

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNER TRANSITION ASSESSMENT
PORTFOLIO IN THE SELECTED SCHOOLS IN TWO LESOTHO DISTRICTS**

By

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(200705414)

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DECLARATION

I, Lefa Clement Thamae, declare that " **Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Transition Assessment Portfolio in the Selected Schools in Two Lesotho Districts**" is hereby submitted for the qualification of a Master's Degree at the National University of Lesotho. This is my original work that has not been submitted for a similar or any other degree award in any university. All the sources in the text have been acknowledged and appeared fully in the reference list using American Psychology Association (APA) style 6th Edition.



SIGNATURE

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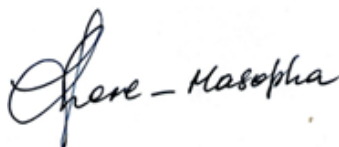
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late grandmother, nkhono' Mamakalo Makau, who was a caregiver and raised me to love and fear God; my mother, Mamonkhe Mathabiso Johanna Makau, who nurtured me at a very young age with the value and love of education, my wife 'Mampiti Thamae, whom I sacrificed her time throughout this study. She has been with me throughout this study, encouraging me to toil and crawl on to the end. I also wish to dedicate this study to my two children, Mpiti and Mahlohonolo Thamae, for the lovely laughter they always showed me whenever I came home, either at night or in the morning after a cross-night.

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this dissertation has been read and approved as meeting the requirements of the Faculty of Education at the National University of Lesotho for the award of a Master of Education (M.ED.).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chere - Masopha". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACL	: Anglican Church of Lesotho
B.ED.	: Bachelor's degree in Education
BED. HONS	: Honour's degree in Education
CAP	: Curriculum and Assessment Policy
COSC	: Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
DEP	: Diploma in Education Primary
DES	: Diploma in Education Secondary
DIP. ED.	: Diploma in Education
ECoL	: Examinations Council of Lesotho
GS	: Government School
HDPE	: Higher Diploma in Primary Education
JC	: Junior Certificate
LBECPP	: Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy
LCE	: Lesotho College of Education
LECSA	: Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa
LGCSE	: Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education
MoET	: Ministry of Education and Training
NUL	: National University Lesotho
PSLE	: Primary School Leaving Examination
RCC	: Roman Catholic Church
Sec.	: Secondary
TAP	: Transition Assessment Portfolio

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ABSTRACT

Lesotho's 2009 curriculum and assessment reforms prioritised continuous assessment using portfolios. Some studies were conducted in Lesotho about learner portfolios used in Lesotho primary schools. Those studies lack information on teachers' perceptions of portfolios as assessment strategies for learners' transition. Thus, this study examined teachers' perceptions of portfolios for learners' transition within the Lesotho education system. The study used a phenomenological design with multiple case studies to explore teachers' experiences of using a transition assessment portfolio in Lesotho. Ten teachers (five Grade 7 and five Grade 8) were purposively selected from primary and secondary schools in the Berea and Maseru districts. Semi-structured interviews were used to generate data that were later analysed through a thematic approach. This study established that Grade 8 teachers did not know about this portfolio. It was also found that Grade 7 teachers were aware of and used transition assessment portfolios (TAP) in a limited way. They (Grade 7 teachers) had different interpretations of TAP, influencing their varying implementation. Even though Grade 7 teachers in this study valued TAP for its potential benefits, they believed that the successful use of TAP in Lesotho schools was undesirable because of the existing conditions. This study also established that teachers believe addressing these challenges requires a seamless multifaceted approach that includes training teachers and other stakeholders, making available adequate resources, reducing the learner-teacher ratio, and reducing teachers' workloads.

Keywords: assessment, teachers' perceptions, transition assessment portfolio (TAP), next level of education

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Teachers are central to successful teaching and learning processes. Chere-Masopha (2018) attests that teachers decide what, when, and how to teach. Teachers also ensure that the desired learning outcomes are achieved through effective teaching and evaluated through learner assessment. This view is supported by Afrianto (2017), who believes that assessing learners is part of a teacher's role. According to Saeed, Tahir, and Latif (2018) and Wilson (2018), teachers assess their learners for two purposes: 1) to improve instruction (formative) and 2) to measure learners' achievement (summative).

