of secondary schools that was conducted in Nigeria by Ikegbusi (2016). The study findings identify three competencies that the hundred principals who participated in the study considered necessary for effective school management. These competencies are: instructional leadership skills, personnel management skills, and financial management skills. Regarding instructional leadership skills, the study findings highlight that principals need the following competencies for effective administration of secondary schools: cooperation with the teachers in defining objectives of the school and selecting strategies to achieve those objectives; subject and class allocation, and availing resources according to need; team work; supervision; and monitoring. On the other hand, with regard to personnel management skills, the researcher posits that principals should be able to motivate staff; appreciate efforts made by the staff; communicate effectively with staff; involve staff in decision-making on matters that concern them; and encourage staff professional development.

As far as financial management skills are concerned, the findings revealed that principals need to be skilled in planning and sourcing funds for school development; delegating the mechanisms of financial matters to capable staff; monitoring financial matters delegated to staff; working within school budget; and keeping accurate financial records (Ikegbusi, 2016). Based on the above

account, principals are required to possess competencies in instructional management, human resource management, and financial management in order to manage schools effectively.

Additionally, Nwafukwa and Sunday (2015) also concur that financial management skills are vital for secondary school principals because they enable them to budget, audit, report, and account for all school funds. In their study on the financial management skills required of principals for the implementation of the Universal Basic Education programme in Ebonyi State junior secondary schools, Nwafukwa and Sunday (2015) found out that principals are required to know how to budget, to audit school accounts, and to possess financial reporting skills. Skills in budgeting are important for they enable principals to account for the money entrusted in their care, and reduce possible over and under estimations during budget preparation. On the other hand, skills in auditing school financial accounts enable principals to prevent and detect embezzlement of funds or any kind of financial fraud by school bursars. Regarding financial reporting skills, principals need these skills in order to prevent corruption and account accurately for the funds entrusted in their care (Nwafukwa and Sunday, 2015).

The managerial competencies highlighted in the reviewed studies show how demanding and complex principals' job is. However none of the studies reviewed was conducted in Lesotho because both electronic and library search could not produce relevant studies done in Lesotho. The present study reveals that principals in Lesotho feel that they need the same competencies for a successful school management. The study further highlights principals' sense of efficacy regarding these managerial competencies, and shows how their efficacy beliefs influence their performance in school management.

2.3. THE ROLE OF PRINCIPAL EFFICACY BELIEFS IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

Artino Jr. (2012) describes self-efficacy as a task-specific confidence in one's ability to attain designated types of performance. In other words, self-efficacy refers to the strength of an individual's belief that they can successfully complete a given task. On the other hand, principals' sense of efficacy refers to principals' beliefs in their capacity to successfully attain desired outcomes such as improved student achievement (Ozer, 2013). Self-efficacy is one of the key

components of effective leadership because it affects principals' choice of activities to engage in, goal-setting, and coping strategies in the face of obstacles (Wahlstrom, Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, and Anderson, 2010). For instance, principals who have high efficacy beliefs are likely to set themselves challenging goals and sustain their efforts in an endeavour to achieve such goals. Moreover, such principals persevere in the face of adversity. On the contrary, principals who have low sense of efficacy may set themselves easy goals and give up easily when they come across challenges.

Federici and Skaalvik (2011) observe that principals are responsible for running all aspects of school operations and future development. As a result, they need to have strong efficacy beliefs in a number of areas of functioning in order to be effective leaders. In affirmation, Rice (2010) remarks on the complexity and multifaceted nature of the school principal job, and argues that the effectiveness of the principal partly depends on their efficacy beliefs regarding particular kinds of tasks. Tschannen -Moran & Gareis (2007) also concur that principals' job is both complex and demanding and requires principals who have strong belief in their ability to perform managerial tasks successfully. Being the core of the leadership team in schools, principals have to depict a high sense of efficacy so as to lead by example.

Federici and Skaalvik's (2011) Norwegian study on the relationship between principals' self-efficacy and work engagement reveals that self-efficacy predicts work engagement. Federici and Skaalvik's (2011 study reveals that principals give priority to areas in which they have high self-efficacy and pay less attention to those areas in which they have low sense of efficacy. Federici and Skaalvik's (2011 findings indicate that Norwegian principals have strong self-efficacy beliefs in instructional leadership, administrative management, and school environment, and give priority to these areas when running schools under their leadership. As a result, areas for which such principals doubt their capabilities are not given needed attention or are left unattended. This suggests that principals' sense of efficacy determines which leadership roles to give priority and engage in anticipation for positive outcomes. In general, as Federici and Skaalvik (2011) opine, there is positive relation between self-efficacy and work engagement. When sense of efficacy is high, principals engage more in a given area of their job, but shy away from areas of their job for

which they have lower sense of efficacy. Briefly speaking, Federici and Skaalvik (2011) purport that self-efficacy predicts engagement.

Versland and Erickson (2017) postulate that principal self-efficacy beliefs are important because they influence principals' actions and behaviours that determine learners' performance, teachers' motivation, and activities that improve schools. An embedded case-study on the influence of principal self-efficacy on collective efficacy by Versland and Erickson (2017) revealed that principals have a high sense of efficacy in human resource management. The study findings revealed that one area in which the principal investigated demonstrated strong sense of efficacy is leading by example. The principal in Versland and Erickson's (2017) study worked collaboratively with teachers in different activities in order to lead by example.

Moreover, Versland and Erickson (2017) also reported that the principal under investigation showed high sense of efficacy in instructional leadership by increasing teachers' instructional effectiveness and promoting learner achievement levels. The principal did not only provided teaching and learning resources, but also secured external funding to make technology accessible to both teachers and learners in order to improve the school's academic performance. On the other hand, Mestry's (2017) study findings show that the instructional leadership role of principals "...includes developing a shared vision, providing appropriate resources, creating conducive learning environment, undertaking classroom visits, setting high expectations for staff and learners, coaching and mentoring teachers." Versland and Erickson's (2017) study findings provide further evidence to Federici and Skaalvik's (2011) assertion that self-efficacy predicts work engagement.

Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2007) posit that principals who have strong self-efficacy beliefs are persistent and do not give up easily in their endeavours. When need arises, efficacious principals adapt their strategies to fit contextual situations in order to attain desirable outcomes. On the contrary, principals with low self-efficacy beliefs doubt their ability to control their environment, and neither choose appropriate strategies nor adapt their strategies to fit contextual situations. In spite of failure, they do not revise their original strategies in order to find working ones; they stick

to their original plan of action and blame others for their failure (Tscannen-Moran & Gareis, 2007). In other words, principals who have low sense of efficacy do not take responsibility for their failure. They blame external forces for lack of success in their endeavours and fail to try alternative strategies which might lead to success. In short, sense of efficacy influences efforts individuals exert in a given task, and their commitment and resolve.

Furthermore, principals' efficacy beliefs consistently determine students' achievement growth. This is induced by principals' effectiveness in hiring and supporting staff, as well as creating and maintaining positive working and learning environment (Horng and Loeb, 2010). For instance, principals who have a strong sense of efficacy are likely to hire highly productive staff and provide them with necessary support to enhance learner achievement. On the contrary, principals with low self-efficacy are likely to be intimidated by confident prospective teachers who might challenge their leadership capabilities. Therefore, they are likely not to hire such teachers and compromise improved school performance. Based on the above account, it can be deduced that principals' sense of efficacy is vital to the overall school management as it affects choices and efforts principals put in their work (Federici & Skaalvik, 2011).

On the other hand, in a quantitative research on primary school principals' sense of efficacy and professional burnout in Turkey, Ozer (2013) argues that because of the demands and complex nature of the roles of school principals, principals who have low sense of efficacy experience anxiety and stress in schools. Such principals are likely to suffer from physical wear-out and sense of despair. Ozer (2013) argues that when principals do not feel efficient enough to manage crowded schools with behaviourally challenging learners, as well as those who struggle to improve their academic performance, they may be stressed and eventually suffer burnout. In other words, according to Ozer's (2013) study, when principals have low sense of efficacy regarding moral leadership they experience more burn-out, whereas when they have high self-efficacy beliefs their level of burn-out decreases. Principals' low efficacy beliefs therefore, have a debilitating effect on their performance in the management of schools.

However, in a quantitative study on the relationship between self-efficacy of leaders, their transformational leadership style and leader effectiveness within the management simulation game

conducted in two Czech universities, Mesterova, Prochazka, Vaculik, and Smutny (2015) postulate that there is no link between leaders' efficacy beliefs and leader effectiveness. The study argues that leaders who have high sense of efficacy without necessary abilities might set goals so high that they become unrealistic. Moreover, leaders' high sense of efficacy may be related to leaders' overconfidence in their abilities. This may result in the exclusion of subordinates in decision making processes and ultimately upset team spirit.

Principals' efficacy beliefs have not been explored much in Lesotho. As a result, not much is known about Lesotho principals' self-efficacy and how it influences their managerial performance in schools. The literature as well as studies reviewed draw evidence from elsewhere but Lesotho because relevant literature based on Lesotho context was not found. Moreover, the studies reviewed are mostly quantitative and do not provide depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation from principals' perspective. The present study is therefore meant to bridge this gap and provide qualitative information on this subject matter through interaction with people who have lived experiences.

2.4. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PRINCIPALS' EFFICACY BELIEFS

Versland (2013) notes that sense of efficacy can be either positive or negative. When positive, perceptions of self-efficacy empower people to action, while negative perceptions make people doubt their capabilities and shy away from engaging in given tasks. Since principals' self-efficacy beliefs are related to their performance as school leaders, it is vital that factors that influence development of these beliefs are addressed (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2007). Below is a detailed discussion of a number of factors which influence principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Professional training of school principals is crucial for effective running of schools because it improves principals' self-confidence and enables them to perform their managerial duties with greater level of certainty and determination (Hutton, 2013). A mixed method study aimed at

evaluating the training program for secondary school principals conducted between 2006 and 2009 in Jamaica by Hutton (2013) reveals that participants gained managerial and networking skills from that training program. The program participants developed confidence in self as a result of exposure, experience, and competencies gained from the courses and the program setting which enabled them to perform leadership roles with certainty and will power. Participants' developed self-confidence enabled them to manage human resource better, improve relations with external organizations and be effective instructional leaders. Generally, the training program enhanced participants' beliefs in their ability to perform leadership duties with greater effectiveness and efficiency. Based on the above account, it can be concluded that formal training of school principals is one of the contributing factors to their efficacy beliefs.

However, specific kinds of training program experiences should be designed to enhance principals' perceptions of their efficacy. For instance, principals' training programs should enable principals to cope with greater levels of stress and conquer feelings of self-doubt (Versland, 2013). The programs should provide principals with challenges which, after successful completion, will help principals to conquer their feelings of inadequacy and enhance their self-efficacy. In concurrence, Yirci and Kocabas (2010) posit that training of new principals require carefully structured pre-service and in-service leadership training. For instance, during training, aspiring principals may be given case-studies and problem-solving assignments to apply specific theories they will have learned to develop mastery experience (Versland, 2013). Successful completion of these assignments is likely to enhance their beliefs in their capability to successfully perform similar tasks in the future.

In a multiple case study undertaken by Shantal, Halttunen, and Pekka (2014) in Finland on sources of principals' leadership practices, the eight study participants identified, among other things, knowledge they gained from leadership theories taught in leadership training programs as one of the sources of their leadership practices. According to Shantal et al. (2014) study, successful application of learned management and leadership theories on given case-studies and problem-solving assignments provide aspiring principals with the conviction that they can successfully run schools. Based on the above account, equipping principals with leadership and management theories, and providing them with practical experiences, enhance their sense of efficacy.

Basically, Shantal et al. (2014) study highlights the importance of professional leadership training in enhancing principals' sense of efficacy. The study revealed that theory and practice offered to principals during training play a paramount role in enhancing principals' self-efficacy. While theory relates to leadership courses offered during training, practice involves internships, mentoring, coaching, and practicum (Shantal et al., 2014). The participants in the study claimed that due to leadership courses offered during training, they are good listeners, practice team-work and collaboration, and are able to manage their staff. In short, principal leadership training programs have a great influence on principals' perceived self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2007).

Furthermore, Mgandi, Mathuva, and Egondi's (2017) study on factors influencing principals' capability in financial management in public secondary schools in Kaloleni and Rabai sub-counties reveal that principals' financial literacy, in-service training and financial manuals influence principals' financial management capabilities to a greater extent. The in-service training activities and manuals reported in Mgandi et al. (2017) study include financial management seminars and workshops, financial guidelines manual, and consultations. Based on this account, attempts need to be made to enhance principals' financial literacy so that they can manage school funds effectively. Frequent refresher courses are necessary to keep principals up-to-date with financial management strategies in order for them to be effective in their schools' financial management.

MONITORING

Another factor that influences principals' financial management capability reported in Mgandi et al. (2017) study is close monitoring of the way they use money. The study revealed that financial management committee's aspects of financial control practices such as cash purchases restrictions, petty cash limits, budget restrictions, and expenditure authorization influence principals' financial management capabilities to a greater extent. With some level of monitoring, principals are careful with their schools' funds, and in turn sharpen their financial management competencies.

MENTORING

Another factor that can contribute significantly in the development of principals' efficacy beliefs is mentoring because it can expose principals to both vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion. The formal leadership training programs offered at the university are mainly theoretical and do not give aspiring principals the practical feel of the role of a principal (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). As a result, novice principals struggle a lot in the first years as principals because they find it difficult to correlate learned theory with practice if they do not have mentors. Hall (2008) also concurs that most new principals start their leadership roles in schools without expert guidance and supervision. So, training programs need to provide aspiring principals with field opportunities to practice learned theories of leadership and acquired skills under the guidance and supervision of seasoned principals as their mentors (Shanatal et al., 2014; Darling-Hummond et al., 2007). Afforded an opportunity to meet and learn from seasoned principals who can illustrate and model effective school management practices, both aspiring and new principals' self-efficacy can be developed (Versland, 2013).

Furthermore, Yirci & Kocabas, (2010) assert that mentoring is a significant method which combines both theory and practice, and helps novice principals find their foot quickly in their new role as school leaders. It develops novice principals with the help of experienced principals who support and supervise them in a real school environment. Shantal et al. (2014) posit that if principals are exposed to practical experiences under the watchful eye of mentors and coaches during training programs, their leadership capabilities and self-efficacy can be improved. Yirci and Kocabas (2010) suggest that mentors teach novice principals how to develop their leadership skills in order to become experts in the profession. In support, Shantal et al. (2014) study on sources of principals' leadership practices conducted in Finland provides tangible evidence that both verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences provided by mentors can enhance principals' self efficacy. For instance, the eight purposefully selected participants in Shantal et al. (2014) study postulated that they learned a lot through internships organized during their training programs as they learned through watching seasoned principals at work. After the internship programs, participants in Shantal et al. (2014) study felt confident that they were ready to assume school headship roles, proving that mentoring enhanced their efficacy beliefs.

SUPPORT FROM STAKEHOLDERS

On the other hand, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, (2007) shows that the support offered to principals by education authorities, staff members, community, and learners themselves has a significant contribution on principals' self-efficacy. In a qualitative study on self-efficacy and "grow your own" leadership programs in Montana, Versland (2013) found out that all the three new principals who participated in the study had low self-efficacy because of lack of support from their colleagues. Being lone administrators in their schools, these novice principals did not have an opportunity to learn from experienced leaders or get mentoring. The lack of vicarious experiences as well as encouragement from seasoned principals meant that these new principals did not have role models to learn from, hence the loss of efficacy (Versland, 2013). Based on the above account, it can be concluded that the support principals get from people around them is of paramount importance as it provides both vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion.

On the other hand, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2007) quantitative study aimed at identifying important antecedents of principals' self-efficacy beliefs from 558 study participants across Virginia reveals that principals who perceive that they have adequate resources to do their job, and get interpersonal support from education inspectors and education office personnel, felt more efficacious. Furthermore, perceived staff and students support is also found to play a pivotal role in principals' sense of efficacy. According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2007) study, efficacious principals tend to perceive greater support from department of education, their teachers, support-staff, as well as learners.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Ozer (2013) argues that work experience is one of the factors that influence principals' sense of efficacy. In a quantitative study on primary school principals' sense of efficacy and professional burn-out, Ozer (2013) asserts that experiences principals gain overtime while overcoming challenges and problems enhance their sense of efficacy. Ozer (2013) highlights the complexity and demanding nature of principals' leadership role and opines that through experience principals

develop a realistic approach to leadership challenges. This in turn plays a significant role on principals' sense of efficacy. In concurrence, Eberhard, J. (2013:46) posits that "Making improvements to self-efficacy involves individual success with specific experiences. These achievements may lead to a positive perception of personal ability." However, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2007) argue that there is no significant relationship between principals' work experience and their self-efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2007) posit that principals who are poorly prepared lack motivation to exert necessary effort to lead successfully and hardly adapt their strategies and persist when they come across challenges.

NETWORKING

Another source of principals' self-efficacy beliefs identified by researchers is networking (Shantal et al., 2014; Ng & Szeto, 2015). Networking enables principals to keep in constant touch and render needed advice to one another (Shantal et al., 2014). Furthermore, networking enables principals to stay updated on the leadership performance of everyone in the network. Having conducted a qualitative research on the professional needs of newly appointed principals in Hong Kong, Ng and Szeto (2015) concur that networking with peers, as well as working with mentors, has a positive relation with principals' sense of efficacy. Knowing that similar others somewhere are successfully performing their leadership roles may provide other principals with a conviction that they too can successfully perform such roles. Additionally, encouragement and motivation given by colleagues within the network have a positive effect on principals' self-efficacy (Shantal et al., 2014).

None of the studies cited in the literature review on factors that influence principals' self-efficacy beliefs above was conducted in Lesotho. Both library and electronic search failed to produce studies on this subject matter in Lesotho. Therefore it may not be concluded that findings from other countries automatically apply to Lesotho without scientifically proving it. The literature reviewed will guide the researcher with regard to the kind of data likely to surface during data collection. As a result, the present study presents the situation in Lesotho in relation to findings of studies conducted elsewhere in the world, and ascertains what actually influences principals' sense of efficacy in Lesotho.

2.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In qualitative research, theories provide lenses through which researchers look at the phenomena under investigation. They enable researchers to realize which important issues to examine, which questions to ask, as well as the study subjects from whom data may be collected (Creswell, 2014). The present study adapted Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory as a lens through which principals' sense of efficacy was examined. This theory is relevant for this study because it tabulates in detail different sources of efficacy beliefs, which is at the core of the current study. The theory also explains categorically how self-efficacy influences an individual's behaviour and thought patterns. As a result, the self-efficacy theory provided an accurate lens through which the researcher examined principals' efficacy beliefs, the sources of these beliefs, and how these beliefs influenced their managerial performance.

The concept of self-efficacy originates within Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory that was renamed Social Cognitive Theory in 1986 (Zulkosky, 2009). Bandura (1994:2) defined self-efficacy as "…people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives." In other words, self-efficacy is a person's judgment of his or her ability to successfully execute a given task. Artino Jr. (2012) describes it as a task-specific confidence in a given context. It is not focused on specific skills people have but on their judgment of what they can do with those skills (Zulkosky, 2009). Therefore, self-efficacy theory is grounded in understanding the correlation between people's beliefs in their capabilities and their willingness to successfully perform a given task (Shooter, 2013).

According Bandura (1989), self-efficacy affects people's thought patterns, levels of motivation, feelings, and behaviour. As a result, it does not only play a role in how people perceive their capabilities, but also in whether or not they successfully achieve their goals in life. In terms of thought patterns, perceived self-efficacy influences anticipatory scenarios people construct and reiterate. While those with strong sense of efficacy visualize success scenarios that prompt them to engage optimistically in activities, people with low self-efficacy beliefs visualize failure scenarios that undermine performance by focusing on how things will go wrong (Bandura, 1989).

Furthermore, perceived self-efficacy beliefs can either increase or hamper people's motivation to perform a given task. This is reflected in their commitment and determination to complete given task successfully, as well as their perseverance in the face of setbacks (Bandura, 1989). When people hold strong self-efficacy beliefs, they engage actively and put more effort in given tasks (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, people who have strong sense of efficacy approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered and do not shy away from them (Zulkosky, 2009). To sum up, efficacious people are intrinsically motivated to engage in activities because they believe they can produce desired outcomes.

On the other hand, Zulkosky (2009) postulates that self-efficacy beliefs influence cognitive processes such as goal setting and the quality of decision-making. Bandura (1994) asserts that people who have strong sense of efficacy set themselves challenging goals and maintain a firm commitment to them. On the contrary, inefficacious people tend to avoid situations and activities they believe exceed their coping skills (Bandura, 1977). In short, individuals' sense of efficacy plays a significant role in individuals' decision to or not to engage in a given activity.

With regard to behaviour, self-efficacy influences people's selection of activities to engage in. Bandura (1977) argues that self-efficacy levels influence both the initiation and persistence of a coping behaviour. In support, Hassan, Alasmari, &Ahmed (2015) posit that people's sense of efficacy determines whether they choose to face a challenging task or view it as impossible and shy away from it. People avoid threatening situations they believe exceed their abilities but choose to engage in activities they judge themselves capable of handling (Bandura, 1977).

Apart from that, Bandura (1989) argues that perceived self-efficacy affects how much stress and depression people experience in the face of obstacles. Zulkosky (2009) posits that low self-efficacy is linked to stress, depression, anxiety, and helplessness. Inefficacious people tend to dwell on their coping deficiencies and experience high level of stress and anxiety arousal (Bandura, 1989). As a result of stress and anxiety, people with low self-efficacy beliefs become pessimistic about their accomplishments and either avoid engaging in tasks or cease their coping efforts prematurely (Zulkosky, 2009). On the contrary, people with high self-efficacy beliefs experience low stress

and anxiety reactions because they believe in their ability to exercise control over threats and obstacles they may encounter (Bandura, 1989).

2.5.1. SOURCES OF SELF-EFFICACY

Bandura (1989) argues that efficacy beliefs are influenced by a complex process of self-persuasion that depends on cognitive processing of various sources of efficacy information. According to Bandura (1977), the four primary sources of information which people use to evaluate their sense of efficacy include: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. The information provided by these four different sources of efficacy information is not inherently enlightening but must be cognitively processed and weighed in order to judge one's personal capabilities correctly. Moreover, people need to act on their self-efficacy judgments in order to elicit confirming or disconfirming experiences that will further enable them to make informed personal efficacy judgments (Bandura, 1989). A detailed discussion of each of these sources of self-efficacy is provided below.

2.5.1.1. Performance accomplishments

Performance accomplishment, also known as mastery experiences, refers to successful completion of tasks; and if it occurs, a sense of efficacy rises. However, if an individual experiences failure, their sense of efficacy decreases (Zulkosky, 2009). Self-efficacy theory stipulates that successes build a robust sense of personal efficacy while failure, especially if it is experienced before a strong sense of efficacy is firmly established, undermines it (Bandura, 1994). Based on self-efficacy theory, individuals who have been successful in completing given tasks develop a strong belief that they can successfully complete similar tasks in the future. This is contrary to individuals who fail to attain designated levels of achievement for they have self-doubts concerning their ability to be successful in the given task.

Moreover, Zulkosky (2009) argues that a person who has developed a robust sense of efficacy due to continued successful completion of given tasks is not easily troubled by setbacks. For examples, employees who successfully complete job-related tasks are likely to feel more confident that they

will successfully complete similar tasks in the future than those who have been unsuccessful in their attempts to complete given tasks (Lunenburg, 2011). In the same way, school principals who have been successful in running schools are likely to have a higher sense of efficacy than those who struggle in their leadership roles. In other words, successful completion of tasks boosts workers' sense of efficacy while failure undermines it.

Self-efficacy theory postulates that a resilient sense of efficacy can be built by overcoming difficulties through persistent effort (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1994). Mastery experiences of easy tasks make people to expect quick results, and their self-efficacy is easily undermined by failure. Therefore, obstacles that people encounter in life are useful to teach them that success requires some amount of endurance and persistent effort (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy theory suggests that when people are convinced that they are capable of producing required outcome, they persevere in the face of adversity and quickly regain their sense of efficacy after unsuccessful encounters (Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1994). Out of the four sources of efficacy information, performance accomplishments has been found to be the most influential especially because they are based on personal mastery experiences (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1994).

2.5.1.2. Vicarious experiences

Another source of information people use to create and strengthen their sense of efficacy is vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1994; Zulkosky, 2009). These experiences happen when people observe others perform a task and feel confident that they too have what it takes to successfully perform similar tasks (Zulkosky, 2009). In other words, people develop and strengthen their personal efficacy beliefs by judging their capabilities in comparison with performance of others (Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy theory asserts that observing similar others execute a task successfully gives the observer the conviction that they too can perform a similar task successfully. In the same way, seeing similar others fail despite sustained efforts makes the observer doubt their capabilities (Bandura, 1994). Based on the self-efficacy theory, it

can be deduced that principals' sense of efficacy may be either enhanced or debilitated by performance of other principals with whom they regard similar.

However, compared to mastery experiences, vicarious experiences are less dependable sources of information for the development of personal efficacy beliefs. This is because efficacy beliefs based on modelling alone are weaker and susceptible to change (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore self-efficacy theory postulates that the impact of vicarious experiences on perceived self-efficacy is strongly dependent on the perceived similarities with observed models. That is, model's accomplishments and failures are more persuasive when the observer perceives the model as their equal or having similar capabilities with them (Bandura, 1994). Watching more senior or experienced models therefore, may not provide useful information for one to develop informed self-efficacy beliefs. For instance, if a secondary school principal watches another principal whom they consider superior and more experienced perform a task successfully, their sense of efficacy may not be influenced as well as if the principal was observing another principal they consider relatively equal.

2.5.1.3.   Verbal persuasion

The third source of self-efficacy beliefs is verbal persuasion, and all other types of social influences indicating that one has necessary capabilities to complete a particular task (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1994; Lunenburg, 2011; Zulkosky, 2009). This involves convincing individuals that they have what it take to successfully complete a given activity (Lunenburg, 2011). In other words, people tend to rely on what others say and how they respond to their performance when making self-assessment of their capabilities related to a given activity.

Self-efficacy theory hypothesizes that people are led into believing that they are capable of successfully performing a particular task or overcoming a situation, through social suggestions (Bandura, 1977). People who have been persuaded verbally that they have what it takes to attain desired outcomes tend to exert more effort in the activities they engage in and sustain it throughout the activities. Moreover, verbal persuasion leads people to work hard enough to successfully complete their tasks, and simultaneously enhances development of skills and self-efficacy beliefs

(Bandura, 1994). Based on this theory, encouragements from the community around schools, from other principals, and complements from the Ministry of Education and Training, and others can play a significant role in boosting principals' self-efficacy beliefs.

However, Bandura (1994) posits that it is more difficult to boost and strengthen a strong sense of efficacy through verbal persuasion than to undermine it. While unrealistic boosts in efficacy are quickly disconfirmed by failure to achieve desired outcomes, people who are persuaded that they lack capabilities, shy away from challenging activities and give up quickly when they encounter difficulties (Bandura, 1994). Furthermore, self-efficacy theory postulates that efficacy beliefs developed through verbal persuasion are likely to be weak because they do not have authentic experimental base (Bandura, 1977). As a result, in the face of adversity and failure to cope with threatening situations, perceived self-efficacy beliefs generated through social influences and suggestions are easily extinguished by disconfirming experiences (Bandura, 1977).

2.5.1.4. Physiological states

Finally, Bandura (1977) argues that physiological states provide useful information that affects perceived self-efficacy when dealing with threatening situations. For example, people interpret their stress reactions and tension as signs of lack of needed competencies to perform given activities successfully (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy theory postulates that people are more likely to have a strong sense of efficacy when they are not beset by aversive emotional arousal than when they are tense and viscerally agitated (Bandura, 1977). Furthermore, besides stress reactions and tension, Bandura (1994) posits that mood also plays a role in people's judgment of their personal efficacy. "Positive mood enhances perceived self-efficacy, despondent mood diminishes it" (Bandura, 1994:3). This suggests that one's state of emotions at one particular point in time can affect their self-efficacy beliefs regarding given task. When people feel down, they are likely not to feel confident that they can successfully complete a given activity, while a happy mood is likely to energize them and boost their confidence in their ability to be successful in a given task.

To counter the effects of negative physiological states, Bandura (1994) argues that people's self-efficacy beliefs can be modified by reducing their stress reactions and changing their negative

emotional tendencies. People need to work on their interpretations and perceptions of their emotional and physical reactions in order to boost their self-efficacy beliefs. Bandura (1994) asserts that efficacious people tend to interpret their emotional arousal as motivation to exert more effort in order to accomplish desired levels of performance while inefficacious people's view of their emotional arousal debilitates their performance.

Figure 1 below shows the current researcher's view of the relationship between Bandura's four sources of efficacy:
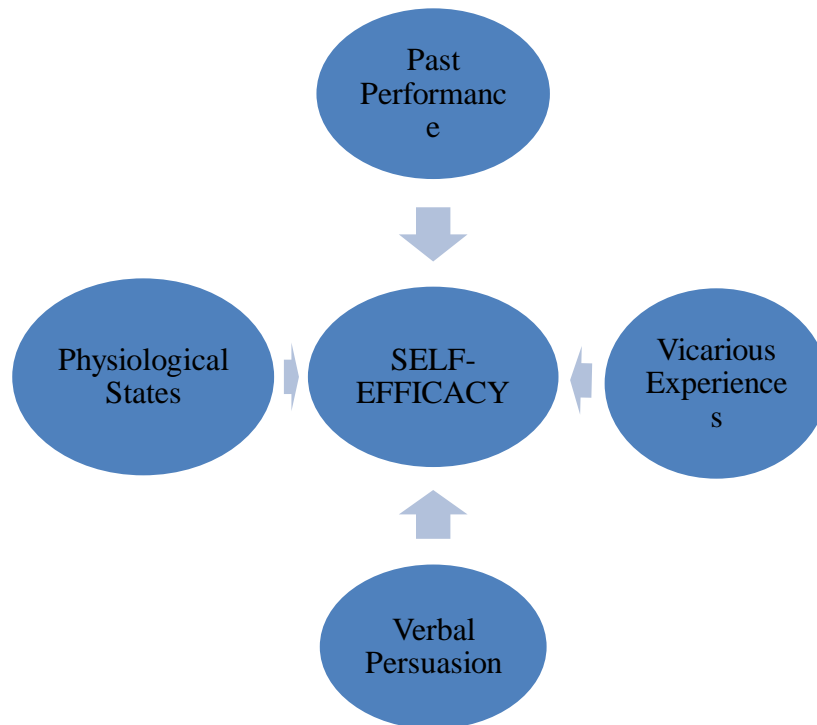
Fig. 2.1 Sources of self-efficacy

Basically, self-efficacy theory is relevant for school management because it provides some explanation for principals' leadership behaviours in schools. In addition to that, the theory brings some enlightenment in relation to what could be done to improve principals' beliefs in their leadership capabilities in order to improve teaching and learning processes in schools. In this study, the self-efficacy theory provided the lens through which the researcher examined principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies.

2.6. SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to focus on school management competencies and the role of principal efficacy beliefs in their school management competencies. Literature and studies were reviewed highlighting the necessary school management competencies and the role of principal efficacy beliefs on school management. Moreover, studies were also reviewed outlining the different sources of principal efficacy beliefs. This focus provided a rationale for using principals' self-efficacy as the central phenomenon for this research. Furthermore, using self-efficacy theory, this chapter provided the theoretical framework for this study. Self-efficacy and its sources were reviewed to provide a lens through which study findings were interpreted and analyzed. Having provided a conceptual framework for this qualitative study meant to explore the self-efficacy beliefs of secondary school principals in Lesotho, the next chapter focuses on methods and methodology, data collection and analysis procedures employed in this phenomenological study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1.   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2, focused on the review of literature on the school management competencies and principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies. A theoretical framework for

the current study was also presented in chapter 2. The current chapter discusses the research methodology employed to answer the research questions. Research methodology refers to the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underlie any study (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Research methods on the other hand, refer to the techniques and procedures researchers follow when conducting research, and are determined by research methodology (McGregor & Murnane, 2010). Therefore, the following sub-topics are discussed in this chapter: research design, research paradigm, population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection, data processing and analysis, trustworthiness and credibility, and ethical considerations.

3.2.   RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a plan or strategy of how a researcher intends to conduct the research in order to answer the research questions. It is basically a framework used to guide the researcher in collecting and analyzing data (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). A research design can either be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods (Creswell, 2014). Since the purpose of this study was to focus on principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding school management competencies, the researcher adopted the qualitative research design. To develop a clear understanding of the principals' perceptions of their self-efficacy beliefs, the researcher needed to interact with them in their natural setting in order to collect adequate data. Therefore, the qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to have face to face interaction with participants, observe them in their natural setting, and examine relevant documents in order to achieve a deeper understanding of secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding school management competencies.

Qualitative research is a subjective approach used to describe and explain meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). It aims at understanding social reality of individuals, groups and cultures. It focuses on the way individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world around them (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Therefore, this approach can be used to study people's lives, lived experiences, behaviours, perceptions and feelings, focusing on the meanings individuals construct from their lived experiences (Creswell, 2003). As a result, a qualitative researcher strives to understand and make sense of the phenomenon

under study from the participant's stand point. For the present study, the researcher sought to understand secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies. The qualitative research design enabled the researcher to interact with principals to make sense of their self-efficacy beliefs from their own perspective.

There are a number of characteristics of a qualitative research approach (Babbie and Mouton, 2006; Creswell, 2014; and Atieno, 2009). The first characteristic is that qualitative researchers collect data from participants' natural settings. That is, data are collected in the field or site where participants experience the phenomenon under investigation. This enables qualitative researchers to talk directly with study participants and observe their behaviour and actions in their natural setting. The researcher physically goes where the participants are located to interview them, and observe behaviour in its natural setting. This enables the researcher to gain better understanding of study participants and their setting, and allows them to be involved in actual experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2003). In this way, qualitative researchers are able to understand the meaning study participants construct in relation to the issue being investigated.

The second characteristic is that the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. This is done through the use of multiple sources of data such as documents, observations, and interviews (Atieno, 2009; Creswell, 2014). The researcher uses both verbal and non-verbal communication in data collection; processes data immediately, interprets the data, checks with participants for accuracy of interpretation, and organize it into themes that cut across all data sources (Creswell, 2014).

Thirdly, qualitative research is inductive. That is, the qualitative researcher uses data to generate themes as opposed to deductively deriving hypothesis to be tested. Qualitative researchers therefore focus on understanding the meaning that the participants hold on the study issue, not what is postulated in the literature (Creswell, 2014).

Moreover, qualitative research is descriptive in that the data gathered is in the form of words, pictures, quotations, field notes, and participants' interviews. Qualitative researchers are interested in providing detailed descriptions of the behaviour and actions of the actors in the study; and then

attempt to make sense of these actions in relation to the participants' beliefs, history and context (Babbie & Mouton, 2002).

Furthermore, qualitative research is emergent. That is, some aspect of the research may change or emerge during a qualitative study as it is not tightly prefigured. For instance, research questions may change or be refined, data collection process may shift, and participants may be modified as doors open and close for data collection (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2014).

The researcher in the current study found qualitative approach suitable for the current study because the main focus was to understand principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding school management competencies and what influences those perceptions. The study required data that were mostly narrative such as explanations and descriptions in order to capture a clear understanding of principals' self-efficacy beliefs. Therefore, the qualitative research approach enabled the researcher to interact socially with participants in their natural setting so as to conduct interviews, observe their behaviour and actions, and examine relevant documents. The data collected through these multiple sources enabled the researcher to build themes and concepts pertaining to principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding school management competencies.

3.3.   RESEARCH PARADIGM

Miskon, Bandara, and Fielt (2015) assert that research paradigms play a crucial role in shaping researcher's view of the world, and selection of the right paradigm for a study is pivotal for any study's research design. The current study adopted the interpretive paradigm in seeking answers for the research questions. The choice of this paradigm has been influenced by the realization that there is a connection between qualitative research approach and interpretive paradigm (Thanh & Thanh, 2015) as they both share a philosophical foundation. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world from the subjective point of view of those who are being investigated (Ponelis, 2015). As a result, interpretive paradigm enables researchers to view the

world through perceptions and subjective interpretations of experiences of the participants (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Interpretive researchers argue that reality differs from person to person; as a result, individuals develop varied and multiple meanings of their experiences (Creswell, 2014). In their quest to uncover reality, interpretive researchers rely on experiences, understandings, and perceptions of individuals to construct and interpret their understanding from gathered data (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Interpretive paradigm holds that there are multiple realities because individuals construct their own realities based on their social settings, cultures, and relationship with other people (Scotland, 2012). As a result, interpretive researchers conduct their investigations in the natural settings of their study participants. The qualitative methods of data collection used by interpretive researchers enable them to investigate these multiple realities through active social interaction with study participants.

In order to make sense of principals' perceptions of their efficacy beliefs, the interpretive paradigm allowed the researcher to conduct investigations in the participants' natural settings. This enabled the researcher to socially interact with participants through face to face interviews, and observe their behaviour and actions. Moreover, cognizant of interpretive researchers' argument that individuals construct multiple realities, the researcher was able to make sense of individual principal's sense of efficacy from participants' point of view. Conducting investigations from participants based in different settings and different work experiences enabled the researcher to capture and understand principals' self-efficacy beliefs from different points of view.

3.4.   STUDY POPULATION

The target population for this study was secondary school principals in Lesotho. Being actively involved in the management of secondary schools, principals know what it is like and what it takes to be principals; therefore they are in a position to share their experiences as principals. The researcher believed that principals would bring richness and depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation because they have lived experiences. In fact, the researcher

strongly believes that perceptions of those who have lived experiences have more weight than those who observe from afar.

3.5.   SAMPLE

Pandey and Pandey (2015:43) state that, "A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis." A number of factors such as time, expense and accessibility prevent researchers from collecting data from the whole population; therefore, they sample a smaller group of the total population for their studies (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). According to Creswell (2014), a phenomenological study such as the current research takes a sample of between three to ten participants. However, Oppong (2013) argue that a sample size in qualitative research is determined in line with theoretical saturation. That is, data is collected until new data yield no additional insight to the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, the number of participants for the current study was determined by theoretical saturation. In other words, data were collected until no new informationwas provided by research participants.

3.6.   SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Oppong (2013) defines sampling technique as a process in which a researcher selects individuals to take part in a research investigation. In research there is a number of sampling procedures to choose from depending on the research approach used. The most widely used sampling method for selection of information-rich participants in qualitative research is purposeful sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015). The current study employed purposive sampling technique to select participants who were likely to provide rich and depth understanding of the information related to research questions. A detailed description of purposive sampling method is presented below.