Many recent studies on assessment have focused on contemporary trends in assessment, which include alternative methods of assessment such as authentic assessment, learner performance, oral assessment, project-based assessment, and other effective strategies that teachers use to assess learners (Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP), 2009; Monib, Karimi, & Nijat, 2020). Assessment portfolios are some of the strategies considered adequate for assessing learners. Some researchers, including Chere-Masopha (2022), Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022), Cong-lem (2019), Eridafithri (2015), Phung (2016), and Singh and Samad (2013a, 2013b) have investigated this strategy, particularly its effectiveness in teaching and learning. However, these studies are limited in their information on how teachers think of this strategy in assessment, particularly its effectiveness for assessing learners transitioning from one level of education to the next.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the Grade 7 and 8 teachers' perceptions of a transition assessment portfolio as a strategy used to assess learners during the transition from one level of education to another. This chapter provides an overview of the investigation. It is structured as follows: Introduction (this section), Background to the study, Statement of the problem, Research purpose and questions, Aim of the study, Research objectives, Significance of the study, Theoretical Background, Research methodology, Definition of key terms, Dissertation layout, and Summary.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

For a long time, Lesotho has been using traditional assessment methods for learners' transition into the next level of education (Khalanyane & Hala-hala, 2014; Tsilo, 2006). Those assessment methods were standardised and used pen and paper to assess learners' suitability for the next level. According to Khalanyane and Hala-hala (2014), those modes of assessment have been used in Lesotho since the arrival of Western education in 1833. They have been carried out as quarterly tests, written quizzes, and national examinations. The tasks of this mode of assessment required learners to respond in written form to multiple-choice and essay questions (Brempong, 2019). Specifically, teachers and the National assessment council (Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECoL)) assessed learners for internal progression (internal assessment) and certification purposes (external assessment) (Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2019).

1.2.1 Internal Assessment.

The teachers did an internal assessment in Lesotho at the school level to determine the internal progression of a learner from one level of education to another. Teachers assessed learners quarterly through tests and quizzes, which Chuadhuri and Adhya (2019) described as coursework. This coursework and the end-of-the-school-year examinations determined the learner's performance for the school calendar year (Khalanyane & Hala-hala, 2014). Based on the results generated by those assessments, parents and learners were informed through written report cards about their performance and the implications of the transition to the next level of education. For instance, in the report, after detailing how a learner has performed in each subject, a recommendation such as "Pass" or "Fail" would be made as a sum of learner performance (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; Khalanyane & Hala-hala, 2014). When a "Pass" had been recommended, a learner had performed well and was eligible to move to the next level of education. A "fail" recommendation meant the learner's performance was not satisfactory, and therefore, such a learner had to repeat a level or a class (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022).

1.2.2 External Assessment

External assessments in Lesotho were taken three times during the educational programme in schools: at the end of the seventh year of school education, at the end of the tenth year of

school education, and at the end of the 12th year of school education (Kaphe, 2017; Khechane, 2016). These assessments were summative, taken at the national level, and their primary purposes were explicitly for certification. For example, learners were forced to take a national examination at the end of the seventh year for the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) certificate (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; Khechane, 2016); at the end of the tenth year for the Junior Certificate (JC) examination (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; Khechane, 2016); and at the end of the 12th year for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) (Mutebi, 2019).

Learners' fate and or certification at all three levels of education (Standard 7 (PSLE), Junior Certificate (JC), and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC)) were based on how they had performed in the examinations (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022). It is worth noting that, unlike the internal assessments where a learner's coursework was considered, these were high-stakes summative assessments that only considered end-of-level examinations (Taral, 2015). Similar to the internal assessments, the assessment items were mostly multiple choice, short answer questions, and essays (Khechane, 2016; Ministry of Education and Training (MoET, 2012; Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2019; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015; Vitello & Williamson, 2017). It is also essential to explain that at this stage, only examination results were considered for a learner's "pass" or "fail." More so, the external examination results classified the learners' performance into "First Class," "Second Class," "Third Class," and "Fail" categories (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; Khalanyane & Hala-hala, 2014). PSLE was phased out in 2016. The last cohort to write the Junior Certificate was in the 2020 examination. An examination was written two years after the JC examination by Cambridge International Examinations in the United Kingdom (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; Khechane, 2016). It was replaced by the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) in 2012 (Mutebi, 2019).

Generally, at all levels of the Lesotho education system, learners were internally and externally assessed through summative methods of assessment to evaluate their achievements against the set standards that checked if they had successfully learned all the materials they needed and if teaching had been successful (Khechane, 2016; Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), 2012; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). This means that even for the transition to the next level of education, learners were assessed summatively using the assessment types just explained (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework (CAP), 2009; MoET, 2012).

These practices are also known as "traditional assessment methods" (Nungani, 2020). These methods of assessment seem to have brought some challenges to Lesotho school education (Khalanyane and Hala-hala, 2014).

1.2.3 The Challenges of Traditional (summative) Assessment in Lesotho

The way a summative assessment, also known as "an assessment of learning", was done in Lesotho brought many challenges to the education system (Nthontho, 2018). One of these challenges was that it was conducted in the form of high-stakes examinations that were more theoretical, reliant on a pen and paper, and concentrated on the cognitive domain, dwelling on the lower-order thinking skills of Bloom's and Structure of Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) taxonomies (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; Khalanyane & Hala-hala, 2014). The other observation that MoET (2016) and Shukla (2019) made was that pen and pencil examinations were not holistic; they only tested part of the learner's knowledge and ignored practical skills and attitudes. These examinations provided a snapshot of the knowledge and skills a learner should acquire rather than a detailed picture of what they had learned (Shukla, 2019). As such, these results were not conclusive as they were based on the performance of the examination day (Albano, 2018; Farid, 2018).