3.6.1. *PURPOSIVE SAMPLING*

The participants of this study were drawn from secondary school principals using purposive sampling technique. In purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately selects participants that best help understand the phenomenon under investigation because they have experience and in-depth knowledge of the focus of the study (Oppong, 2013; Creswell, 2014; Kothari, 2004). As Tongco (2007) affirms, purposive sampling is most effective when one needs to study a phenomenon with knowledgeable experts within the area of study. It enables the researcher to build a sample that will satisfy specific needs of the study (Creswell, 2014). Participants who have been in service for at least five years as principals were purposefully selected to participate in this study because they have experience in the position and can be in a position to reflect on their perceptions of their capability to run schools. Their participation was highly informative and assisted in understanding their interpretations of their lived experiences as principals. Participants were chosen from both church-owned and government-controlled schools. This is because the researcher foresaw a likelihood that principals from these categories might have varying perceptions based on work environment, resources and support availed by their proprietors.

3.7.   DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In their attempt to yield insight and understanding of behaviour, and explain actions from participants' point of view, interpretive researchers use qualitative methods of data collection such as interviews, observations, and role-playing to generate qualitative data (Scotland, 2012). These methods ensure adequate social interaction between researchers and their subjects in order to construct meaning collaboratively. For the current study, the researcher used interviews, observation method, and document analysis to collect qualitative data.

3.7.1. *INTERVIEWS*

For this study, the researcher used face-to-face interviews for data collection to generate rich and in-depth understanding of principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding school management competencies. Interviews involve semi-structured questions meant to elicit participants' views and opinions on the subject being studied (Creswell, 2003). According to Nieuwenhuuis (2010), interviews allow the researcher to probe so as to obtain clarification of answers in order to gain a clear understanding of how participants make sense of phenomenon under study. The researcher developed an interview protocol in which there was a set of semi-structured interview questions to guide the interviews. During interviews, the researcher probed, guided, and encouraged participants to share their perceptions on their beliefs on their ability to manage schools.

The interviews addressed all the four study objectives, namely, investigation of the competencies necessary for effective management of schools; examination of secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their school management competencies; investigation of factors that influence principals' sense of efficacy in relation to school management competencies; and assessment of the influence of principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies on their school management.

Interviews were recorded by audio-taping as well as by note-taking. Audi recording allowed for the transcription of the verbatim information shared by research participants to ensure accuracy in data collection. The researcher also took notes during interviews for the purposes of adding depth as non-verbal information was captured for interpretation during data analysis.

3.7.2. OBSERVATION METHOD

In addition to interviews, the researcher used observation technique for data collection. Kielmann, Cataldo, and Seeley (2012) posit that researchers use observations to complement or corroborate data from other data collection sources. In other words, observations allow researchers to check if there is correspondence between data collected from interviews and the actual behaviour or process. In Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) view, observation technique enables the

researcher to gather live data from naturally occurring events. It also allows the researcher to look directly at what is happening than rely on study participants' interpretations; and therefore yields more valid and authentic data.

In qualitative observations, the researcher takes field notes in which he records the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site in an unstructured or semi-structured way (Creswell, 2014). The current study used an observational protocol for recording data in an unstructured manner during observations. As advised by Kielmann et al. (2012), there was a section for identifying information, descriptive notes such as accounts for particular activities or events, analytic notes, and one for reflective notes on the whole observation process itself. This technique enabled the researcher to corroborate data collected through interviews and assess if principals' self-efficacy beliefs were well calibrated. That is, it offered the researcher the opportunity to assess if there was correlation between principals' sense of efficacy regarding school management competencies and what actually happened in their schools.

Observations in the current study enabled the researcher to gather data on secondary school principals' managerial practices. The observations focused on the general teaching and learning atmosphere which included among other things arrival time for teachers and learners, orderliness, and lesson attendance. Observations made on the above allowed for the interpretation of school management competencies which principals considered necessary for effective school management. Besides, data collected through observation method also enabled the researcher to examine how principals' efficacy beliefs in the managerial competencies influence their school management practices. That is, observed practices at the research site provided a picture of the role played by principals' efficacy beliefs on school management.

3.7.3. DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Document analysis was also used in data gathering for this study. According to Creswell (2014), during data collection, a researcher may take both public and private qualitative documents such as official reports, newspapers, minutes of meetings, official reports, and private journals and diaries. This data collection technique, according to Bowen (2009), is used in combination with

other data collection methods as a means of triangulation. In this study, data collected from documents were used to corroborate data collected from interviews. Data were collected and analyzed from academic records, clock books, classroom observation records, financial records, staff demographics and qualifications. These documents provided needed information that helped the researcher to ascertain whether principals' self-efficacy beliefs were well calibrated.

In the current study document analysis enabled the researcher to evaluate secondary school principals' school management competencies. Document analysis further assisted the researcher to ascertain the correlation between these competencies and principals' efficacy beliefs regarding school management competencies. Additionally, the documents studied provided an understanding regarding the influence of principals' efficacy beliefs on school management. Data collected through document analysis enabled the researcher to assess if there was corroboration with reported principals' efficacy beliefs from interviews.

3.8. DATA PROCESSING

Data processing implies editing, coding, classification, and tabulating of collected data to make them manageable for analysis (Kothari, 2004). On the other hand, Creswell (2014) highlights that data processing involves transcription of recorded interviews, typing of field notes, cataloguing of visual material, and sorting and arranging data based on the source of information. For the present study, the audio-taped interviews were transcribed verbatim and read thoroughly in order to make sense of the data according to the participants' perspectives. Thorough reading of the transcriptions enables the researcher to note patterns, themes, categories, and regularities (Cohen et al., 2007). While reading the transcripts to obtain the overall meaning of gathered data, the researcher wrote notes on the margins of the transcripts on patterns and themes that might emerge. This was followed by manual coding of items of data which appeared in each case so that items of data in one interview could be compared with data from another interview. Coding allowed the researcher

to put participants' responses into a limited number of categories to make them manageable for analysis (Kothari, 2004).

Observational field notes were typed and also read thoroughly in order to note of patterns and themes that might surface. The content was coded into themes in the same way interview transcripts were analyzed. Data collected through observations were used to check if there was correlation between data collected from interviews and what actually took places at the research sites.

Collected documents were catalogued, and then given a reference number for easy retrieval when needed. The documents were then studied carefully, reviewed, and analyzed by interpreting them to give them voice and gain meaning around principals' competencies necessary for effective school management. The content in the documents was coded into themes in the same way the interview transcripts were analyzed.

3.9. DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis focuses on descriptions and interpretations of participants' perspectives on a phenomenon under investigation (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) note that "Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for, and explaining data." It entails making sense of data according to participants' understanding of the phenomenon being studied, noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities. For the present study, both thematic and content analyses were employed during data analysis. These two qualitative data analysis methods are discussed bellow.

3.9.1. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

For the current study, data collected through interviews and observation technique, were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. This is a qualitative research data analysis method for identifying, analysis, and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In thematic analysis, researchers familiarize themselves with the data by reading and re-reading data, generate initial codes, search for themes, review the themes, define and name themes, and produce a report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After coding data in the data processing phase, the researcher sorted the codes into potential themes. The researcher then reviewed the potential themes to ensure that there were enough data that supported them. This enabled the researcher to see if there were themes which needed to be combined into one theme or if there were those that needed to be discarded. Having reviewed themes, the researcher re-read the entire data set to ensure that themes correlated with the data set. Re-reading of the entire data set allowed for the coding of additional data within the themes that might have been missed in the earlier coding stage. The researcher then wrote a detailed analysis of each theme in relation to the research questions. Moreover, the researcher checked for sub-themes within large and complex themes.

Thematic analysis is considered appropriate for studies that seek to discover using interpretations because it allows the researcher to determine the correlation between concepts and compare them to collected data. It also allows a researcher to code and categorize data into themes (Alhojailan, 2012). For the current study, no pre-existing themes were used; rather, themes emerged as the researcher interacted with collected data. This enabled the researcher to draw interpretations that are consistent with collected data.

3.9.2. CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis involves summarizing and reporting written data gathered from any written materials such as documents, interview transcriptions, and media products (Cohen et al., 2007). It involves open coding, categorizing, and creating abstractions (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). For the present study, the researcher studied collected documents carefully, and manually coded relevant sections of data in order to develop themes for analysis.

Having coded each interview transcript, observation notes, and collected documents, the researcher generated themes across the study and discussed them in a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis.

3.10. TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

Simon (2011) posits that in qualitative research validity refers to trustworthiness, while reliability refers to dependability or credibility. Whereas trustworthiness relates to the accuracy of research findings from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, or the readers of the report, dependability refers to the extent to which findings could be similar if the research could be conducted in a similar context (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). To ensure both trustworthiness and credibility in the current study, the researcher used member checking, triangulation, and pilot testing.

3.10.1. MEMBER CHECKING

In this study, the researcher used member checking to ensure accuracy of the research findings. Member checking involves asking participants whether or not the researcher accurately described their experiences. It involves taking transcribed data back to participants to determine whether the participants feel that the data are accurate. It provides the participants with the opportunity to correct both errors of fact and interpretation (Simon, 2011; Creswell, 2014). Besides, member checking enables participants to voluntarily add facts and feelings which might have been left out during interviews (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Basically, member checking creates opportunity to ensure accuracy and adequacy of the data.

3.10.2. TRIANGULATION

The researcher used triangulation to ensure credibility of the study findings. Cohen et al (2007) define triangulation as the application of two or more data collection methods in a given study. Babbie and Mouton (2006) opine that the best way to elicit different construction of reality is to collect data from different points of view. Triangulation is done in order to improve the chances that the study findings and interpretations could be found credible. To achieve this, the researcher used three data collection methods, namely, interviews, observations, and document analysis, to generate reliable evidence. In affirmation, Bowen (2009) postulates that examination of data from different data collection methods enables the researcher to corroborate findings across data sets and therefore reduces the impact of biasness.

3.10.3. PILOT STUDY

The researcher carried out a pilot study with two principals to ensure that interview questions were well framed to be easily understood by participants and to see if they could be administered with ease. Both principals had over ten years experience as principals. One principal had headed two other secondary schools before his current school while the other had only been a principal in the current school. The former principal held a Bachelor of Education degree as his highest educational qualifications while the latter held a Master of Education degree. While one was heading a government-controlled school, the other was leading church-owned school.

Both principals were interviewed at their schools, and the researcher was able to gather observational data on the general teaching-and-learning atmosphere at the schools and the schools' appearance. Furthermore, the researcher was able to draw some observations on both learners' and teachers' operations to make sense of how they actually operate on day to day basis. This gave the researcher an opportunity to gain a picture of how the schools were managed and assess if there was corroboration between reported principals' sense of efficacy with regard to their managerial competencies and the actual practices at their schools.

Moreover, one principal provided the researcher with some of the documents requested while the other did not have any of the documents ready. Collected documents included school budget and annual financial reports for three consecutive years, internal and external examinations analyses,

and staff demographics and qualifications. Scheme books and preparation books were not collected but scanned to note relevant data. However, the principal could not provide clock book, as well as classroom observation records as they were non-existent. The collected documents enabled the researcher to assess if there was any correlation between reported principal efficacy beliefs and their actual performance.

The pilot study helped the researcher to determine if the interview questions were well structured to be easily understood by the respondents, and whether they could be administered with ease and within a reasonable time. It also helped the researcher to see if each question gave adequate range of responses as expected. Furthermore, the pilot study assessed if both the observation and document analysis methods could provide adequate data to corroborate data gathered through interviews.

During the interviews, the respondents did not answer some of the questions as expected, and were sometimes too brief. As a result, the researcher had to probe and clarify questions until the questions were answered adequately. On the other hand, interview questions 5 and 6 sounded similar because answers to these questions were repetitive and therefore needed a lot of clarification to draw a difference between the two questions. However, the researcher found it best to merge the two questions; question 4 was used as the main question while question 5 was used to probe in a case where the main question was not responded to satisfactorily

It has to be noted that the researcher did not get all the documents requested, and that one respondent did not provide documents at all. However, collected documents provided needed information that helped the researcher to assess if the principals' efficacy beliefs were well calibrated. Moreover, the pilot study was beneficial because it sharpened the researcher's questioning skills and enabled him to devise strategies to obtain needed documents for the main study.

3.11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Creswell (2014), researchers need to think about ethical issues that may arise during their studies. It is important to write about these anticipated issues because researchers need to

protect their research participants to secure their trust; and to promote integrity of research. For the present study, the following ethical considerations were observed: gaining approval to conduct the study, gaining access to the field, informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity, and honesty in reporting results.

3.11.1. GAINING APPROVAL TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

The guidelines of the National University of Lesotho (NUL) were used to guide this study. For example, the researcher presented this study proposal before a panel of experts for approval prior to data collection. Therefore, the researcher followed appropriate procedures to get the study approved before venturing into the field to collect data.

3.11.2. GAINING ACCESS TO THE FIELD

Kielmann et al. (2012) postulate that in qualitative research it is important to consider how access to the field will be gained. For the current study, the researcher went to selected schools to present a letter requesting principals to participate in the current the study (Appendix A). This is in line with Cohen et al. (2007) assertion that one of the ethical consideration is to gain official permission to conduct a research in the target community.

3.11.3. INFORMED CONSENT

Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) posit that informed consent is important in conducting research. It includes a written or verbal statement that introduces the purpose of the study, its possible risks and benefits, and the procedure that would be followed during data collection, to the participants (Marvasti's, 2004). It is only when participants understand what the research is about and how their participation will be affected that they will give consent (Kielmann et al., 2012). For the current study, the researcher developed a consent form which stipulated the purpose of the study, its possible risks and benefits, explanation about choice of participants, and the data collection procedure (Appendix B). Having read and understood the details of the consent form, each

participant was asked to sign it if they agreed to take part in the current study. The form enabled participants to make informed decisions pertaining to whether or not to participate in this study.

3.11.4. VOLUNTATRY PARTICIPATION

The purpose of the study was disclosed fully before asking participants to voluntarily participate in individual interviews. This is in conformity with Marvasti's (2004:135) assertion that "Participation in a research project should be voluntary." Participants were not forced or lured into taking part in the current study in any way; their involvement was completely by choice. Additionally, as advised by Kielmann et al. (2012), participants were made aware that they had a right to pull out of the study even if already engaged if need arose.

3.11.5. CONFIDENTIALITY AND ANONYMITY

Moreover, participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity with regard to what was seen and said by anyone involved in the study. The researcher respected participants' privacy by ensuring that no one else knows their identity. This was achieved through the use of pseudonyms or fictional names when writing the research report. Moreover, as Creswell (2014) suggests, no uniquely identifying information was attached to data so that it might not be traced back to the individual who provided it. The researcher codified data obtained and kept separate file with the code linked to uniquely identifying information, and once the necessary data collection was completed, the separate file was destroyed.

3.11.6. HONESTY IN REPORTING THE RESULTS

The current study avoided plagiarism. All sources of data and information are acknowledged within the text and in the list of references. Neither falsification nor fabrication of results is committed in this study. All findings of this study are reported truthfully.

3.12. SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research design as well as research paradigm used for the current study. The chapter further highlighted the study population as well as the sampling technique used to select respondents. Moreover, data collection methods intended to be used to gather qualitative data were discussed together with data processing and analysis. Issues pertaining to trustworthiness and credibility were also addressed in this chapter. Lastly, ethical considerations were also highlighted in this chapter. The next chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the research methodology that was adapted in the current study. It highlighted research design, research instruments and data analysis strategies employed in the current study. The purpose of the current chapter is to present, analyze, and interpret the findings of the study on secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies. The data presented in this chapter were collected over four months using interviews with the principals, on-site observations, and documents review. Data collected using these three

data collection methods is presented and analysed concurrently. Only data that respond to the research questions are presented, analyzed and interpreted in this chapter. This analysis starts with a description of the study participants and context of the schools from the study was conducted, followed by presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the study findings.

4.2.   PARTICIPANTS

Participants for this study were drawn from secondary school principals who had at least five years experience as principals. Guided by theoretical saturation, a total of seven (7) principals participated in this study. They represented both government-controlled and church-owned secondary schools. Furthermore, the participants represented secondary schools located in both rural and urban areas.

All the principals selected to participate in the current study were Basotho men and women who headed secondary schools in Lesotho. Among them, four were females while three were males. In addition to that, three of the participants were aged between 46 and 50 years old, one ranged between 51-55 years of age, while three were between 56-65 years old. All the seven participants were mature women and men who could be trusted to lead institutions of learning in the country.

Five of these participants held Bachelor's degree as their highest educational qualification, and two had Master of Education degree. However, majority of the participants, five of the seven, had no formal training in educational management and administration. Only one participant reported to have a certificate in Educational Management and Administration obtained through correspondence with one college found abroad, while the other one was on a Masters programme through correspondence with one university outside Lesotho. Based on the above information, most of the participants did not have any leadership and management qualification. As a result, they were managing schools through managerial skills acquired outside formal training. Without formally acquired school management and leadership skills, there is a risk of not using the conventional leadership styles. As a result, a number of inconsistencies are likely to be prevalent in the participants' performance of school management functions.

All of them had been principals for over five years when the study was conducted, and therefore met the required experience for this study's participants. Two principals with the least experience had between 6-9 years experience as principals; another two had 10 years experience as principals; three had between 12-14 years experience as principals; while one had 26 years working experience as a principal. These participants had been principals for a good number of years when the study was conducted. After so many years in the position of a secondary school principal, they might have acquired some skills and experience in this position. They were therefore in a good place to comment on their perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies,

4.3. CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOLS

The study interviews were conducted with seven principals from seven secondary schools selected from four districts of Lesotho. The principals represented both church-owned and government-controlled schools; four principals headed church-owned secondary schools while three headed government-controlled secondary schools. Two schools were identified as rural schools while five were located in urban areas. The smallest school was reported to have an enrolment of less than 500 students, while the largest had an enrolment of 1436 students. Having looked at the participants and the context, the following paragraphs present data obtained through interviews, on-site observations, and document analysis.

4.4. PRINCIPALS' MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

To solicit information on principals' managerial competencies necessary for effective school management, participants were asked to describe a well managed school. In participants' responses, the following themes emerged: discipline, financial management, academic results, cooperation, happy employees, work commitment, and infrastructure. The above themes are elaborated below.

Discipline

Majority of the participants viewed discipline as an important feature of a well managed secondary school. Five of the seven participants (71%) explained that disciplined learners and teachers make a well managed school. They argued that if there were elements of indiscipline at a school, teaching and learning processes would not run smoothly, and that would negatively affect the school performance. The participants believe that it is the duty of the principal to ensure that all are well disciplined at school. This implies that there is a need for principals to be well equipped in dealing with discipline of both learners and staff in their schools. Principal STP of Tlokoeng high school indicated that, *"Discipline is a general term which includes many things: punctuality, lesson attendance, and the way the students, even teachers, behave. A teacher can't come to school after drinking alcohol. You can't come to school drunk."*

Principal LIL of Linonyana high school reiterated that in a well managed school there must be orderliness in a manner in which school operations and processes are run. He pointed out that a well managed school is a school where *"Learners know what to do, and everybody knows what to do. You can't find people who are loitering around."*

On the other hand, Principal MET of Motheo high school emphasised that in a well managed school learners behave in a manner that the staff expects them to. She further argued that when a school is not well managed, learners' discipline deteriorates. She elaborated as follows:

> *I have seen when things were not managed well, discipline started to be out of order. I could tell that there was something that we were not doing well as the admin and the staff when there were a number of elements of ill-discipline that were uncalled for.*

The observations noted during site visits confirmed what was reported by the principals during interviews. The observations revealed that discipline and orderliness was regarded highly by participating principals. At six of the seven schools there were teachers on duty in the morning to ensure that learners came on time for morning study. Only a few learners were seen arriving late

and getting punishment for that. Furthermore, in these six schools, there was orderliness in terms of lesson attendance because learners were not seen loitering around during lessons. Moreover, teachers signed clock book when they reported to work as well as when they left at the end of the day. Besides, teachers were seen going to the classrooms on time every time the alarm rang to indicate end of one lesson and the beginning of the next. This was further confirmed by drawn time-tables for each teacher to know where they were supposed to be, and when.

Financial management

Majority of the participants (57%) perceived a school's financial management as one of the indicators of a well managed school. Four of the seven participants agreed that in a well managed school, the school funds are used to answer the needs of the school, not for principal's personal use. These four participants argued that there is no misappropriation of funds in a well managed school. The participants indicated that where there is mismanagement of school funds, school needs such as visual aids, workshops attendance, and staff salaries may not be met. It is the principal's duty to run school funds effectively so that the school's performance may not be crippled. Principal LIL emphasised the need for school principals to budget school funds and keep to those budgets. He asserted that if school funds are run according to drawn budget, such a school may be considered well managed.

The four participants' advocacy for good financial management as a feature of a well managed school was supported by audited financial statements provided to the researcher by only two of the seven study participants. These financial statements showed clearly what was budgeted for and how the money was spent. However, the rest of the participants (71%) were not able to provide financial statements claiming that they were confidential. The participants' inability to provide the researcher with financial statements could have been because the statements were not prepared at all; or if they were prepared, they were faulty and therefore did not reflect the participants' good financial management skills.

Academic results

Three of the seven participants opined that good academic results characterise a well managed secondary school. These three participants regarded good academic performance as the ultimate goal for any secondary school, and if the goal is not achieved, there must be a problem with the school's management. For a school to produce good academic results the principal has a vital role to play because it is the principal's role to ensure effective teaching and learning in the school they manage. Principal QEL of Qhoku high school concurred that good academic results show that a school is well managed *"... because the school that is not well managed cannot produce good results."*

The information captured when the researcher reviewed participants external examinations results analysis provided evidence on the three participants assertion that good academic results characterise a well managed school. In two out of seven schools visited, Motheo and Qhoku high school, the schools' academic performance had been consistently good for the three consecutive years reviewed. With the remaining five schools, there was inconsistency in their academic performance. This could be because certain aspects of the school management were not given necessary attention, or the culture of good academic results was not instilled in both the learners and the teachers.

Cooperation

Cooperation emerged as one of the indicators of a well managed school during the analysis of the data collected for this study. Three participants viewed cooperation between staff and school management, as well as cooperation between the school and the community around it as one of the features of a well managed school. These participants explained that school operations and processes run smoothly in a school where the staff and the management work collaboratively to achieve common goals. In cases where cooperation is lacking, schools are not able to succeed in their endeavours because the school community do not pull towards the same direction. Principals have a task to ensure that there is team work in their schools in order to achieve their set goals. Principal MET of Motheo High School emphasised the importance of cooperation in secondary schools by stating that:

I think a well managed secondary school is where the administration of the school works collaboratively with the teaching staff. By that I mean where decisions are reached by or communicated to all the parties concerned. When that is done, any follow up that you make as the principal of the school, because it emanates from the discussions and conclusions that were made collectively, it makes life a bit easier because you are not coming up with your own things as the principal. You are not coming up with things that are unfamiliar in as far as teaching staff is concerned; anything you talk to them about is something they already know that it is what is expected of them

On-site observations made in five of the seven visited schools provided evidence that concurred with the three participants' submission to the importance of cooperation as a feature of a well managed school. Teachers were observed working as a team to supervise morning study and to ensure that late-comers got the punishment they deserved. The researcher speculated that these teachers were assigned this duty by their principals and their execution of the duty affirmed their cooperation among themselves and with the school management. On the other hand, at Kolomota high school where Principal KLM was in charge, four teachers were seen working together on the master time-table to ensure that every teacher knew which lessons to attend and when to do so. The researcher assumed that these teachers would not have done this task if they were not mandated to do so by the principal. Furthermore, these teachers would not complete the task on time if they did not team-work on it.

Work commitment

Two of the seven participants viewed work commitment as one of the features of a well managed school. These participants asserted that in a well managed secondary school, teachers are happy to do their work and need not to be pushed to execute their duties. They come up with solutions to emerging challenges and initiate activities and programmes at their schools. Without commitment to their duties, teachers do not take initiative to either address challenges or come up with possible development in the school. Rather, they wait to be told what do by those in authority, and in the process hinder the development of the school. Principals need to create a conducive work

atmosphere for their teachers to feel at home when at work so that they can perform their duties effectively. Principal LIL had the following to say in support of the importance of work commitment as a feature of a well managed school:

> *A well managed secondary school is a secondary school where teachers, to start with, feel free to do their work in the presence or absence of the principal. That is what I consider a well managed secondary school; where everybody feel that it is their responsibility to do their work; where subordinates volunteer to do things and don't expect to be pushed.*

Observational data collected in five of the seven visited sites confirmed work commitment as one of the indicators of a well managed school. Teachers at these sites responded positively and on time to the alarm that indicated the beginning of their lessons. These teachers did not wait to be reminded to go to class or to be fetched by learners. Besides that, in the staffrooms of these five sites, teachers were seen busy with some work at their desks while waiting for their turn to go to class.

Infrastructure

Only one out of seven participants mentioned beautiful infrastructure as a feature of a well managed school. Principal ADV of Atamelang High School argued that a well managed school has beautiful infrastructure and well cared for facilities. According to Principal ADV school buildings and its surroundings speak volumes about the school's management. While beautiful and cared for school facilities provide a conducive work and learning environment, dilapidated infrastructure and untidy environment is neither welcoming nor conducive to learning. Principals are in control of the resources needed to maintain and develop the school infrastructure, and it is their duty to ensure that their school facilities are well taken care of.

On-site observations at six of the seven visited sites collaborated Principal ADV's submission that well taken care of infrastructure characterises a well managed school. In these six schools, classrooms and administration buildings were well cared for. Motheo and Atamelang High Schools

further kept their surroundings very tidy. Some handy men were seen working on lawns removing weeds and cutting unwanted branches of the flowers on the lawns.

To further solicit information on the necessary managerial competencies for effective management of a secondary school, participants were asked to describe the main duties of a secondary school principal. The following themes emerged in the analysis of data collected on this question: financial management, work monitoring, liaise with other sectors, human resource management, staff motivation, and staff recruitment.

Financial management

Majority of the participants, 86%, reported that one of the duties of a secondary school principal is to manage school funds. These participants described a secondary school principal as a chief accounting officer with regard to management of school funds. According to the participants, principals ensure proper use and safe-keeping of school funds. This correlates with participants' submission that good financial management is one of the indicators of a well managed school. To perform this duty effectively, principals need to be equipped with financial management skills. This is because principal's incompetence in financial management has detrimental consequences on the smooth running of the school. Principal KLM of Kolomota high explained that a principal *"... has to draw a budget with the support of the HODs, manage the funds on behalf of the board, and report the use of those funds."*

However, only two of the seven study participants provided the researcher with audited financial statements to show how their school funds were managed. The other five participants claimed that they would not provide the researcher with the financial statements because they were confidential. There was no proof to confirm that these five participants regarded financial management as one of the duties of a secondary school principal. Perhaps they lacked financial management competencies, so they could not produce financial statements to be reviewed by the researcher.

Work monitoring

All the seven participants reported that one of the basic duties of secondary school principals is to ensure that teaching and learning take place at the schools they lead. These participants mentioned that it is principals' duty to provide teachers with teaching aids and to see to it that teachers go to class on time and teach according to the syllabus. They argued that it is only when teachers have teaching resources and go to class on time that learning will take place effectively. This duty correlates with the participants' earlier submission that one of the features of a well managed school is good academic results. Principal's ability to monitor teaching and learning processes has positive effects on the general school performance, and improved learner academic performance is realised. Principals need to be skilful in monitoring teaching and learning if they are to execute this duty successfully. In her submission on this issue, Principal MET indicated that, *"The main duties of a school principal are: to ensure there is efficient teaching and learning at the school; to ensure that there are teaching and learning materials supplied; to ensure that time-table is in order, and everyone knows where to go and at what time."*

Sharing the same sentiment, Principal MKL of Majakaneng High School explained that a principal's duty is:

> *To make sure that there are resources which will make it easy for teachers to do their work: we need pens, we need chalk, we need, you know, whatever may assist smooth running or having a good work environment. It is the principal who should help to make sure that those things are available.*

Both observational data and reviewed documents provided evidence of how principals execute this duty. All visited sites had well furnished classrooms conducive for teaching and learning activities. Besides that, they all had science laboratories equipped with needed apparatus. In the principals' offices of all the seven participants, master time-tables were posted on the walls for the principals to see where teachers were supposed to be at different times. Moreover, reviewed scheme books provided evidence that they were checked on a regular basis to ensure that teaching and learning took place.

Liaise with other sectors

Three participants felt that one of the duties of a secondary school principal is to link the school with other sectors outside the school. These participants explained that schools need to have friendly relationships with communities around them, and liaise with organisations and government ministries in a number of issues. It is the principals' role to link schools with relevant bodies outside school such as Teaching Service department (TSD), Examination council of Lesotho (ECOL), and other organisations of interest that serve schools' interest. Good communication skills are vital for this duty to be performed effectively, so principals are required to possess these skills. In her contribution on this issue, Principal MET explained that, *"...when you are the principal you have to make sure that the board and the ministry of education are also kept abreast of the developments and what goes on at the school."*

On the other hand, Principal STP highlighted that principals have to link their schools with the communities around them. To execute this successfully, a principal must have good interpersonal skills to facilitate communication with the community around the school. Principal STP further explained that, *"There has to be close relationship with the community around the school. That means the school must be in friendly terms with the community around the school. It is the principal who makes sure that this happens"*

Observations made at one of the seven sites confirmed that a principal is a reference point of a school. When invigilators for LGCSE paper encountered a challenge at Linonyana High School, they reported to Principal LIL who responded by immediately conducting the ECOL through telephone for solutions. This confirmed that principals are required to have good communication skills so that they can link their schools with outside world in order for schools to fulfil their mandate.

Maintain teacher and learner conduct

Five participants posited that it is crucial for principals to be able to maintain order and disciplined in schools. These participants stated that principals should ensure that teachers and learners are well behaved at school. They argued that where the principal lacks skills pertaining to maintenance

of order and discipline, learners demonstrate elements of indiscipline. This implies that principals are expected to ensure that teachers report to work on daily basis and attend their time-tabled lessons. Principals are also expected to develop strategies to ensure that learners also attend school regularly, and are at their best behaviour while at school. Principal MKL emphasised that it is important for a principal to be equipped with human resource management skills because:

> *He/she is there on behalf of the school management board to ensure the overall discipline of the school, and that teachers behave accordingly, and do their work. And if teachers do their work, it means even the principal is doing his/her work because he/she will be there to see that they attend classes, they give students work.*

Evidence provided by reviewed documents revealed that principals have a tool that helped them to ensure daily staff-work-attendance as well as learner school attendance. While each site had clock book which was signed by the staff on arrival at work and after school, there were also learner attendance register books which recorded learners who are absent on a daily basis. Moreover, each of the participating schools had school prospectus which in it, stipulated rules and regulations for learners. This document was meant to guide learners' behaviour. On the other hand, principals used the Teaching service code of good practice to keep teachers in order.

Staff motivation

Two participants, Principal LIL and Principal QEL, stated that ensuring staff motivation is one of the duties of a secondary school principal. They elaborated that principals are required to motivate both low performing and high performing staff in order to improve the general performance of the school. These participants explained that principals have to encourage struggling staff to pull up their socks while giving them hope that they are capable of doing better. On the other hand, good performance should be encouraged to keep up the good work through incentives and any other token of appreciation. According to these participants, motivated staff-members show commitment and dedication to work. This duty aligns well with these participants' earlier submission that work commitment characterises a well managed school. In her submission on this point, Principal QEL said*, "When somebody has done well, the principal has to motivate that*

person. There must be incentives for people who are doing very well. Even students who are doing very well, or who have improved, they have to be recognized."

Staff recruitment

Two out of the seven participants reported that one of the principals' duties is to recruit staff, and make recommendations to the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) for teachers to be employed in their schools. These participants elaborated that for a teacher to be employed at their schools, principals have to report the need for a teacher, advertise the position, and hold interviews before they send recommendations to TSC. Moreover, the participants explained that they employ private staff at schools according to areas of need. This is a technical duty which requires a principal equipped with human resource management skills. Principals who lack these skills run a risk of filling up positions with people who are not effective in those positions. Principal MET explained this duty by stating that principals:

> *...make recommendations for teachers, teacher replacement. When we are supposed to hire new teachers, it is the role of the principal to set the ball rolling for that to happen; starting with advertising positions, getting everything in order until such time when interviews have been carried and recommendations made to the commission.*

4.5.   PRINCIPALS' SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS

In order to gather data about principals' self-efficacy beliefs, study participants were asked to describe their beliefs in their ability to perform duties of a secondary school principal. During data analysis of collected data on this question the following themes emerged: Sense of efficacy in human resource management skills**,** instructional leadership skills, financial management skills**,** and communication skills. A detailed elaboration on these themes is presented below.

4.5.1. Principals' beliefs in their human resource management skills

All the seven study participants had a high sense of efficacy with regard to human resource management skills. They believed that they were capable of leading and supporting their teams of teachers. These participants reported that they believed they were capable of leading by example, communicating effectively with staff members, ensuring that teachers always come to work on time, and motivating staff to be dedicated to their work.

Four of the seven participants reported high sense of efficacy with regard to leading by example. These participants explained that they believed they were capable of conducting themselves in a manner in which they expected their staff to conduct themselves. They reported that they believed they were capable of being punctual, and being always available at work to ensure that work is done. In relation to this issue, Principal STP emphasised how the belief in his ability to lead by example made it easy for him to manage teachers in his school. This is how he explained himself on this issue:

> *I believe I'm able to set a good example because I am here at school all the time. I do not say they should come and I go away. I believe I'm able to lead by example because what I'm saying they should do, I also do. And then as a result, it is not easy for them to be away from school when they know that I'm always at school.*

Apart from that two out of seven study participants reported a strong sense of efficacy with regard to their ability to communicate effectively with their staff to ensure smooth running of their schools' operations. These two participants believed in their ability to communicate effectively with their staff in order to keep the staff up to date with what goes around at their school and that made them team players. Principal MET explained, *"I believe I'm good at communicating. Good at communicating; meaning, I follow up on people and discuss, you know, things with people, things that I don't understand why they are doing certain things."*

Principal MET reported high sense of efficacy with regard to her ability communicate effectively with her staff was further confirmed during document analysis. She noted announcements and

messages on the school's clock book so that when teachers signed when they arrived they read them. Below is what Principal MET's clock book looked like:
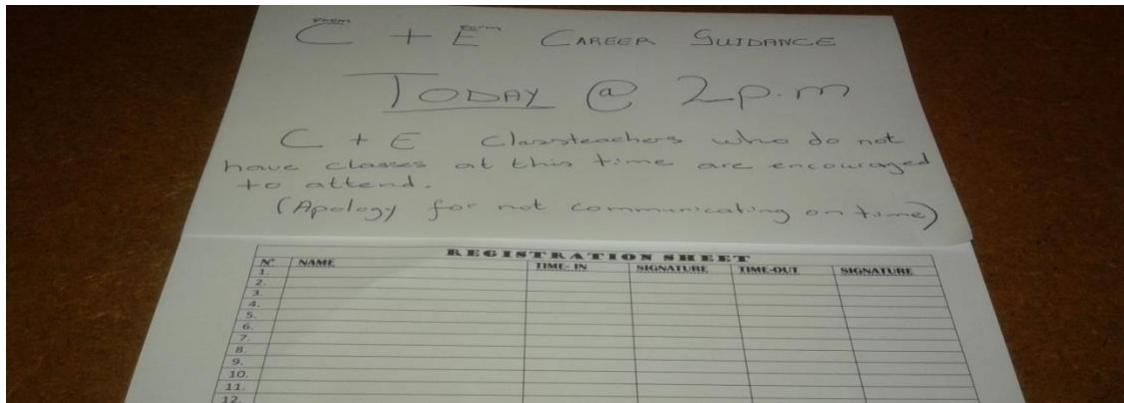

Figure 4.1: Motheo High School clock book

Three participants indicated that they believed they monitored lesson attendance well to ensure that teachers do not miss lessons. These three participants reported their belief in their ability to make sure that learners do not suffer as a result of teachers who dodge lessons unnecessarily. They explained that they had developed strategies, which included physically walking from classroom to classroom to check if there were teachers in the classrooms, and looking through the principal's office window to check teachers' movement to and from classes, to ensure that teachers attended lesson as expected. Principal QEL said with some conviction that she believed she had necessary competencies to lead her staff and ensure that teachers attend classes. She reported to have developed a strategy that she believed helped her to ensure lesson attendance by teachers. She explained:

> At school we have monitors. If there is no teacher in the class, they are told to report straight to the office. They do not go to the staffroom to get teachers if there is no teacher in the classroom because if I say they should go and check at the staffroom, they might be scared of teachers. They come straight to me and tell me there is no teacher, and then I take actions. I always maintain that there are teachers in the classrooms.

However, there was neither observational nor documented data to corroborate the participants' claims of high sense of efficacy regarding their ability to monitor lesson attendance. Perhaps their strategies are unconventional and may not be proven. It is not easy therefore to speculate if their beliefs are well calibrated or not.

Two participants believed that they were good at motivating both teachers and learners. They believed that motivated people show dedication to their work and are easy to manage. On the contrary, employees who are not motivated track their feed and lack enthusiasm in their work. This may results in the school's poor academic performance. When declaring her high sense of efficacy with regard to skills in staff motivation, Principal ADV reported that:

> *I can inspire. That one has to do with leadership skills. Before people work, you have to motivate them, talk to them nicely. I inspire them during our meetings in the morning. Even at the assembly I have to inspire students; tell them that they should do their best. So in the morning I have to give them something. Even if somebody has left home, let's say they are not happy in their family, when they get here, they feel at home.*

During observations, especially at the sites where strong sense of efficacy regarding participants' ability to motivate staff was reported, data collected corroborated with the participants' claims that they can motivate staff. Sitting in the staffroom, the researcher observed teachers who did not idle when they did not have lessons to attend. Rather, teachers sat at their desk to prepare for next lesson or mark piles of exercise book on their desks.

However, despite having expressed high sense of efficacy regarding human resource management, one participant, Principal MKL of Majakaneng high school, later complained that it was difficult to achieve her goals because working with people was difficult. This confession implied that she was coping with certain characters in her staff. Therefore could not confidently claim to have a high sense of efficacy regarding human resource management competencies. She complained:

> *I try different approaches in order to try and achieve my goals; which is actually difficult. Working with human beings is difficult because you have people who come*

from different backgrounds and who have different personalities. In life people can just bite you and make you fail on purpose.