Another challenge was the way the results of these examinations were treated. First, levels of learner performance were assigned labels such as "pass" (1st class pass, 2nd class pass, and 3rd class pass) and "fail" (Khalanyane & Hala-hala, 2014). This had implications for the learners' future opportunities for further education or employment (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022). Explicitly, learners' performance in the categories of "pass" (again, depending on the merit of the pass level) placed the learners in an advantageous position in terms of further training, education, and employment. On the other hand, learners' performance in the category of "fail" or lower pass (3rd class or worse) placed them in a disadvantageous position (Nthontho, 2018). These learners often struggled to be admitted for further education and training or to be employed (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022). As a result, this cohort of learners often dropped out of the education system and remained unemployable in their communities (Nthontho, 2018).

The assumptions that were made about learners whose performance in these examinations ranked in the category of "pass" were that these learners had successfully demonstrated the acquisition of intended knowledge and skills, while those in the "fail" category were

considered to have been unsuccessful (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022). According to McMillan (2018), this promoted learners' valuing of extrinsic rewards and viewing examinations more as a form of competition. It also promoted academic dishonesty and malpractices such as cheating, bribery, threats, and physical abuse among these learners (Albano, 2018; Dejene, 2019).

1.2.4 Responses to the Challenges Caused by Strategies Used for Assessment of Learning

The observation of the challenges brought by high-stakes examinations used for the assessment of learning resulted in educational experts and policymakers rethinking how the assessment of learning should be carried out (Pospíšilová & Rohlíková, 2023). They began considering other forms of assessment, such as continuous assessment, as an alternative (MoET, 2016; Shukla, 2019). The rethinking of strategies that could be used to assess learning has led to many educational systems going into curriculum and assessment reforms (Hopfenbeck, 2019; Omebe, 2014). Lesotho also reformed its education system in 2009 (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework (CAP), 2009; MoET, 2012) and in 2021 through the Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy (LBECP) draft of 2021.

1.2.5 Curriculum and Assessment Reforms in Lesotho Schools

In Lesotho, the curriculum and assessment reforms were introduced in 2009 through the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework (CAP) of 2009 (Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECoL) & Burdett, 2011; Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), 2012). The reforms focused on shifting from old to new ways of assessing learning, with a preference for continuous assessment (Ntsibolane, 2013). For example, the policy clearly states that assessment should be moved from test-oriented strategies to those that align and create links among what is taught, what is learned, and what is assessed (ECoL & Burdett, 2011; CAP, 2009; MoET, 2012; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015). The policy supports and commends assessment strategies that continuously monitor learners' learning progress and provide teachers with information for remediation and improvement (MoET, 2012). According to CAP (2009), continuous assessment can effectively monitor the learning progress of a learner and provide teachers with information for remedial teaching while contributing to the learner's final course or subject score. Continuous assessment can assess theoretical, practical, and attitudinal aspects of learners' education (Abera, 2017; Dejene, 2019; Rai, 2019).

These curriculum and assessment reforms were introduced in schools across the educational system and at all levels of education (CAP, 2009). CAP recommended assessment strategies such as quarterly tests, coursework, projects, portfolios, and practical tests that develop higher-order skills, attitudes, and life skills to be considered for continuous assessment (CAP, 2009).

The policy also recommends that there should be three checkpoints (grades 4, 7, and 9) where all learners take the national education assessment (ECoL & Burdett, 2011). These checkpoints are mainly to monitor the learners' accomplishment of competencies at each point (ECoL & Burdett, 2011; CAP, 2009). According to this policy, the national assessments in grades 4 and 9 should be surveys and analyses and focus on broad educational objectives (CAP, 2009). Grade 7 checkpoint examinations should focus on the individual's attainment of competencies in each learning area, each learner's progress in the education system, and the general assessment of learners for transition into Grade 8 (CAP, 2009). For the general evaluation of learners for transition into Grade 8, Grade 7 teachers should work with their learners to develop a portfolio that would be used as an assessment tool for transition (CAP, 2009; Motaung, 2021). This notion was affirmed by the Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy (LBECP) draft (2021) when Lesotho basic education was again reformed through the LBECP draft of 2021 to solve challenges encountered in the implementation of CAP and to respond to 21st-century demands and current global trends. This policy, again, addresses assessment issues, including using learners' portfolios in Lesotho schools. Therefore, the focus of this study is on these reforms. This study intended to establish how Grade 7 and 8 teachers perceive a learner portfolio as an assessment tool for learners' transition into Grade 8.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

On this basis, CAP 2009 introduced assessment portfolios, and the LBECP draft 2021 supported their use (CAP, 2009; LBECP draft, 2021; Raselimo & Mahao, 2015; Selepe, 2016). The CAP policy suggested that portfolios should be used for continuous assessment. This assessment strategy would provide information that would assist teachers in diagnosing learning difficulties, identifying areas that require remediation, and monitoring learners' performance (CAP, 2009; Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022). It would also be a

communication tool for parents and teachers (LBECF draft, 2021). The CAP policy further recommended that the portfolio assessment be used to supplement the pen and pencil tests when determining learners' progression (CAP, 2009). Again, Lesotho teachers should use this portfolio as one of the tools that contain systematic and well-recorded information about the learners from one grade to another (CAP, 2009; Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; LBECF draft, 2021). As a result, learners are expected to be accompanied by this portfolio assessment when transitioning from one grade to another (MoET, 2012; Motaung, 2021). It is expected that a teacher to whom a learner is transitioning would use this portfolio to inform him or herself about the learner (Motaung, 2021). Thus, this assessment strategy requires teachers to properly manage learners' records, particularly those that indicate their learning progression, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses.

Since portfolios for learners have been introduced in Lesotho schools, there has been a growing interest in how teachers use them in their practices. Three studies were identified that were conducted in Lesotho about learner portfolios used in primary schools: Mothetsi-Mothiba's (2019), Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba's (2022), and Chere-Masopha's (2022) studies.

Mothetsi-Mothiba (2019) conducted a mixed-methods study investigating teachers' perceptions of using a portfolio as an assessment tool in Lesotho primary schools. The study found that some teachers viewed a portfolio as a strategy of teaching and learning that documents learners' work, either in progress or completed, while others perceived a portfolio as a file in which all learners' work should be documented. The study also found that the teachers had limited exposure to using portfolios as a learning and assessment tool. As a result, they had limited knowledge and skills essential for successfully implementing portfolio assessments.

Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022) conducted a qualitative study exploring the experiences of Lesotho primary school teachers on the use of a portfolio as a strategy for teaching, learning, and assessment. The study found that some teachers regarded a portfolio as a folder that files the academic work of learners, while others understood it as a tool that monitors their learners' progress and identifies each learner's strengths and weaknesses. The study also found that many teachers did not get training on portfolios during their tertiary training but had in-service training after the Curriculum and Assessment Policy was

introduced in 2009. Few teachers claimed to have been trained in the portfolio in the South Africa institutions where they had their teacher training. The study also showed that teachers used a portfolio to record their learners' work, teaching, learning, and assessment activities and report to other stakeholders like parents and the school. Moreover, the study results indicated that teachers lacked knowledge and skill in using a learner portfolio effectively or as recommended by the policy.

The study conducted by Chere-Masopha in 2022 was a survey of teachers' perceptions of a learning portfolio used in Lesotho classrooms for teaching and learning. The study found that teachers use portfolios more to document the learners' work than to use them for teaching and learning in the classroom. The study also found that the challenges encountered by the teachers in implementing a portfolio as a teaching and learning tool included limited resources and teachers' lack of training, which led to their limited knowledge, skills, and confidence to prepare and implement portfolios as suggested by the policy. This study also established that teachers found it challenging to use this strategy in large classes.

All these reviewed studies did not consider using portfolios as a strategy that provides comprehensive information for the transition of learners from one level of education to the next. They looked at the portfolio as teachers' classroom learning and teaching tools. Regarding assessment, the studies looked at how teachers use portfolios to assess learners' work in the classroom, not as an assessment strategy for learners' transition to the next class, especially from Grade 7 to Grade 8. Therefore, this study investigated teachers' perceptions of the portfolio as an assessment strategy for Grade 7 learners' transition into Grade 8.

1.4 RESEARCH PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

This study explored the perceptions of Grade 7 and 8 schoolteachers of a portfolio as an assessment tool regarding learners' transition into Grade 8. This information would provide insight into how Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers view the effectiveness of this tool in providing information about learners transitioning into Grade 8. Again, the study intended to enlighten all the Lesotho education stakeholders on how Grade 7 and 8 teachers perceive portfolios when the learners are transitioned into Grade 8. Therefore, the main question asked in this study was: "What are the perceptions of Grade 7 and 8 schoolteachers of a portfolio as an

assessment tool regarding learners' transition into Grade 8?" The following sub-questions were used to generate data:

1. How do teachers interpret assessment portfolios for transition?
2. What are the teachers' experiences of using this portfolio for learner transition?
 - Effectiveness of this strategy
 - Challenges encountered when implementing this portfolio
3. What are teachers' views about the practicality of this strategy in Lesotho schools?