Furthermore, observational data provided evidence that there was a problem with Principal MKL human resource management skills. After the morning assembly, instead of learners going straight to class, a number of them walked slowly towards their classrooms, while a group of boys went behind one block of classroom singing Sesotho songs. No teacher bothered to tell learners to hurry to class, nor address the singing boys. The principal herself had to tell learners to go to their respective classroom, and attended to the singing boys. This contradicted with prior claim that she believed she was capable of managing people. As a result, the researcher picked up a low sense of efficacy regarding human resource management competencies. Based on the presented data, it is clear that Principal MKL's efficacy beliefs were not well calibrated.

On the other hand, two participants talked about their efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to promote team work at their schools. Principal KLM reported strong sense of efficacy regard his ability to promote team work and be a team player himself. He believed that through team work, his school ran smoothly and set goals were achieved with ease. In his submission on this issue he pointed out that, *"If you are part of a team, if you lead a team, you should be actually part of the team yourself, be in the shoes of the players; don't be somebody else outside the circle of the people who are doing the work of teaching here."*

Principal KML's reported sense of efficacy regarding his ability to promote team work was well calibrated by data collected during on-site observations. The researcher learned that teachers were grouped according to departments and subject majors. For instance, Home Economics teachers sat together so that they could draw their plans and share ideas uninterrupted. The same was the case with wood-work teachers and Mathematics and Science teachers. Moreover, heads of departments used a different room from the main staffroom. This enabled them to share ideas on how best to run their departments for the common good of the school.

On the contrary, Principal MET expressed uncertainty in her inability to facilitate team-building for her teachers. She narrated that teachers at her school were not as united as she would like them to be, and blamed herself for this lack of unity. When employees work as a team, they work towards achieving similar set goals for the betterment of their organisation. Teachers at school aim at improving learner performance in order to produce good academic results. Lack of team work may result in poor performance in some subjects or part of the same subject. It is important for principals to be skilled in ensuring that their teachers are team players so as to create positive working atmosphere and produce good academic results. In declaration of her low sense of efficacy regarding her ability to promote team work Principal MET said, "One of the things I believe is that a leader should be able to bring people together, as in, to have people to be united as a team. I'm not sure I'm good at that. I think I have flaws on that."

However, the observations made during the visit at Principal MET school were that staffrooms were divided according to departments. This had created a platform for teachers in the same department to consult one another on their subjects' related issues with causing any inconvenience to member of other departments. Moreover, analysis of the school's academic performance provided no evidence of absence of team work at Principal MET school. All departments and teachers seemed to be working together towards producing good results because the school had a track record of good academic performance in the district and nationwide for more than three consecutive years. This implies that Principal MET's efficacy beliefs in this regard were poorly calibrated.

4.5.2. *Principals' self-efficacy beliefs in instructional leadership skills*

All the seven participants discussed their sense of efficacy regarding different instructional leadership skills. Six participants out of seven reported high sense of efficacy while one participant, Principal MET, discussed areas in which she doubted her skills in this regard. The sub-themes which emerged under this theme were belief in the provision of teaching resources, classroom observations, and work monitoring.

All the seven study participants reported a high sense of efficacy with regard to facilitating smooth teaching and learning processes through provision of teaching and learning resources. For teaching and learning processes to run smoothly teachers need teaching materials to facilitate learning. These teaching materials include well furnished classrooms, text books, visual aids, as well as chalk and white board markers. Without these resources, teaching and learning may be hindered, resulting in low-learner achievement. A secondary school principal ability to provide teachers with necessary teaching resources is fundamental for smooth running of teaching and learning activities and improved academic performance. When reporting his high sense of efficacy regarding his ability to facilitate teaching and learning processes at his school, Principal KLM reported that he believed he provided the teachers at his school with necessary teaching resources so that they could operate unhindered. On the same note, Principal MKL mentioned that, *"I believe I make sure that there are resources which will make it easy for teachers to do their work: we need pens, we need chalk. It is the principal who should help to make sure that those things are available."*

Observational data provided evidence of well furnished classrooms with learners not sharing chairs. Boxes of chalk were also observed placed either on an unoccupied desk or on the window sill closer to the door in the staffrooms. Text books written "Teacher's copy" in bold, were seen on teachers' desks at some sites to confirm the participants' claim that they bought text books for teachers. Furthermore, the two audited financial statements reviewed proved that there were teaching resources bought for teachers. Participants' reported efficacy beliefs correlated with their actual practice at school. There was basically a positive calibration between reported efficacy beliefs and participants' actual performance.

Five participants reported that they did classroom observations in order to supervise the teaching and learning in their school. Classroom observations provide proof that teachers teach according to the syllabi and follow conventional methods of teaching. Moreover, classroom observations are instrumental in developing teachers because in addition to being recommended for good work, their attention is drawn to their weaknesses so that they may improve on them. Principals need competencies in clinical supervision so that their classroom observations could benefit teachers under their leadership. If not done well classroom observations may be stressful and have debilitating effects on teachers, so principals need to conduct them skilfully if they are to yield positive results. In their declaration of high sense of efficacy regarding their competencies in

classroom observations, two participants explained that they had developed observation tools and made sure that they observed their teachers in the classrooms as they taught. Principal QEL submitted that:

> *Sometimes I don't just sit in the office, I have to go around to check if there are teachers in the classrooms, and they are doing what they are expected to do because some teachers might go to the classrooms to rest, yet their job is not to go and sit down in the classes; they have to go and do the teaching.*

There was documented evidence at Atamelang High School and QEL High School that classroom observations were done. Observation tools reviewed at these sites clearly stipulated focus point of each observation and had constructive comments at the end to help teachers improve on their shortfalls. The tools were signed by both the principal and observed teachers at the end. This gives an implication that there were discussions of the contents of observation tools after the observations. Based on the presented data above, it can be said that the participants' efficacy beliefs were well calibrated. On the other hand, the absence of classroom observation proof from other participants implied that these participants did not perform this function; probably because they doubted their capabilities in this regard.

Three other participants claimed that they made sure that they supervised teachers, ensured that teachers went to class, and followed up on their lesson preparation books. They reported that they monitored teaching and learning in general. However, there were no records to show classroom observation sessions they had with their teachers because they failed to produce lesson observation records. For instance Principal STP asserted that:

> *I can help teachers to do what they are employed to do; get into the class in time. Not only to get into the class in time, but even to check if they are doing the right job because one can be in the class, and then you find that they are not doing their work.. Sometimes you have to get in class with them. You have to get into the class with them. It is true it is not done often, but there are times when I feel that......uhm......I suspect that probably a certain teacher is not doing the work, so*

I go into the class with him. I make a follow up to make sure that teachers get into the classroom.

However, Principal STP's claims that he went to class with teachers to check if they were doing the right job were not supported by any documentation on classroom observations. It could therefore be speculated that if he truly went to class with teachers, he was doing it in an unconventional manner. In that regard, what Principal STP reported to be doing appeared to be more of human resource management than instructional leadership. Instead of helping teachers to do their work, he was basically making sure that they did not miss lessons.

A case similar to Principal STP's practice was reported by Principal LIL who reported that he did not make class visits in the first session of the year because then his teachers were not reluctant to go to class. He reported making class visits around October when most of his teachers seemed reluctant to go to classes. This is how Principal LIL explained himself:

"...I don't do class visits early because, what I have realized is that at the beginning of the year everyone is doing their best. But towards October, when others have started writing Mock Exams, now you see them reluctant to go to classes. So this is the time when I happen to visit them in classes. I just go to the class; I don't even inform the teacher that I'll be in their class. Sometimes the teacher finds me there.

Contrary to participants who claimed high sense of efficacy with regard to classroom supervision, Principal MET reported a low self-efficacy belief in this regard. She explained that she avoided classroom observations because they are challenging. When describing her beliefs in her managerial competencies, Principal MET confessed that, *"I wouldn't say I'm fully capable of classroom supervision. I'm not hopeless, but I'm not where I should be. I'm saying this because I've noticed that the supervision aspect of it is quite challenging. I struggle a lot to do that."*

Principal MET submission was further confirmed by the absence of any recorded proof that she once observed any of the teachers at her school. Based on the above account, the researcher assumed that Principal MET did not have adequate training or experience in classroom observations and had no clue of how it is actually done. It was obvious that Principal MET was aware of her weaknesses in this regard and her efficacy beliefs were well calibrated.

All the seven participants believed in their ability to monitor teachers' work. They reported that they knew how to check teachers' lesson plans and scheme books; and they that they did it on a regular basis. Teachers are expected to draw quarterly scheme for the concepts they are going to teach learners. Their scheme of work emanate from the syllabi that they follow; and from the schemes, they are expected to draw daily lesson plans. Principals are tasked with the responsibility to monitor teachers in doing these duties. Principals' inability to perform this task may lead to teachers who neither teach according to the syllabi nor finish teaching concepts schemed for. This may result in poor learner performance in examinations. Principals have to possess necessary competencies in monitoring teachers' work to ensure that relevant content is actually taught in schools. When Principal ADV expressed her strong efficacy belief in her ability to monitor teachers' work she stated that:

> *There are tasks which have to be done like attendance of classes. I have to check that these people are inside the class; so I move around. And there are times when they have to submit what is written, so I monitor. Actually, managing comes in terms of monitoring; I monitor if they are doing the work properly. I check if their schemes correspond with the syllabi. Yes there are times when I give them to the HODs and the Deputy, but there will be times when they come back to me.*

Participants provided the researcher with scheme books and lesson plans as evidence that they were capable of monitoring teachers' work. The teachers' scheme books and lesson plans seemed to have been checked by both the Heads of Departments (HODs) and the principals. However, Data collected from scheme books and lesson preparation books reviewed from four sites revealed a number of inconsistencies. These books seemed to have been checked as they had both HODs'

and principals' signatures; but there were a lot of recurring inconsistencies which the HODs and principals had not commented on. For instance, there was no record of work for schemed topics and sub-topics; and no mention of such topics in the scheme for the following quarter. In some scheme books, only a list of topics to be taught was shown without mention of number of lessons for each topic, resources which were going to be used, as well as teaching methods. These findings from reviewed documents imply that these principals did not actually know what to look for when they monitored their teachers' work. Their sense of efficacy in this regard was therefore not well calibrated. An example of a scheme short of a lot of details is presented below:

Figure 4.2: Scheme of work

4.5.3. *Principals' self-efficacy beliefs in financial management skills*

Out of the seven study participants, six described their efficacy beliefs in their ability to manage school funds. Three participants claimed to have strong sense of efficacy while the other three participants expressed doubt in their financial management competencies. Secondary schools get

their funding mainly from school fees paid by learners. The management of these funds is crucial for the effective running of the school operations and processes. Principals need to be well equipped with financial management skills to be able to run school funds efficiently. Without these skills, teaching and learning processes may be hampered, maintenance of the school infrastructure may be a challenge, and privately employed staff may not get their salaries on time.

Among the three participants who held a high sense of efficacy regarding their financial management abilities, two provided the researcher with their schools' budgets and audited financial statements. Their budgets and financial statements showed clearly how the money was earned and how it was spend. Besides that, there were observable new infrastructural developments on which the schools' funds were used. This implied that these participants' efficacy beliefs were well calibrated. In his submission in this issue, Principal LIL said he believed that he was capable of running school funds because, *"The money of the school is used for what it has been budgeted for; there is no misappropriation of funds."*

On the other hand, Principal MKL of Kolomota high school believed that she was managing her school funds well because the amount of money paid for school fees was little but she had always been able to run the affairs of the school smoothly. She elaborated:

> *Truly speaking, I believe I'm doing quite well considering the amount of money learners pay per annum. And, for this past 10 years we have never had to close school because there was no money to run the school. The school fee for the whole year is less than M1000.00, but we manage to buy all the necessities. And we have bought, you know, even modern equipment like a photocopier, duplicating machine.*

However, on-site observations provided contradictory evidence to Principal MKL claims of high sense of efficacy regarding her financial management capabilities. It was evident that the school was barely surviving because there were no apparent developments on the school's infrastructure and premises to show how the school funds were used. The buildings found at the school were those build by the proprietor when the school was established ten years ago and a science laboratory which was built when the school was already operating. Moreover, she was reluctant to provide financial records for review in order to confirm her claim of being capable of running the school funds competently. There

were no data that corroborated her reported high sense of efficacy, so it could be said that there was poor calibration of her sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies.

Three of the out of seven participants complained that though it was their duty run school funds, they believe they did not have necessary competencies to do so. In most cases they depended on their school bursars for the proper management of school finances, especially with regard to recording financial transactions in the proper books of accounts. Principal ADV had this to say about her financial management competencies:

> *"You need to know a little bit of finances even though not in detail because, as I said that at times for the supply of resources into the school, you are the one who is responsible; in terms of fees, in terms of reporting these things to the board, and also to the parents. I don't think I have much. I think I was blessed to have a powerful accountant, otherwise would not cope"*

On the same note, Principal MET said she was hopeless with regard to financial management abilities. When asked if she believed she was capable of running her school finances, she said, *"Absolutely no. But what I do is; I work with the school bursar a lot on those issues. So we guide each other because honestly when it comes to finances I think I'm hopeless. What I simply do is to follow up on what is expected from the Ministry."*

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To confirm their reported belief that they lacked financial management skills, the three principals who doubted their financial management skills did not provide the research with their schools' financial statements. However, the infrastructural development observed at the three participants' schools also did not correlate with the participants' declaration of low sense of efficacy. There were new buildings observed in these sites and their premises were well taken care of, The participants' reported incompetence with regard to using books of accounts seemed not to practically translate into their inability to run school funds. This is another case of not well calibrated self-efficacy beliefs.

4.6. Factors that influence principals' self-efficacy beliefs

In an attempt to gather information on the sources of principals' self-efficacy beliefs, participants were asked to explain what had influenced their beliefs in their managerial competencies. The analysis of responses on this question revealed the following themes: Experiences, comparison with other principals, encouragements, networking, training, support, and character. Data on each of these themes is presented below.

4.6.1. Experiences

Five out of seven participants reported that their sense of efficacy regarding managerial competencies was influenced by experiences in their position as principals. These participants referred to both successful experiences and failures. With regard to successful experiences, participants talked about the effects of producing good academic results and being able to send candidates to tertiary institutions year after year, and successfully dealing with different challenges related their position as heads of schools. They reported that their successful experiences made them confident that they had what it takes to manage secondary schools. In her submission on this subject, Principal QEL boldly said, *"Because of the results our school is producing, I don't have a doubt that our school has got a very good principal."*

The same sentiment was shared by the other four participants who reported that their successful experiences contributed a lot in how they perceived their managerial competencies. They reported that they were able to send learners to tertiary institutions year after year despite challenging circumstances they worked under, and that made them believe that they had necessary instructional leadership skills to run schools. In her contribution on this issue Principal MKL emphasised *that "Much as we are in a place that I call rural area, and having learners who come from primary*

schools which are very poor, with no good foundation at all, we are able to send learners to university every year."

Basically, when reviewing academic results the participants obtained from the participants, there was evidence that there were learners who made it to tertiary institutions from the participants' schools each year. However, academic results of the schools led by four participants who reported successful experiences as their source of high efficacy beliefs regarding managerial competencies were not that good. This implied that the little they achieved boosted their feeling of adequacy in the position of a principal; they did not need majority of their learners to pass well in order to have strong efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies.

On the other hand, a review of Principal QEL school's results for both Junior Certificate (JC), and Lesotho General Certificate of School Examination (LGCSE), provided evidence that the school was consistently performing well year after year. Principal QEL's declaration of a high sense of efficacy as a result of improved learner achievement was therefore justified. This is an indication that successful experiences do illuminate people's confidence in their capabilities. Analysis of the school's LGCSE results for Principal QEL looked as follows for 2016 examinations:

Figure 4.3: Results Analysis

Academic results were not the only reference made to experiences that influenced participants' sense of efficacy. Two participants reported that their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies was influenced by their resilience against hardships and work challenges, and successful completion of managerial tasks. This is an indication that successful experiences raise people's sense of efficacy. In her elaboration of what had influenced her high sense of efficacy regarding managerial competencies, Principal QEL posited:

> *When you have achieved through hardships, you regard yourself as a hero. It wasn't easy at all when I started here in 2007. I was straight from the teaching post, classroom; I had never been a deputy nor HOD. From the classroom to being a principal, it was not easy at all. But I told myself that I have to work very hard.*

Principal MKL reiterated the above sentiment in this manner:

> *You know very well that some of us started these schools with nothing. And for the school to have gone through these past ten years with all the challenges that I have*

had to face as the principal, I do believe that the managerial competencies which I

have are the ones that made it possible for me to be this far.

Moreover, Principal LIL believed that the work experience he had gained as a treasurer of one association in the country played a role in enhancing his efficacy beliefs in financial management competencies. Principal LIL explained that he had worked with people who were good in financial management in the association, so he gained a lot while working with them. In this case, the experience the participant acquired informally through working with experts in the field of finances made him confident that he could manage secondary school funds well.

A review of financial statements obtained from Principal LIL provided evidence that he knew how to manage school funds. There were clearly drawn budgets which corresponded with the financial statements. Moreover, some of the infrastructural developments which he reported to have established with the school funds were observable in the school compound. This is an indication that the experience the participant had in financial management had a positive effect on his ability run school funds.

On the contrary, Principal ADV and Principal MET reported low sense of efficacy with regard to financial management competencies due to unsuccessful experiences in this regard. They explained that they had a challenge as far as the use of books of accounts was concerned. As a result, they depended on their school bursars to manage and account for the use of their schools' funds. Principal ADV argued that they were only trained as teachers and did not know much about financial management. Principal MET reported that for years she had never been able to account for the use of money in her school. In other words, she had never produced end of year financial statements for her school. Her inability to perform this task made her feel inadequate with regard to financial management. When explaining what had influenced her low sense of efficacy regarding her financial management skills, Principal MET said:

I've looked at our accounts, the keeping of books. And one of the things that I have

not been able to do has been to get the school's financial statement. And that is a

major flaw because that is one of the things that are expected by the Ministry. If you are accountable enough, that is one of the major things you need to provide, financial statement. Our accounts have never been audited.

Both Principal ADV and Principal MET did not provide the researcher with financial statements for review. This confirmed that they felt challenged as far as their financial management skills were concerned. Contrary to their beliefs and what they reported to have influenced those beliefs, their schools' infrastructure and surroundings were welcoming and well-cared for among all the sites visited. So, as much as these participants had a feeling of inadequacy with regard to their financial management skills, the observational data gathered provided a different insight. The good looking buildings and school compounds meant that money was used to maintain their schools' good looking states. Handy-men were seen working on both schools' surroundings to ensure their good looking states. The tools these handy-men used and any other inputs used to beautify the schools' environment, required the use of money to make them available. Their availability meant that money was put to good use in these schools. Perhaps if these participants looked more at how they used school funds than at their ability to use books of accounts, they would have a different perception of their sense of efficacy.

In a nutshell, findings of the current study have revealed that experiences can either boost or lower one's sense of efficacy. Successful experiences boost self-efficacy beliefs while failures bring about doubt in one's capabilities to perform certain functions.

4.6.2. *Comparison with other principals*

Four of the seven participants reported comparison with performance of other principals as the source of their high sense of efficacy. They cited a number of principals from neighbouring schools whom they believed were doing a good job and expressed a belief that they too could do a good job as principals. Observing their counter-parts in other schools performing well made these participants feel that they could also perform better. Principal LIL and Principal MKL explained that they had observed job well done by other principal around their areas and believed that if those

principals could do such a good job, there was nothing that could stop them from managing their schools well. Principal STP reiterated by indicating that, *"I have my neighbours here; Bobojane High School and Meraka High School, their principals are doing very well. Then, I say I'm in the office like them, so I can also do well"*.