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study, therefore, aimed to explore the Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers' perceptions of a portfolio as an assessment strategy used for learners' transition to the next level of education.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was attained through the following objectives:

1. To explore and understand the Grade 7 and 8 teachers' interpretations of portfolios as an assessment tool during learners' transition to the next level of education.
2. To explore teachers' experiences of using assessment portfolios for learner transition.

Sub-objectives:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of using assessment portfolios as a transition strategy.
 - To identify the challenges teachers encounter when implementing assessment portfolios for learner transition.
3. To investigate teachers' views about the practicality of using assessment portfolios for learner transition in Lesotho schools.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study explored the Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers' perceptions of the portfolio as an assessment strategy for learners' transition to the next level of education. Therefore, the findings of this study are hoped to benefit different stakeholders in education in Lesotho, particularly those interested in using portfolios as assessment tools for learner transition.

The policymakers, especially the assessing body in Lesotho schools, ECoL, could use the findings of this study to address the challenges encountered in using this strategy for learner

transition. They will make well-informed decisions to successfully use an assessment portfolio as a new innovative approach for a learner transition (Cong-lem, 2019).

The study was also hoped to benefit the institutions of high learning that train teachers, specifically the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and Lesotho College of Education (LCE). These institutions could use the results of this study to review and revise their teacher education programmes.

The findings of this study could enable Grade 7 teachers to reflect on and improve their practices. They would familiarise themselves with how the transition assessment portfolio is developed and how the learners' tasks are developed and implemented for this kind of portfolio (Virgin & Bharati, 2020). This study's findings would also help Grade 8 teachers consider learners' products, giving them insight into learners' knowledge and skills (Quansah, 2018). The study findings could also add more knowledge about assessment to teachers that would help them with contemporary strategies for assessing learners.

The study findings could also inform learners how to reflect on their work, do self-assessments, and evaluate their work using a transition assessment portfolio. Farid (2018) asserts that portfolios help learners look at their academic journey, do self-evaluation, and reflect on their selected work presented in those portfolios. Hence, the findings of this study could add to the existing knowledge of learners on how to self-assess their work using portfolios compared to traditional ways of doing self-assessment.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was informed by constructivism theory. Multiple forms of constructivism exist, including personal, social, behavioural, cultural, radical, and others (Abulnour, 2016). However, the meaning of constructivism varies according to one's perspective and position (Ültanır, 2012). According to Ültanır (2012), constructivism has no universal meaning but has been defined according to a study's views and field or discipline. In education, especially for learning, it is referred to as the "theory of learning," which posits that learners acquire knowledge by constructing new understanding and knowledge through experiences and integrating new information with their prior knowledge (Geofrey, 2021; Mahony, 2017; Živković, 2021). It is also seen as a social and cognitive construction of knowledge where learners actively engage in their assessment through self-reflection, self-assessment, peer

assessment, and collaborative assessment (Abulnour, 2016; Kivunja, 2018). The social and cognitive constructivist perspectives are also believed to enable learners to understand assessment requirements that engage them in self-appraisal and generate internal feedback (Nicole, 2014).

Therefore, in this study, constructivism was hoped to guide the researcher in generating relevant information about using a transition assessment portfolio during grade 7 learners' transition into grade 8. Again, in this study, constructivism was hoped to help a researcher analyse the data about the use of a learner transition assessment portfolio regarding how social and cognitive constructivists view assessment; hence, Abulnour (2016) proclaims that portfolio is one of the assessment strategies used in social and cognitive constructivists' classes.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section gives an overview of the research methodology used in this study. The study used a qualitative research approach, employing a phenomenological case study design. The population of the study was Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers in Berea and Maseru districts. Ten teachers (five Grade 7 and five Grade 8 teachers) were purposively selected from these two districts to represent the entire population. The data were generated through face-to-face and telephone interviews. The study used a thematic analysis approach to analyse the generated data.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This study identifies the fundamental concepts as perceptions, teachers' perceptions, assessment, transition assessment portfolio (TAP), and the next level of education. These concepts are defined hereafter.

1.10.1 Perceptions

The term "perception" is derived from the Latin words *perceptio*, and *percipio* and means receiving, collecting, the action of taking possession, and apprehension with the mind or senses (Qiong, 2017). In this study, perceptions are understood as beliefs, attitudes, and expectations shaped by selecting, organising, and interpreting sensory information about a person, an object, or a situation (Quansah, 2020; Qiong, 2017).

1.10.2 Teachers' Perceptions

Teachers' perceptions are teachers' knowledge, beliefs, views, and interpretation of information about people, objects, or situations to understand them (Chere-Masopha, 2018). In this study, teachers' perceptions are viewed as beliefs, views, knowledge interpretations, and understandings of teachers about a portfolio as an assessment strategy for learners' transition into the next level of education.

1.10.3 Assessment

Assessment is a broad term used in different disciplines with different definitions and understandings (Qu & Zhang, 2013). This study adopts a definition by Black and Wiliam (2018) and Nitko and Brookhart (2014), who view it as collecting or generating and analysing data using valid and reliable instruments, examining the collected or generated data, and using the results to make decisions about a learner.

1.10.4 Transition assessment portfolio (TAP)

This study viewed a transition assessment portfolio, as defined by Enery (2017) and Hartley, Rogers, and Smith (2014), as a tool that purposefully and systematically collects and organises information about learners' achievements who are transitioning to the next level of education. In this study, a transition assessment portfolio is used interchangeably with the following concepts: a portfolio, a learner assessment portfolio, an assessment portfolio, or a portfolio assessment.

1.10.5 Next Level of Education

This study considers the next level of education as the next class a learner moves into from the preceding class (Onyango, 2014). Hence, this study regards Grade 8 as a new level of education for learners promoted from Grade 7.

1.11 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

This study consists of five chapters, which are outlined as follows:

Chapter 1. The chapter introduces and gives an overview of this study.

Chapter 2. This chapter reported on the literature reviewed for this study. It discussed the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin this study. Additionally, it discussed empirical studies regarding portfolio assessment.

Chapter 3. The chapter explained the research methodology used in this study.

Chapter 4. This chapter presented the research findings of this study.

Chapter 5. This chapter discussed the findings of a study. It concluded the study and presented the recommendations.

1.12 SUMMARY

This chapter introduced and contextualised the study by orienting the reader to the background of the study that discussed the problem statement, research aim, objectives, and research purpose and questions. It discussed why a researcher explored Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers' perceptions of a learner assessment portfolio used during learners' transition to the next level of education. This chapter also discussed the significance of the study, the theoretical framework, the research methodology, and the definition of critical terms. The next chapter presents the review of literature that gives the supporting background to the study, the conceptual framework, and the theoretical framework employed to guide the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated the perceptions of Lesotho Grade 7 and 8 teachers of portfolios as a strategy used during Grade 7 learners' transition. The previous chapter introduced this study by highlighting its Background and overview. This chapter discusses the literature that was reviewed for this study. It is organised into four major sections: Introduction (this section), Theoretical Framework, Conceptual Framework, Empirical Studies Reviewed, and Summary.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework refers to the theories expressed by experts in a specific field that researchers draw upon to provide a theoretical framework for data collection or generation, analysis, and interpretation (Kivunja, 2018). It is considered an imperative element of research because it maps a way for the researcher to conduct appropriate research (Kaphe, 2017). In a theoretical framework, a specific theory is presented in combination with empirical and conceptual work on it (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). Therefore, the theory that framed this study is constructivism.

2.2.1 Constructivism Theory

In this section, the discussion on constructivism as a theory that framed this study is structured and presented as follows: a description of constructivism theory, forms of constructivism theory, assessment models of constructivist classes, and Kivunja's constructivist teaching model as a preferred model in this study.

Definition of Construction and Constructivism. The word "construction" is derived from the Latin "*com*", meaning together, and "*struere*", meaning to pile up (Geert, 2017). Geert (2017) further points out that the Latin word "*construere*" means piling up together, accumulating, building, making, or erecting. Based on this definition, Geert (2017) and Warrick (2001) observe that in constructivism theory, humans accumulate, build, make, or construct knowledge independently. They uphold that the roots of constructivism can be traced back to a little-known Latin treatise, *De antiquissima Italorum sapientia*, written in 1710 by Giambattista Vico. Therefore, they believe that the word "constructivism" was first introduced by Giambattista Vico in 1710. They reported that Vico suggested that knowledge

is knowing about the parts of something and how these parts relate to each other (Geert, 2017). They also claimed that Vico believed individuals generated truth and reality through experiences that originated in the mind (Geert, 2017; Warrick, 2001). Apart from Vico, there are many proponents of constructivism, including George Kelley, Heinz von Foerster, Jean Piaget, Jerome Brunner, John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, Maria Montessori, and Wladyslaw Strzeminski (Abulnour, 2016). They all give different definitions per their perspectives, perceptions, and the nature of their fields.

Sjoberg (2010) and Ultanır (2012) posit that the term "constructivism" is used in different fields like psychology, sociology, education, and the history of science. Hence, the proponents of this theory define it according to their perceptions and positions. However, all these definitions have a common element of knowledge construction. For example, in psychology, it is defined by Kouicem (2020) and Kouicem and Nachoua (2018) as a theory that postulates that humans create their realities and make meaning out of their lives. Warrick (2001) also affirms that constructivism refers to the philosophical belief that people construct their understanding of reality rather than conform to a body of knowledge about their world and environment. In sociology, constructivism is a theory of knowledge where humans socially interact to construct knowledge (Kouicem & Nachoua, 2018). In education, it is referred to as the "theory of education" that posits that learners acquire knowledge by constructing new understanding and knowledge through experiences and integrating new information with their prior knowledge (Geofrey, 2021; Jena & Behera, 2005; Mahony, 2017; Paulson & Paulson, 1994; Živković, 2021). This study conforms to all these definitions, but it emphasises an education definition as it positions itself in this field because it addresses an educational issue, the learner portfolio, as an assessment strategy for learners' transition within the different levels of education. The following are some tenets of constructivism that help in clarifying its meaning as identified by Kouicem and Nachoua (2018, p. 75):