4.6.3. Encouragements

Four of the seven participants reported that the encouragements and show of appreciation for their work by communities around their schools and other school principals influenced their high sense of efficacy in their capabilities to run schools. They reported that they received praises for their good academic results and good students' behaviour. Based on the participants' reported source of their sense of efficacy, it is evident that people's recognition of the participants' achievements made these participants believe in their ability to manage schools. Principal MET reported that some principals come to her to comment on her wok and ask for advice on school management issues. She stated that, *"And sometimes other principals come and say that they see that our learners are disciplined, and ask me to tell them how I go about it. They say that they see that our results are very good; and ask me to tell them how I go about it. Yah, I tell them what I think works for us here."*

4.6.4. Networking

Three of the seven participants attributed their high sense of efficacy to principals' network they had created. They explained that they had principals whom they could talk to if things did not go well at their school. They emphasised that knowing that their colleagues were just a phone call away to help when need arose boosted their beliefs in their managerial capabilities. This implies that they felt that they were not alone in this demanding and challenging position. Their network with other principals provided enough support system to help in times of need. In her contribution on this subject, Principal MET states that:

I try to go to individual principals and we talk as individuals. If I know the principal of this other school, and the school seems to be doing well in something, I simply take a phone, call this person as an individual and book an appointment. Then I go and tell the person that I have seen that they do this and this well and ask for advice.

4.6.5. Training

Two out of seven study participants believed that formal training had played a major role on their ability to run secondary schools. These participants referred to both the training they obtained from institutions of high learning and the workshops they attended as principals. This implies that both pre-service and in-service training is considered vital in enhancing principals' self-efficacy beliefs. While one of the participants reported to have a certificate in Educational Administration, the other reported to have enrolled for a Master's degree programme in which she had learned a lot about leadership and management. Formal training equips candidates with skills needed in real work situations, so it is understandable that these participants attributed their high sense of efficacy in managerial competencies to formal training. Principal LIL reported that his strong sense of efficacy regarding school managerial competencies may be attributed to formal training workshops and educational administration and management courses he did through distance learning with one college in the United Kingdom. Apart from that, Principal ADV narrated that she was doing part time studies on organizational behaviour and leadership, and that had boosted her confidence in her own managerial competencies. She said, *"I'm doing part-time studies for Masters. I learn organization behaviour and leadership; and I did conflict management and Ethics. So I have realized that really, working with people is my thing."*

Only two participants reported the contribution made by school proprietorship in enhancing their sense of efficacy in school managerial competencies. They made reference to workshops organized by school proprietorship for principals. Principals need refresher courses to sharpen their managerial skills. These courses may be made available through regular workshop to keep principals up to date with the ever changing development in school management. To emphasise

the value of these workshops on sense of efficacy regarding her managerial competencies, Principal ADV narrated that:

> *From time to time the church organizes something that takes us to a workshop in Bloemfontein. There we are equipped with skills on how to do our job, and to do it well. We meet with people who are doing it excellently. And that is where I realized that principals who are more organized achieve their goals.*

4.6.6. Support

All the seven participants of the current study reported both internal and external support they received as a great source of their self-efficacy beliefs regarding school managerial competencies. They reported support from their staff members, school boards, parents, proprietors, and the Ministry of Education and Training. Three participants reported that the warm relationships they had with their staff made it easy to manage staff, as well as school operations and activities. Apart from that, the participants referred to staff dedication to work as one of the sources of their high sense of efficacy in their managerial competencies. Managers who have created conducive work environment for their subordinates find it easy to lead them. This is because when work environment is welcoming to employees, such employees support managers in all operations and processes of the organisation. The smooth running of operations and processes of the organisation gives principals a feeling of adequacy in their managerial competencies. So, it is understandable that these participants' strong sense of efficacy is influenced by staff support. Principal LIL expressed his staff support by explaining that, *"They don't allow a vacuum. When they see that something has to be done, they volunteer to do it. Like the lady who has just come, maybe she has seen that I'm busy somewhere, so she is taking initiative, helping this LGCSE invigilators."*

At four visited sites, observational data provided evidence of warm relationships between staff and principals. The interaction between teachers and the principals was relaxed and communication was smooth. It was not difficult for teachers to ask their principals if they had to leave school early for one reason or another. This warm working atmosphere resulted in cooperation between

teachers and principals and made the teachers easy to manage and delegate for different activities. Based on this evidence, it makes sense that the participants felt that their strong sense of efficacy was enhanced by their staff support.

On the other hand, Principal MET blamed her low sense of efficacy on the support that teachers at her school give her. She complained that teachers' dedication to their work deterred her from nurturing her supervision skills which she believed were lacking on her part. She claimed that she found no need to undertake classroom observations because teachers at her school attended classes without being pushed. However, having reported low sense of efficacy with regard to classroom observation skills, it is likely that Principal MET had not been conducting classroom observations because she did not have adequate skills to observe teachers. The issue of teachers' dedication to their work being the source of her low sense of efficacy regarding classroom supervision skills seemed like just an excuse. When reporting what she believed had influenced her low sense of efficacy regarding classroom supervision skills she narrated that:

> *The staff support is one of the things that made me lack the supervision skills that I need, to be efficient in because most of the time, to a larger extend, the staff support me by carrying out their roles. Their roles I mean the teaching and the extra-curricular activities. I don't run after them, especially with the extra-curricular activities.*

The observational data provided positive evidence regarding teachers' work dedication at Motheo high school, Principal MET's school. Teachers' dedication was evident with teachers who were on morning duty as they dealt with late comers accordingly. It was also evident with lesson attendance as teachers hurried to class every time the alarm signalled end of the lesson before theirs. This, however, does not justify Principal MET's reasoning for not doing classroom supervision. It only proves that people perform functions which they have high sense of efficacy in, and avoid those which they doubt their capabilities in.

Apart from staff support, it emerged that the support secondary school principals got from their school boards played a vital role in enhancing principals' self-efficacy beliefs in their managerial

competencies. Three participants out of seven elaborated that school boards were supportive and believed in their managerial capabilities. The participants explained that whenever they needed support regarding issues related to school management board members availed themselves to land a hand. Moreover, these participants reported that school boards believed in the participants' abilities as principals and trusted them. School boards comprise of parents representatives, teachers representative, village chief, council member, proprietor's representative, and the principal. The support provided by these people of different calibres and status in society is enough to strengthen the one supported. Their support means that the affairs of the school are run smoothly without anyone standing on the way. In cases where school boards work against principals, developments in those schools are put on hold and principals find it difficult to run the affairs the schools. In her contribution on this issue, Principal MKL reported that:

> *I think the support that I get from the board is enough for me to believe that I'm still doing the duties that they have entrusted me to do. I've never had a problem with my board and they are always so supportive. Every time I ask them to come, they come. Like this year, the first day when we re-opened, I asked my chairperson to come and help to talk to learners, to instil in them the importance of good behaviour, hard work, and discipline. He didn't hesitate to accept my invitation; he was here talking to learners when the school opened.*

Furthermore, all the participants agreed that parents and the communities around their schools played a pivotal role in promoting their efficacy beliefs. Principal STP stated that the fact that parents sent their children to a school where he was the principal was a sign of support and an indication that the parents believed in his ability to run the school. Other principals referred to parents' support in combating learners' bad behaviour. Principal KLM and Principal MKL reported parents around their schools have committees which helped to address issues of teenage pregnancy, drug abuse in schools and behavioural challenges brought by boys from initiation school. Principal ADV reported that at her school they even have what they called parent-teacher association. This association, according to Principal ADV, was helpful in the running of the school affairs. On the other hand, the support from parents and the community around the schools was elaborated well by Principal KLM:

Our community, the chief and some people in our village here are quite good people. They come to our campus here and give advice on one thing or the other. For example, we have this problem of teenage pregnancy, and drug abuse by some of the boys, and this notorious behaviour of boys who come from initiation school. We formed a team with those people. Every year they come around this time, or in March, and they talk to initiates in terms of how they should behave here now that there are ladies and men who have not gone to the initiation school.

4.6.7. Personality

Three participants attributed their high self-efficacy beliefs to their character. They described themselves as positive, optimistic people who liked good things. One's character plays an important role in one's perseverance against challenges. A pessimistic person doubts their abilities while an optimistic person believes in success and is always committed to achieving their set goals. Based on the participants' description of themselves as optimistic people, it is not surprising that they attribute their high sense of efficacy regarding managerial competencies to their characters. Principal MET stressed this point as follows, "*What I know about myself is that I'm a very positive person, a very optimistic person. Irrespective of how bad things go, I believe that I can channel them or they can be channelled to the correct direction.*"

4.7 The influence of principals' efficacy beliefs on managerial performance

In order to establish how principals' efficacy beliefs influence their management of secondary schools in Lesotho, participants were asked how their beliefs in their managerial abilities help them in the management of schools. During analysis of the data collected for this question, the

following themes emerged: delegation of duties, effective communication, confidence, perseverance, and good financial management.

4.7.1   Development of leadership in others

Four out of the seven study participants reported that their sense of efficacy in their managerial competencies enables them to develop leadership in others. These participants explained that they did not do everything in person but delegated duties to different members of staff. They stated that they had departmentalised their schools and promoted some teachers to be HODs in order to help in the running of the schools. They further stipulated that they worked hand in hand with deputy principals, HODs, and teachers to ensure that all angles of school management are covered. Besides that, these participants also reported that they assigned other staff members to perform some of the managerial function for which they feel less capable. Delegation allows managers to make use of different expertise in the organisation for the betterment of the same organisation. Moreover, because of the leadership instilled in other members of staff, principals' weaknesses may be hidden from observers, while in the process the schools' operations and processes run smoothly. When explaining how his efficacy helped him in the management of his school, Principal KLM stated that, *"I allocate the job that I do; I run some of projects within the school using some of the staff members. Not all things are done by me, we share. I make use of the HODs, some teachers, to make it a point that my work actually improves."*

4.7.2   Effective Communication

One participant, Principal MKL, reported that high self-efficacy beliefs in her managerial competencies enabled her to communicate effectively with both learners and teachers. She explained that whenever there was need, she used different strategies to communicate with bodies that need to be addressed in the school community. She argued that effective communication skills made her job easy because everybody at her school knew what was expected of them. She stated that she had teachers who were habitually late for work, but after talking to them, she saw a lot of

improvement. Some even went to report and apologised whenever they came late to work. Apart from communication with teachers, Principal MKL described her communication with learners in the following manner:

> *I do talk to learners about the importance of keeping time and being self-disciplined. If you remember, we have Life Skills Education here. It is the one that has made it really easy for me to talk to all learners about the facts of life. Sometimes I talk to them at the assembly; sometimes I go from class to class trying to show them the importance of education. I tell them that it is their responsibility to do their school work, whether the teacher is there in their class or not.*

4.7.3   Confidence

Four participants reported that their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies gave them peace of mind because they believed they could be successful despite challenges. These participants asserted that their high sense of efficacy gave them confidence and conviction that they can run the schools. They indicated that their strong sense of efficacy made their work easy, gave them motivation and peace of mind. With confidence these participants perform their managerial function without doubt that they will be successful in their endeavours. They foresee success in the execution of their duties and are not deterred by feelings of doubt and possible failure. In her submission on this issue, Principal ADV said, *"It gives me peace of mind because here at school there are many challenges, so I don't worry. I know I can. Whatever obstacles I come across, I know that I will overcome."*

4.7.4   Perseverance

Principal QEL reported that her high sense of efficacy regarding her managerial competencies helped her to persevere when she encountered challenges in her work. She explained that because she believed she had what it takes to be a principal, every obstacle she came across had to be

overcome. Principal QEL asserted that there is no problem that does not have a solution. When explaining how her strong sense of efficacy in her managerial competencies helped manage the school she stated that:

> *When I encounter problems, I try my level, level best to overcome those challenges because I know that every challenge has to be overcome. There is no challenge; there is no problem that does not have a solution. For a challenge, I should do all that it takes to overcome it.*

4.7.5 Financial management

On the other hand, Principal LIL reported that his strong belief that he could manage school finances effectively resulted in the proper use of school funds for the growth of the school. He emphasized that there was no misappropriation of funds in his management. He elaborated further in the following manner:

> *You will find that at the end of the year, we still have a little bit left to do developments. We don't just exhaust all the cents. We don't just spend money for the sake of spending. There is something left to do repairs, maintenance, and new developments. And we save for rainy days. We are paying private teachers, we feed learners, we take part in academic and extra-mural activities, but still we use the money in such a way that we don't just spend everything for the sake of spending.*

Principal LIL's reported high sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies was confirmed by audited financial statements which corresponded with drawn budgets for three consecutive years. Moreover, reported infrastructure developments which the researcher also observed corroborated the reported Principal LIL's self-efficacy beliefs. In other words, Principal LIL's efficacy beliefs regarding financial management were well calibrated.

4.7.   SUMMARY

Chapter 4 provided a detailed presentation of the findings of secondary school principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies. The analysis was based on four main themes derived from study questions which sought to investigate the following: necessary competencies for effective secondary school management; principals' self-efficacy beliefs regarding school management competencies; sources of principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their school management competencies; and the influence of principals' sense of efficacy on their managerial performance in schools. From participants' interviews, the major themes that emerged were: human resources management competencies; financial management competencies; instructional leadership competencies; and communication skills. Using thick descriptions and direct quotations from the study participants, the research was able to present participants' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding secondary school managerial competencies. Chapter 5 will provide discussion of these findings and make conclusions and recommendations. Suggestions for further research on Lesotho principals' self-efficacy beliefs will also be tabled in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data collected on secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding managerial competencies. The current chapter focuses on the discussion of the results obtained in this study. Conclusions will be drawn from the presented data and recommendations for further research are also provided in this last chapter of the current study. The discussions in this chapter are based on four main sections that reflect the four research questions. The first section has three themes, section two has three themes, and the third section has six themes, while the last section has five themes that emerged during data analysis.

5.2.   Principals' managerial competencies necessary for effective school management

Three themes pertaining to managerial competencies necessary for effective school management emerged during data analysis. These themes were: human resource management skills, financial management, and instructional leadership skills. These themes are discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.2.1. Human resource management skills

It emerged that participants in the current study considered human resource management skills necessary for effective school management. Participants pointed out that principals should be able lead by example, maintain teacher and learner conduct, recruit staff, and motivate staff-members and students. A detailed discussion of each of these aforementioned human resource management skills follows in the following paragraphs.

5.2.1.1. Leading by example

Participants postulated that effective principals lead by example and make sure that they are always at work to ensure smooth running of the school. They opined that subordinates trust and follow a leader who is part of the team and leads from within. Principals' presence at work motivates teachers' work performance as they are able to take after the principals. This finding is similar to Versland and Erickson's (2017) finding that a principal has to work collaboratively with teachers in different activities in order to lead by example. This study finding is also in line with Gurr's (2015) finding that principals are story-tellers and sense makers in their schools. They establish a shared vision and act as guardians of the vision and champions of change.

5.2.1.2. Maintain teachers' and learners' conduct

Majority (71%) of the participants viewed discipline as an important feature of a well managed secondary school. This requires principals to be skilful in maintaining both teachers' and learners' conduct at their schools. Conduct according to the study participants entails punctuality, lesson attendance, and the way the students and teachers behave at school. It further emerged that if there were elements of indiscipline at a school, teaching and learning processes would not run smoothly, and that would negatively affect the school performance. The participants believe that it is the duty of the principal to develop strategies and measures that enable maintenance of teachers' and

learners' discipline in schools. This finding is in line with Bitterova, Haskova, and Pisonova (2014) findings which stipulated that principals have to be skilful in leading and controlling their staff. In this regard, principals are expected to skilfully give their staff direction and ensure that they work towards the same goal. In line with the current study findings, Mendels (2012) posits that effective principals develop vision of commitment to high standards and the success of all students. Furthermore, Lunenburg (2010) concurs that principals' ability to develop the school vision and set goals is important because without clear plans and goals, staff would not be cognisant of what is expected from them and would therefore be ineffective.

5.2.1.3. Staff recruitment

Staff recruitment also emerged as one of the principals' duties for which principals need to possess relevant skills to perform. Participants elaborated that for a teacher to be employed at their schools, principals have to report the vacancy at the Teaching Service Department (TSD), advertise the position, and hold interviews before they send recommendations to Teaching Service Commission (TSC). Moreover, the participants explained that they employ private staff at schools according to areas of need. This is a technical duty which requires a principal equipped with recruitment skills within human resource management skills. These findings correlates with Lunenburg (2010) and Mendels (2012) submission that principals are tasked with the duty to hire competent personnel; and when necessary, develop their staff in the skills required to carry out their assigned tasks. Horng and Loeb (2010) also concur that besides strategically hiring staff, effective principals retain effective teachers while developing or removing underperforming ones.

5.2.1.4. Staff-members and learners' motivation

Staff and learners' motivation emerged during data analysis as one of the duties of a secondary school principal. Participants elaborated that principals are required to motivate both low performing and high performing staff in order to improve the general performance of the school. They, participants, further explained that principals have to encourage struggling staff members to pull up their socks while giving them hope that they are capable of doing better. On the other hand,

good performing staff members should be encouraged to keep up the good work through incentives and any other token of appreciation. According to these participants, motivated staff-members show commitment and dedication to work. This is line with Lunenburg's (2010) argument that principals need to understand the importance of motivation in influencing teachers and other members of the school community to use their knowledge and skills in order to implement drawn plans. Moreover, Bitterova, Haskova, and Pisonova (2014) note that school leaders must possess skills in the creation of motivation strategies based on shared values of the school. According to Wahlsrom et al. (2010), effective principals communicate set goals with teachers and encourage them to join in because they understand that teachers' motivation is positively related to student achievement. Horng and Loeb (2010) and Shatal et al.(2014) postulate that effective principals motivate teachers by providing them with appropriate support and teaching materials so as to be successful in the classroom

5.2.2. *Financial management skills*

The current study's findings also revealed that financial management skills are necessary for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho. The participants described a secondary school principal as a chief accounting officer with regard to management of school funds. Principals ensure proper use and safe-keeping of school funds. This finding correlates with Ikegbusi's (2016) quantitative study findings which noted that financial management skills are necessary for effective school management. Ikegbusi's (2016) revealed that principals need to be skilled in planning and sourcing funds for school development; delegating the mechanisms of financial matters to capable staff, monitoring financial matters delegated to staff, working within school budget, and keeping accurate financial records. Nwafukwa and Sunday (2015) reiterate that principals are required to know how to budget, audit school accounts, and do financial reports. Skills in budgeting enable principals to account for the money entrusted in their care, and reduce possible over and under estimations during budget preparation. On the other hand, auditing skills enable principals to prevent and detect embezzlement of funds or any kind of financial fraud, while financial reporting skills ensures funds accountability and prevention of corruption (Nwafukwa and Sunday, 2015). Based on collected data, most (71%) of the participants are challenged when

it comes to these financial management skills. Failure to provide the researcher with their schools' financial statements implies that they doubt their financial management abilities. This finding confirms Motsamai, Jacobs, and de Wet (2011) findings that principals in Lesotho lack financial management skills.