- Learning is an active process;
- Knowledge is created rather than innate or passively absorbed.;
- Knowledge is invented, not discovered;
- All knowledge is personal and idiosyncratic;
- All knowledge is socially constructed;
- Learning is essentially a process of making sense of the world and;

- Effective learning requires open-ended, meaningful, and challenging problems for the learner to solve.

Generally, constructivism is a theory based on observation and scientific study about how people learn (Roustae, Kadir, & Asimiran, 2014; Sjoberg, 2010). It says that learners construct their understanding and knowledge of the world gained through their experiences and reflections (Olusegun, 2015).

Olusegun (2015) attests that when learners encounter something new, they have to reunite it with their previous ideas and experiences, and this can either influence them to change their beliefs or to discard the new information as irrelevant. Olusegun (2015) further indicates that in the learning environment framed by constructivism theory, learners must ask questions, explore, and assess what they know. Hence, according to constructivists, learners continually perceive new experiences, update their mental models to reflect the new information, and, therefore, construct their interpretation of reality (Abulnour, 2016; Imiere, 2021; Mutepa, 2016; Olusegun, 2015; Ultanır, 2012).

2.2.2 Cognitive and Sociocultural Constructivism Theory

As also observed by Abulnour (2016), there are several forms of constructivism. This study used cognitive and sociocultural constructivism theories to guide it. While cognitive constructivism theory is believed to have been pioneered by Piaget, sociocultural constructivism was initiated by Vygotsky (Kouicem & Nachoua, 2018). These two theories are often compared to acknowledge humans' active role in knowledge construction (Kouicem, 2020; Kouicem & Nachoua, 2018). Nevertheless, the difference is in how knowledge is constructed (Kouicem, 2020). Ultanır (2012) and Mattar (2018) assert that for Piaget, knowledge is produced in the learner's mind while he or she is organising his or her experiences and cognitive structures. According to Vygotsky, however, knowledge is formed through social and cultural interactions (Kouicem & Nachoua, 2018; Mattar, 2018). Consequently, also confirmed by Mattar (2018) and Roustae et al. (2014) that knowledge is a product of the learners' individual and social intellectual activity.

This study used these two forms of constructivism because they are believed to be the contemporary dominant theories in teaching and learning. Above all, these two forms of theory endorse a portfolio in education, as they both posit that a learner is responsible for his

or her work. The construction and development of a learning portfolio advocate a conference between a learner and a teacher in which they decide on the processes and products to consider in developing a learner's portfolio (Mogonea, 2015). The two learning theories are believed to improve the quality of engagement, initiatives, and personal investments in producing research reports, portfolios, and projects (Abulnour, 2016; Jena & Behera, 2005). The proponents of these theories prefer assessments with more genuine thinking and "real-life" application, such as authentic, performance, or portfolio assessments (Abulnour, 2016). Again, these theories encourage metacognition in learners, promote self-reflection, and facilitate self, peer, and collaborative assessments (Jena & Behera, 2005; Kivunja, 2018). Moreover, constructivists prefer the use of models of learning and assessment.

2.2.3 Theoretical Model for Constructivist Classroom

Various constructivist models are used in education (Kivunja, 2015a, 2015b, 2018; Torre, Vidal, & Ferran, 2021). All experts agree that behind any learning activity, there is a learning model (Torre et al., 2021). As a result, constructivist models help teachers design instructional strategies and techniques that effectively facilitate learning (Torre et al., 2021). Some of these models include cognitive development by Jean Piaget in 1954, Action learning by Reg Revans in 1963, Thought and language: The social environment is crucial for learning by Lev S. Vygotsky in 1978, Theory of action by C. Argirys Y. D. Schön in 1974, and Reflection in action by Donald Schön in 1987, to mention but a few. Since this study mainly focuses on assessment, it used Kivunja's (2018) constructivist teaching and assessment model. This model is contemporary, and it does not only apply constructivist principles and practises in their teaching and learning but also includes how assessment should be done in the constructivist classroom (Kivunja, 2015a, 2018).