5.2.3. *Instructional leadership skills*

Instructional leadership skills also emerged as necessary managerial competencies for effective school management. Participants reported that secondary school principals have to ensure that teaching and learning take place at the schools they lead by providing teachers with teaching resources, monitoring teachers' work, and conducting classroom supervision. For principals to perform all these duties effectively, they need to be well equipped with instructional leadership skills. This is in line with Mestry's (2017) findings which revealed that principals' instructional leadership role includes providing appropriate resources, creating a conducive learning environment, undertaking classroom visits, setting high expectations for staff and learners, coaching and mentoring teachers. Bitterova, Haskova, and Pisonova (2014) and Ikegbusi's (2016)findings concur that it is necessary for principals to have instructional leadership skills in order to manage the teaching and learning processes in schools.

5.2.3.1.   Provision of teaching resources

The participants in the current study noted that principals are required to facilitate the teaching and learning processes in their schools. According to the participants, principals perform this function by ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning at school through provision of teaching resources such as syllabi, as well as teaching and learning materials to teachers. These findings concur with Horng and Loeb's, (2010), Shatal's et al.(2014) and Mestry's (2017) argument that effective principals facilitate the teaching and learning processes in their schools by providing teachers with appropriate support and teaching materials so as to be successful in the classroom.

5.2.3.2. Monitoring teachers' work

It also emerged in the current study's findings that secondary school principals ensure that teaching and learning take place at the schools they lead through monitoring teachers' work. Participants mentioned that it is principals' duty to see to it that teachers go to class on time and teach according to the syllabus. To perform this duty effectively, principals have to possess skills in monitoring teachers' work, and knowledge of what to look for as they monitor teachers' work. These findings correlate with Bitterova's et al. (2014) findings that one of the necessary managerial competencies required of principals is their ability to administrate the teaching process at school level. Principals are required to be skilful in employing strategies that improve the quality of the teaching process (Bitterova et al., 2014). In concurrence, Mestry (2017) reiterates that coaching and monitoring of teachers' work fall under principals' instructional leadership roles. Principals are required to ensure that teachers scheme in relation to the used syllabi, prepare lesson plans from the concepts schemed, and record the work done on a weekly basis.

5.2.3.3. Conducting classroom supervision

Principals' ability to conduct classroom observations also emerged as an important skill that principals need to possess for effective school management. Participants pointed out that principals make sure that teachers go to class, and observe those teachers as they teach. This finding is in line with Sarfo and Cudjoe's (2016) assertion that supervision is a leadership function therefore principals need to be knowledgeable and skilful in clinically supervising their staff in order to achieve set targets. In support, a quantitative study conducted by Okorji and Ogbo (2013) revealed that clinical supervision brings about greater teacher performance as well as improved learner performance. Therefore, principals' capabilities in skilfully observing their teachers delivering instruction in class are crucial for effective school management.

5.3. PRINCIPALS' SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS

Data from interviews, observations, and documented analyses revealed a number of themes related to the principals' sense of efficacy with regard to managerial competencies. These themes include belief in their ability to manage human resource, provide instructional leadership, do financial management, and communicate with stakeholders. Each of these themes is discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

5.3.1. Belief in own human resource management abilities

The current study participants reported high sense of efficacy with regard to human resource management. They believed that they were capable of leading and supporting their teams of teachers. Observed principals' practices, as well as documents reviewed pointed to areas of human resource management which principals gave more attention to calibrate their reported high sense of efficacy. The participants reported that they believed they were capable of leading by example, communicating effectively with staff members, monitoring teachers' work, and motivating staff to be dedicated to their work. These findings are in line with Federici and Skaalvik's (2011) findings which revealed that principals give priority to areas in which they have high self-efficacy. Another study which has findings that correlate with the current study findings is a case-study on the influence of principal self-efficacy on collective efficacy by Versland and Erickson (2017) which revealed that principals have a high sense of efficacy in human resource management. The current study reveals that one area in which the principal investigated demonstrated strong sense of efficacy is leading by example. The principal in Versland and Erickson's (2017) study worked collaboratively with teachers in different activities in order to lead by example.

5.3.2. Belief in own instructional leadership skills

Principals' self-efficacy beliefs regarding instructional leadership skills emerged in this study. Some participants (71%) reported a high sense of efficacy while others (29%) felt inadequately equipped to perform some of the instructional leadership functions. Participants who reported

strong sense of efficacy believed in their ability to facilitate smooth running of teaching and learning processes through classroom observations and monitoring teaching and learning processes. With these skills principals are able to help, direct, advice, and stimulate teachers' growth, as opposed to merely finding faults in their teaching. Zaare (2013) and Veloo, Komuji, and Khalid (2013) concur that principals' abilities to conduct classroom observations enables teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and make amendments in order to become more effective.

On the other hand, although only two of the seven current study participants reported low sense of efficacy with regard to classroom observations, document analysis revealed that five participants had low sense of efficacy with regard to classroom observations. While two participants expressed their lack of skills in classroom observations, there was no record of classroom observations to corroborate claims of high efficacy beliefs made by three of the participants. The participants who reported low sense of efficacy explained that they did not do classroom observations because they felt inadequately prepared for that role. This finding is in line with Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory argument that self-efficacy levels influence both the initiation and persistence of a coping behaviour. In support, Hassan, Alasmari, and Ahmed (2015) posit that people's sense of efficacy determines whether they will choose to face a challenging task or view it as impossible and shy away from it. People avoid challenging situations they believe exceed their abilities but choose to engage in activities they judge themselves capable of handling (Bandura, 1977).

Moreover, principals' beliefs in their ability to provide teaching and learning resources such as text books, and visual aids also emerged within instructional leadership skills efficacy. Participants reported high sense of efficacy with regard to provision of teaching and learning materials, and observational data corroborated this claim. Textbooks marked "Teacher's copy" and other visual aids were seen on teachers' desks in the staffrooms as a proof that principals avail teaching and learning materials to teachers. With teaching and learning resources availed to them, teachers are able to perform their instructional duties with ease and produce good results. This finding correlates with Versland and Erickson (2017) findings which revealed that a principal who has high sense of efficacy in instructional leadership increases teachers' instructional effectiveness and promote learner achievement levels through provision of teaching and learning resources.

Furthermore, the current study findings are also in line with Mestry's (2017) findings which revealed that the instructional leadership role of principals includes, among other things, providing appropriate resources, creating conducive learning environment, undertaking classroom visits, coaching and mentoring teachers.

5.3.3. Belief in own financial management abilities

Principals' beliefs in their financial management abilities also emerged in the current study. Five of the seven study participants reported strong sense of efficacy while two expressed doubt in their financial management competencies. With regard to two out of the five participants who reported high sense of efficacy, audited financial statements were produced to correlate their beliefs. However, three principals who reported strong self-efficacy beliefs could not produce financial statements or any other data that could help the researcher assess if there were calibration between the principals' beliefs and the actual performance. On the other hand, participants who reported low self-efficacy beliefs regarding financial management had no financial statement ready for review. This is in line with Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory's submission that people with strong self-efficacy beliefs engage actively and put more effort in given tasks. On the contrary, inefficacious people tend to avoid situations and activities they believe exceed their coping skills. The current study findings are further supported by Federici and Skaalvik (2011) findings in a study on the relationship between principals' self-efficacy and work engagement which revealed that self-efficacy predicts work engagement.

5.4. Factors that influence principals' self-efficacy beliefs

The analysis of data pertaining to factors that influence principals' self-efficacy beliefs revealed that principals developed self-efficacy beliefs from work experiences, comparing themselves with other principals, encouragements from colleagues, networking, training, and internal and external support. Each of these sources of principals' self-efficacy beliefs is discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.4.1. Work Experiences

Work experience emerged as one of the factors that influenced principals' sense of efficacy regarding school managerial competencies. Participants in the current study referred to both successful experiences and failures, and their role on principals' self efficacy beliefs. This is in line with self-efficacy theory hypothesis that success builds a robust sense of personal efficacy while failure, especially if it is experienced before a strong sense of efficacy is firmly established, undermines it (Bandura, 1994). Principals who produce good academic results and are able to meet set targets tend to have a sense of efficacy as a result of their achievements. On the contrary, principals who fail in their attempts to meet set targets tend to have low sense of efficacy with regard to tasks they have failed to complete.

With regard to successful experiences, participants talked about the effects of producing good academic results and being able to send candidates to tertiary institutions year after year, and successfully dealing with different challenges related to their position as heads of schools. They reported that their successful experiences made them confident that they had what it takes to manage secondary schools. These findings are in line with Ozer's (2013) findings that experiences principals gain overtime while overcoming challenges and problems enhance their sense of efficacy. Ozer (2013) highlights the complexity and demanding nature of principals' leadership role and opines that through experience principals develop a realistic approach to leadership challenges, and this in turn plays a significant role on principals' sense of efficacy. In support, Eberhard (2013:46) posits that "Making improvements to self-efficacy involves individual success with specific experiences. These achievements may lead to a positive perception of personal ability."

On the other hand, unsuccessful experiences emerged as sources of low sense of efficacy with regard to financial management competencies. Two of the seven participants explained that they had a challenge as far as the use of books of accounts was concerned. As a result, they felt that they could not adequately manage school funds and had to depend on their school bursars to manage and account for the use of their schools' funds. These findings correlate with Zulkosky's

(2009) submission that if an individual experiences failure, their sense of efficacy decreases. The findings are also in line with Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory argument that inefficacious people tend to avoid situations and activities they believe exceed their coping skills.

5.4.2. Comparison with other principals

The current study also discovered that principals developed their sense of efficacy from comparing themselves with other principals. Four of the seven study participants compared themselves with principals from neighbouring schools whom they considered to be doing a good job and expressed a belief that they too could also perform as well as those other principals. Generally, these four study participants referred to good academic results produced by neighbouring principals, and elaborated on the measures they took to produce good results as well. These findings provide evidence that another source of information people use to create and strengthen their sense of efficacy, as stipulated in self-efficacy theory, is vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1989; Bandura, 1994; Zulkosky, 2009). These experiences happen when people observe others perform a task and feel confident that they too have what it take to successfully perform similar tasks (Zulkosky, 2009).In a qualitative study on self-efficacy and "grow your own" leadership programs in Montana, Versland (2013) found out that lack of vicarious experiences as well as encouragement from seasoned principals meant that new principals did not have role models to learn from, hence the low sense of efficacy.

5.4.3. Encouragements from colleagues

Encouragements and appreciation for principals' work by communities around their schools and other school principals emerged as some of the factors that influenced principals' high sense of efficacy in their capabilities to run schools. Four participants reported that they received praises for their good academic results and good students' behaviour, and that made them believe that they had necessary managerial competencies to manage schools. These findings show encouragement as another source of principals' self-efficacy beliefs. These findings are in line with Shantal,

Halttunen, and Pekka (2014) study on sources of principals' leadership practices conducted in Finland which provides tangible evidence that both verbal persuasion and vicarious experiences provided can enhance principals' self efficacy. Shantal et al.(2014) further posit that encouragement and motivation given by colleagues within the network have a positive effect on principals' self-efficacy.

5.4.4. Networking

During data analyses networking emerged as another source of principals' sense of efficacy in school management competencies. Three of the seven participants explained that they had colleagues whom they could contact to seek advice when they encounter challenges in schools management. They emphasised that knowing that their colleagues were just a phone call away to help when need arose boosted their beliefs in their managerial capabilities. These findings are in concurrence with findings of studies conducted by Shantal et al.(2014) and Ng & Szeto(2015) which reported that networking is another source of principals' self-efficacy beliefs. Shantal et al.(2014) note that networking enables principals to keep in constant touch and render needed advice to one another in times of need. Furthermore, having conducted a qualitative research on the professional needs of newly appointed principals in Hong Kong, Ng and Szeto (2015) concur that networking with peers, as well as working with mentors, has a positive relation with principals' sense of efficacy.

5.4.5. Training

Formal training also surfaced as one of the factors that enhance principals' sense of efficacy in their ability to run secondary schools. Two of the seven participants referred to both the training they obtained from institutions of higher learning and the workshops they attended as principals. Participants emphasised that leadership theories and management styles they learned at school gave them confidence in their ability to run schools. Apart from that, workshops do not only refresh their minds on what is expected of them as principals, but also provide an opportunity for principals to meet their colleagues and share ideas. These findings correlate with Shantal, Halttunen, and

Pekka's (2014) findings that knowledge principals acquire from leadership theories taught in leadership training programs is one of the sources of their leadership practices. Shantal et al.(2014) study reveals that theory and practice offered to principals during training play a paramount role in enhancing principals' sense of efficacy. The current study findings are also in concurrence with Hutton's (2013) findings that professional training of school principals is important for effective running of schools because it improves principals' self-confidence and enables them to perform their managerial duties with greater level of certainty and determination.

5.4.6. Support

The current study's data analyses revealed that the support principals received from staff-member, school boards, proprietors, parents, and the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), as a source of principals' self-efficacy beliefs regarding school managerial competencies. They reported that cooperation and warm relationships they had with their staff made it easy to manage staff members, as well as operations and activities at their schools. The proprietors and MOET do not only provide principals with teaching and learning resources, but provide training workshop for principals. These findings are in line with Tschannen-Moran and Gareis, (2007) argument that the support offered to principals by education authorities, staff members, community, and learners themselves has a significant contribution on principals' self-efficacy. According to Tschannen-Moran and Gareis's (2007) study, efficacious principals tend to perceive greater support from department of education, their teachers, support-staff, as well as learners. On the other hand, in a qualitative study on self-efficacy and "grow your own" leadership programs in Montana, Versland (2013) found out that new principals who participated in the study had low self-efficacy because of lack of support from their colleagues.

5.5.   The influence of principals' efficacy beliefs on their managerial performance

Having discussed principals' self-efficacy beliefs regarding managerial competencies, as well as the factors that influence those beliefs, this subsection focuses on the influence of principals' efficacy beliefs on their managerial performance. Collected data for the current study revealed that principals' self-efficacy beliefs have influence on principals' work engagement. Therefore, the discussions in this subsection focus on how both high and low self-efficacy beliefs influence principals' managerial performance.

In the current study, analysed data revealed that principals performed functions which they believed they were capable of performing but avoided those that they did not trust their abilities in performing. Principals' self-efficacy beliefs were found to have influence on principals' ability to create organisational structure, effective communication, confidence, perseverance, and financial management. This finding is supported by findings of Federici and Skaalvik's (2011) study on the relationship between principals' self-efficacy and work engagement which revealed that self-efficacy beliefs predict work engagement. Federici and Skaalvik's (2011) study reveals that principals give priority to areas in which they have high self-efficacy and pay less attention to those areas in which they have low sense of efficacy. A detailed discussion of the influence of principals' self-efficacy beliefs on creation of organisational structure, effective communication, confidence, perseverance, and financial management, is presented in the following paragraphs.

5.5.1. Creating organisational structure

Participants in the current study reported that their sense of efficacy in their managerial competencies enables them to be professional when managing schools. These participants explained that they did not do everything in person but allocated duties to different members of staff. They stated that they had departmentalised their schools and promoted some teachers to be heads of departments (HODs) in order to help in the running of the schools. This was done despite lack of grants for HODs. They further stipulated that they worked hand in hand with deputy

principals, HODs, and teachers to ensure that all angles of school management are covered. This finding correlates with findings of Versland and Erickson's (2017) study which revealed that principals who have a high sense of efficacy share leadership with others, develop capacity, and publicly recognised strengths and skills in others. In support of these findings, Bitterova et al. (2014) reveal that effective principals run schools like profession institutions. Such principals create and develop organization structure, clear distribution of powers and responsibilities, and promotion of a school culture that supports team-work. Lunenburg (2010) also agrees that running schools professionally involves establishing policies and chain of command, departmentalization, reporting patterns, and various administrative and subordinate duties.

5.5.2. *Effective communication*

In this study, effective communication emerged as a product of principals' sense of efficacy in school management competencies. One participant explained that because she believed in her ability to communicate effectively, whenever there was a need, she used different strategies to communicate with bodies that needed to be addressed in the school community. For example, she wrote announcements directed to staff-members in the clock book, while those meant for learners were delivered at the morning assembly. She holds administration, and staff meetings periodically and whenever there is an urgent need to have a meeting. This finding is in line with Ikegbusi's (2016) study finding that effective principals communicate effectively with staff, and involve staff in decision-making on matters that concern them. On the other hand, Tyler (2016) posits that communication skills are necessary for building trust between school principals and teachers, because trusting relationships are vital for leading teachers towards effective instruction.

5.5.3. *Confidence*

The current study revealed that principals' sense of efficacy plays a pivotal role in promoting principal's confidence. Participants reported that their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies gave them peace of mind because they believed they could be successful despite

challenges. These participants asserted that their high sense of efficacy gave them confidence and conviction that they can run the schools. Their strong sense of efficacy made their work easy because they did not anticipate failure in the performance of their duties. They reported that they were always optimistic that they will be successful when executing their tasks and this keeps them motivated to attempt challenging activities. These findings are in line with Bandura's (1989) argument that self-efficacy affects people's thought patterns, levels of motivation, feelings, and behaviour. According to Bandura (1989)perceived self-efficacy influences anticipatory scenarios people construct and reiterate. While those with strong sense of efficacy visualize success scenarios that prompt them to engage optimistically in activities, people with low self-efficacy beliefs visualize failure scenarios that undermine performance by focusing on how things will go wrong

5.5.4. *Perseverance*

The current study findings revealed that principals' self-efficacy beliefs played a significant role in enhancing their ability to persevere in the face of challenges. One participant reported that her high sense of efficacy regarding her managerial competencies helped her to persevere when she encountered challenges in her work. She explained that because she believed she had what it takes to be a principal, every obstacle she came across had to be overcome. The findings are supported by Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2007) who posit that principals who have strong self-efficacy beliefs are persistent and do not give up easily in their endeavours. When need arises, efficacious principals adapt their strategies to fit contextual situations in order to attain desirable outcomes.

5.5.5. *Financial management*

Findings in the current study revealed that principals' self-efficacy beliefs influence their performance in financial management duties. One participant who reported strong sense of

efficacy believed he managed school finances properly and for the growth of the school. His school's drawn budgets and financial statements for three consecutive years calibrated the participant's belief. However, three of five participants who reported high self-efficacy beliefs regarding financial management had no documents to calibrate their sense of efficacy. On the other hand, two participants who reported low sense of efficacy regarding management competencies did not provide any financial documents for analysis. These findings confirm Bandura's(1977) and Bandura's (1989) self-efficacy theory argument that perceived self-efficacy beliefs can either increase or hamper people's motivation to perform a given task. This is reflected in people's commitment and determination to complete given task successfully, as well as their perseverance in the face of setbacks (Bandura, 1989). When people hold strong self-efficacy beliefs, they engage actively and put more effort in given tasks (Bandura, 1977).

Contrary to work commitment and engagement brought about by principals' high self-efficacy beliefs regarding managerial competencies, low sense of efficacy appeared to have a debilitating effect on principals' performance of their duties. 71% of the participants in the current study appeared to have low sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies while 57% had low sense of efficacy regarding classroom observations. There were no records indicating these participants' performance of both financial management tasks and classroom observations. This implies that these participants avoided these tasks because they doubted their abilities to perform them successfully. These findings are in line with self-efficacy belief theory's argument that inefficacious people tend to avoid situations and activities they believe exceed their coping skills (Bandura, 1977).

5.6.   CONCLUSIONS

In this study, the researcher set out to answer the following main research question and sub-questions as illustrated in chapter 1:

Main research question: *What are secondary school principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies?*

Sub-questions:

1. What are managerial competencies necessary for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho?
2. What are the Lesotho secondary school principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies?
3. What factors influence Lesotho secondary school principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies?
4. How do the principals' efficacy beliefs influence their management of secondary schools in Lesotho?

5.6.1. Principals' managerial competencies necessary for effective school management in Lesotho

In relation to the first question, 'What are managerial competencies necessary for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho?' the current study concludes that three main managerial competencies are necessary for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho. These are human resource management competencies, instructional leadership competencies, and financial management competencies.

Within human resource management competencies, principals are required to be able to lead by example, maintain teachers' and learners' conduct, recruit and motivate staff, in order to effectively manage secondary schools in Lesotho. It is important that principals are team players in their schools so that they can lead from within. Leading from within, principals are able to be exemplary and to monitor teachers' work closely. In turn, teachers perform their duties well because they copy from the principal and are aware that principals are close-by to monitor their work. Besides that, it is important that principals are able to recruit competent staff memberswho perform their duties without being pushed to do so. Basically, human resource management competencies are vital for principals to command order and keep teachers motivated to exert all

effort in their schools' success. Without these skills, principals run a risk of leading unruly and disorganised staff-members who might not perform their duties as expected. Consequently, learners' education might suffer a terribly blow.

Furthermore, instructional leadership competencies were also found to be necessary for effective management of secondary schools. In the current study, principals' ability to provide teaching and learning resources, monitoring of teachers' work, classroom observations, and creation of conducive work environment emerged as instructional leadership skills necessary for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho. Principals need these skills in order to raise learner achievement and produce good academic results. Principals who lack instructional leadership competencies are at the risk of leading low performing schools which may fail to attract new learners in the future.

Furthermore, the study concludes that management of school funds is one of the basic roles of school principals. Therefore, financial management competencies are necessary for effective management of secondary schools in Lesotho. As chief accounting officers in their schools, principals' possession of budgeting skills, auditing of school accounts, and financial reporting skills is important for effective management of school funds. Financial management competencies are essential as they enable principals to avoid both under and over estimations when budgeting, and to ensure accountability and prevent corruption when preparing financial reports. Furthermore, principals' ability to audit school accounts prevents misappropriation of school funds and any kind fraud by teachers and other staff-members entrusted with school funds.

5.6.2. Lesotho Principals' Self-efficacy beliefs regarding managerial competencies

In relation to the second question, 'What are the school principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies?', this study concludes that principals hold strong sense of efficacy in

some managerial competencies, and low self-efficacy beliefs in other managerial competencies. A strong sense of efficacy in the following human resource management competencies emerged in leading by example, communicating effectively with staff members, ensuring that teachers come to work on time and do their work, and motivating staff to be dedicated to their work. Principals' strong sense of efficacy in their ability to lead by example enables them to work collaboratively with their staff members to achieve set goals. This in turn, influences teachers' work performance positively as they take after their leaders. Apart from that, principals' high sense of efficacy in their effective communication skills allows them to keep teachers up-to-date and involved in the affairs of their schools. When they are involved in what goes around in their schools, teachers work cooperatively with principals in order to achieve desired goals. In short, collected data confirmed that principal self-efficacy beliefs are important because they influence principals' actions and behaviours that determine teachers' motivation and performance, and processes that improve schools.

On the other hand, this study concludes that principals have varying self-efficacy beliefs regarding instructional leadership competencies. Strong self-efficacy beliefs were generally found in the provision of teaching and learning resources, monitoring of teachers' work, classroom observations, and creation of a favourable work environment. Observational data on the above instructional leadership skills provided a positive calibration between reported self-efficacy beliefs and actual principals' performance. However, a lot of inconsistencies were picked in relation to monitoring teachers' work and classroom observations. Analyses of preparation books, and scheme and record books gave an implication that some principals either did not know what to check in these books, or they only signed without checking if there were correlation between lesson plan, schemes and records. Moreover, while one participant explicitly reported low sense of efficacy regarding classroom management, most of those who claimed to have high self-efficacy beliefs could not provide evidence of their performance in this regard. As a result, the researcher concludes that these participants' self-efficacy beliefs are poorly calibrated.

Additionally, principals' efficacy beliefs were reported regarding financial management competencies. While most of the participants reported a strong sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies, a positive calibration between these beliefs and actual performance was only found in one case. Failure to provide the researcher with schools financial statements, and observable lack of improvements in some of the participants' schools implied that there was a challenge with management of school funds. On the other hand, a declaration of low sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies by two of the seven participants, correlated with the absence of financial statements for three consecutive years. In short, based on collected data for this study, there is an indication that principals are challenged as far as financial management competencies are concerned. Therefore, intervention is needed to rectify this challenge.

5.6.3. *Factors that influence principals' self-efficacy beliefs in Lesotho*

Based on the collected data for the third question, 'What factors influence Lesotho secondary school principals' efficacy beliefs regarding their managerial competencies?' ,the researcher concludes that the following factors influence principals' self-efficacy beliefs regarding managerial competencies: work experiences, comparison with other principals, encouragements, networking, training, and support. This conclusion is in line with self-efficacy theory's assertion that mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasion are sources of individuals' self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977). In addition to these three sources, networking, formal training, and support also emerged as important factors that promote principals efficacy beliefs. Based on gathered data, principals appear not to be sufficiently prepared for the role of a principal, especially with regard to instructional leadership and financial management competencies. Lack of formal training in management and leadership skills appeared to have a major impact on principals' sense of efficacy because most of the failures experienced by principals are due to lack skills to perform certain school management functions.

5.6.4. Principals' efficacy beliefs' influence on managerial performance in the secondary schools of Lesotho

In relation to the fourth question, 'How do the principals' efficacy beliefs influence their management of secondary schools in Lesotho?', data from interviews, observations, and document analyses show that principals' strong sense of efficacy enables them to develop organisational structure, communicate effectively with staff-members, and work with enhanced confidence. The distribution of leadership roles among teachers makes principals' job easier and enables them to focus on more serious duties in their work. Besides that, the distribution of leadership powers ensures that all areas of management are taken care of. Principals' self-efficacy beliefs have a positive influence on principals' managerial performance in this regard.

On the other hand, collected data provided evidence that most principals' low sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies cripples principals' performance in the management of school funds. Most of the participating principals could not produce financial statements of their schools. Perhaps they feared that their poor budgeting and financial reporting skills would be revealed. In a nutshell, principals' low sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies negatively affects principals' performance in the management of school funds.

Generally secondary school principals have strong sense of efficacy regarding human resource management competencies. However, even though principals reported high efficacy beliefs regarding instructional leadership competencies, they are generally challenged with regard to classroom supervision and work monitoring. Principals' reluctance to conduct classroom supervision and inconsistencies in teachers' scheme books reflect poor calibration between principals' reported high sense of efficacy regarding instructional leadership competencies and their actual performance. Besides that, based on collected data, this study concludes that secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies is low. The low sense of efficacy regarding financial management competencies was reflected in their inability to prepare their schools' financial statements.

In a nutshell, Lesotho secondary school principals hold a strong sense of efficacy regarding human resource management competencies. On the other hand, this study concludes that principals have low sense of efficacy with regard to instructional leadership and financial management competencies.

5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

5.7.1. Recommendations directed to principals

In order to improve their instructional leadership capabilities, principals must work collaboratively with successful principals in order to learn strategies used by those principals. Networking with successful principals can also help struggling principals with both vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion which will enhance their sense of efficacy.

Moreover, it is recommended that principals develop their financial management skills so that they can budget, audit financial accounts of their schools, and write clear financial reports. This can be done through enrolling in in-service training programmes which will equip them with financial management skills. Equipped with financial management skills, principals will believe in their ability to manage school finances, and therefore give financial management tasks the priority they deserve. This will result in financially stable schools where there is transparency in the use of school funds.

5.7.2. Recommendations directed to Ministry of Education and Training

In order to ensure that secondary schools are managed by principals who possess necessary managerial competencies, qualification requirements for the position of a principal may be revised. It could be required of candidates for the position of a principal to have a qualification in Educational Administration and Management. Principals who are formally trained in Educational Administration and Management are equipped with different leadership styles and managerial competencies necessary for effective management of school. Furthermore, during training, principals may be exposed to mastery experiences which boost their self-efficacy beliefs.

Moreover, novice principals may be assigned mentors who will guide them in their first year as principals. Through mentors' guidance, novice principals will be exposed to vicarious experiences as well as verbal persuasion which will positive influence their sense of efficacy. Besides that, with mentors at their disposal, young principals can attempt challenging tasks and attain mastery experiences which will further enhance their sense of efficacy.

Apart from that, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education and Training, and teacher training institutions organise in-service financial management training to respond to principals' lack of financial management competencies. Equipped with financial management skills through in-service training, practicing principals' self-efficacy beliefs will improve and enable them to perform their school financial management tasks with greater level of conviction.

5.7.3. *Recommendation directed to tertiary institutions*

In order to produce school leaders who are equipped with managerial competencies necessary for effective school management, it is recommended that teacher training institutions should introduce in-service and pr-service leadership training programmes meant to produce school principals. In addition to providing principals with leadership styles and managerial competencies, leadership training programmes can also expose upcoming principals to internship programmes which will provide principals with mastery experiences, and vicarious experiences that uplift their sense of efficacy.

5.8. SUMMARY

The current chapter focused on the discussion of the results obtained in this study. Conclusions were drawn from the presented data and recommendations for principals, Ministry of Education and Training, and tertiary institutions, were provided in this last chapter of the study.

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APPENDIX

A. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

Telephone: +266 22340601

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Website: http://www.nul.ls

P.O. Roma180,
Lesotho.

Africa.

Faculty of Education

Ref:

January 22, 2018

The Principal/Headmaster/Headmistress

Dear Sir/Madam,

Introduction Letter for Data Collection for G.G.Mphutlane

I am more than happy to introduce the bearer of this letter who is a part time student pursuing Master of Education in the Faculty of Education at the National University of Lesotho. As part of the programme requirement, students are expected to write a Dissertation on topical issues in education, hence your school has been sampled for this particular exercise.

You are kindly requested to provide him with necessary assistance during his visit in your school.

Thank You

Retšelisitsoe Matheolane (Ph.D.)

Supervisor

B. **CONSENT FORM**
THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

CONSENT FORM

I, German G. Mphutlane, am conducting a study on Lesotho secondary school principals' perceptions of their sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies. This study is in partial fulfillment of the Master's degree requirements. You are therefore requested to participate in this study by honestly responding to set interview questions.

The researcher will ensure that your responses will only be used for the purposes of the study and will not put you in any harm. Your identity will be kept confidential.

You may not benefit directly from taking part in this study. However, this study may help us better understand the influence of principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies on school management.

Signed _____ Date: _____

Supervisor_____ Date: _____

C. INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Name of school:

Date:

Location:

Introduction:

Thank you for your time to speak with me today. I am sincerely grateful for your willingness to take part in this study. I will be asking you a few questions and recording your responses verbatim. After the transcription of your thoughts and feelings, I will ask for your review of what I transcribed. It is important for the transcription to be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you've said with an incorrect interpretation.

What I am interested in is exploring secondary school principals' sense of efficacy regarding their managerial competencies. Please express your thoughts and feelings as freely as you like. I really want to know your perspective concerning the abovementioned topic. I may ask you some additional questions in order to clarify for me what you mean. Do you consent to have our interview tape recorded? Are you ready to start?

Interview questions

1. In your opinion, how can you describe a well managed secondary school?
2. Please describe the main duties of a secondary school principal.
3. Please describe your beliefs in your ability to perform your duties as a principal? *(please explain managerial skills/competencies you possess)*
4. a) What has influenced your beliefs in your managerial competencies?
a) Explain what support might have contributed to your beliefs in your ability to manage your school.
5. How do your beliefs in your managerial abilities help you manage your school?

   D. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please tick the appropriate option

Male	
Female	

2. Please tick the appropriate age range/group

20-30 years		46-50 years	
31-40 years		51-55 years	
41-45 years		56-65 years	

3. Please tick your highest qualification

B.A.Ed/B.Ed/Bsc.Ed		M.A.Ed/M.Ed/Msc.Ed	
PGDE		Other(specify)	

4. Teachings experience before becoming a principal

1-5 years		11-15 years	
6-10 years		Over 15 years	

5. How long have you been a principal?

5-9 years		15-20 years	
10-15 years		21 and more	

6. How long have you been the principal of this school?

5-9 years		15-20 years	
10-15 years		21 and more	

7. Please indicate your school proprietorship

ACL		GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO	
LECSA		Methodist Church	

RCC		Other (specify)	

8. Where is your school located?

Urban area		Foothills	
Rural area		Mountains	

9. What is the approximate enrollment of your school?

Less than 300 learners		501-750	
301-500 learners		More than 750 learners	

10. What is the approximate number of teachers in your school?

10-15		26-35	
16-25		More than 35(specify)	

11. How many departments does your school have?

One		Three		Five	
two		Four		Six	

12. Please mention the departments in your school.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

QUESTIONS	PARTICIPANTS RESPONSES	ADDITIONAL NOTES
1. In your opinion, how can you describe a well managed secondary school?		
2. Please describe the main duties of a secondary school principal.		
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4. a) What has influenced your beliefs in your managerial competencies? b) Explain what support might have contributed to your beliefs in your ability to manage your school.		
5. How do your beliefs in your managerial abilities help you manage your school?		

PRINCIPAL QEL Transcription

INTERVIEW	
Researcher: Madam, in your opinion how can describe a well managed secondary school? **Princ. QEL:** A well managed school is a school with a very good leadership. If the leadership is very good, we regard the school as well managed. **Researcher:** How do we see that the leadership is good? **Princ. QEL:** Ehm.......we can see that if things are well organized at school; and if the manager who is the principal lead by example. In order for people to do things, they have to see them from the principal herself/himself. If you are a teacher, you have to see to it that you are always on time. If you are expecting teachers to be at school; you also as the principal have to be always at school. **Researcher:** Do the issue of academic results of the school show that the school is well managed? **Princ. QEL:** Definitely. It shows because the school that is not well managed cannot produce good results. **Researcher:** What about the environment of the school, the infrastructure, does it show if the school is well managed? **Princ. QEL:** We don't have infrastructure at our school; we don't have classes. But we have, we use what we have.	
Researcher: Ok. Thank you. What are the main duties of a school principal? **Princ. QEL:** The main duties of a school principal are: to see to it that learning is taking place at school. She is also chief accounting officer (long pause) **Researcher:** Chief accounting officer, what are we saying here?	

Princ. QEL: Here we are saying the principal always see to it that the school funds are well managed. **Researcher:** Ok. That's what it means...... **Princ. QEL:** Yes. **Researcher:** We talked about ensuring learning, being accounting officer......... **Princ. QEL:** You also see to it that teachers go to classes; and you should always monitor the teaching and learning of students all the time. And you should also make sure that teachers and learners enjoys what they are doing. You know that work of teachers is to teach, so they have to enjoy their job of being teachers. **Researcher:** How do you do that? **Princ. QEL:** Yes, you have to......when somebody has done well, you have to motivate that person; incentives for people who are doing very well; even students who are doing very well, or who have improved, they have to be recognized.	
Researcher: Nice, nice. You have mentioned the qualities of an effective principal, and the duties of the principal. Now, the question is, do you believe you have what it takes to be a principal? **Princ. QEL:** Yes I do. **Researcher:** You do. **Princ. QEL:** Yes. Because of the results our school is producing, I don't have a doubt that our school has got a very good principal. **Researcher:** Ok. What managerial skills do you believe you have to say I know I have what it takes to be a principal? **Princ. QEL:** Eh.....like I have mentioned earlier, I don't make decisions on my own, I involve other people; I listen to what other people say, and draw then draw my own conclusions. If what I have got from people involved is going to be beneficial to the school....... **Researcher:** Ok, ok. You mentioned that one of the duties is to ensure teaching and learning, how do you ensure that?	

Princ. QEL: Eh......I normally talk to.......at school we have eh......monitors and monitresses. If there is no teacher in the class, they are told to report straight to the office. They should not go to the staffroom to get teachers if there is no teacher in the classroom because if I say they should go and check at the staffroom, they might be scared of teachers. They come straight to me and tell me there is no teacher, and then I take actions. I always maintain that there are teachers in the classrooms. **Researcher:** Knowing that there are teachers in the classrooms, how do you ensure that they are there to teach, not just to be there? **Princ. QEL:** Sometimes I don't just sit in the office, I have to go around to check if there are teachers in the classrooms, and they are doing what they are expected to do because some teachers might go to the classrooms and rest in the classrooms, yet their job is not to go and sit down in the classes; they have to go and do the teaching. **Researcher:** Ok. Do you do observations, class observation? **Princ. QEL:** Regularly **Researcher:** Ok. Is it clinical? Like, do you arrange with them, that I will be coming to your class and ...... **Princ. QEL:** Yes, yes.	
Researcher: What could you say influences your belief in your ability to manage the school? You have mentioned that the school results influence your belief that you can manage the school. What else? **Princ. QEL:** Other things might be the background that I come from. I come from a very vulnerable family, so since I know that education is the only key that can change one's life, that is what influences me to work hard. If education has changed me, I also want it to change these kids as well. **Researcher:** could we say you have passion for your work? **Princ. QEL:** Yes	

Researcher: We have the proprietor; does the proprietor do anything to enhance your belief in your ability to run the school?

Princ. QEL: Not that much. Like I have indicated earlier, we don't have infrastructure, and that hinders our school progress. We don't have enough teachers. If the proprietor was caring about the school, we could have everything at school, and that would make our work earlier.

Researcher: Any support that you get from anywhere else that maybe help enhance your belief in your abilities?

Princ. QEL: I think I get support from the board, the school board. It is very supportive. Eh....in most schools, you will find that school boards and principals clash. The support that I get is also from the deputy principal.

Researcher: What about the staff?

Princ. QEL: They are not the same; some are difficult to work with, but some are listening to the tune.

Researcher: How do you deal with those who are difficult to work with?

Princ. QEL: Eh.....I normally use other staff member to talk to them; those who are very hard, to make them see things the way we see them. That is why I said I always involve other people, I don't make my own conclusions and decisions.

Researcher: Ok, at work, more especially in leadership positions, that are challenges that people come across, do you face challenges at your school?

Princ. QEL: Yes I do.

Researcher: How does it feel after you have successfully gone through your challenges?

Princ. QEL: I regard myself as a hero. We you have achieved through hardships, you regard yourself as a hero.

Researcher: Looking back at the challenges that you have been going through, does that experience enhance your belief in your ability to run the school? **Princ. QEL:** Yes sir. Because it wasn't easy at all when I started here in 2007; eh......like I was straight from the teaching post, classroom, I had never been a deputy, I had never been HOD, from the classroom to being a principal, it was not easy at all. But I told myslf that I have to work very hard.	
Researcher: Ok madam. Last question; this strong belief that you can manage the school, how does it help you in your day-to-day running of the school? Just the belief that I can run the school? **Princ. QEL:** My work is very easy. When you belief that you can do something, your work is very easy. You are able to achieve your goals, whether they are daily or life, whatever goals. **Researcher:**Ok. What happens when you encounter a challenge or a difficulty? How does your belief in your abilities help you there? **Princ. QEL:** When I encounter problems, I try my level, level, level best to overcome that challenge because I know that every challenge has to be overcome. There is no challenge; there is no problem that does not have a solution. For a challenge, I should do all that it takes to overcome that.	
Researcher: Ok, ok. That's nice. I think we have come to the end of our interview and madam thank you very much. I hope I didn't take much of your time. **Princ. QEL:** Thank you very much.	