2.2.4 Kivunja's (2018) Constructivist Teaching and Assessment Model

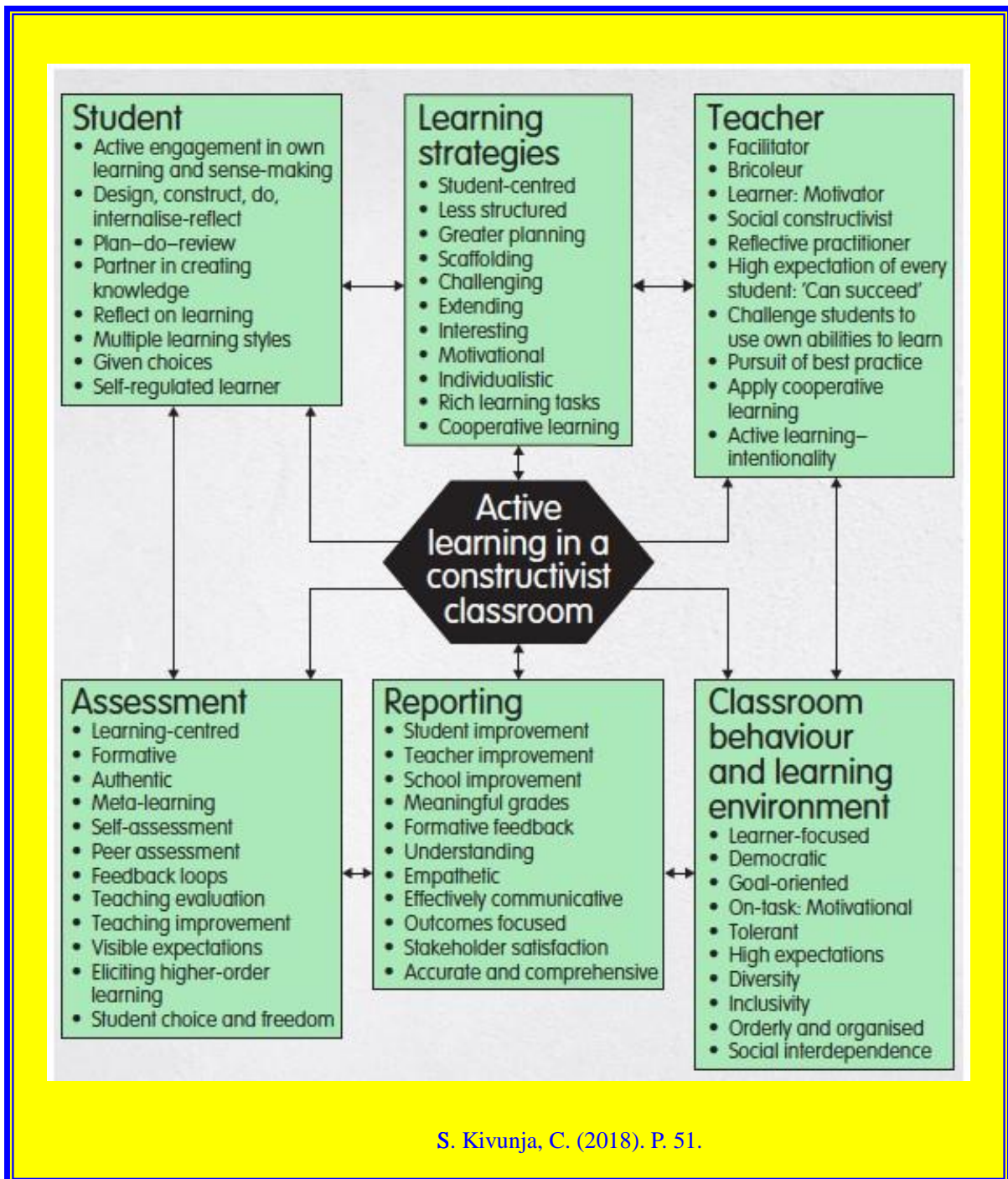
Kivunja (2018) presented a model representing teaching and learning in a constructivist classroom. The model shows the roles and activities a learner and a teacher should perform during teaching, learning, and assessment. Teachers' roles should include selecting strategies for classroom behaviour, managing the learning environment, and reporting on learner assessment. The model suggests that the purpose of assessment should be to facilitate higher-order learning (Kivunja, 2018). It should deliver much feedback and allow for self-assessment and peer assessment to help the learners comprehend their progress (Abulnour, 2016; Kivunja, 2015a, 2018). During evaluations, learners should be able to choose from

various options for the tasks to accomplish and how they should carry them out (Kivunja, 2018).

This model emphasises an assessment that is formative and authentic and promotes meta-learning, self-reflection, self-assessment, and peer assessment. The model further suggests that the assessment of learners should be interwoven with teaching that improves and elicits higher-order learning and should be done through teacher observations as well as learners' portfolios and exhibitions (Kivunja, 2018). This model also suggests that assessment should give learners choice and freedom throughout their learning journey. The model shown in **Figure 2.1** displays aspects of teaching, learning, and assessment framed by Kivunja's (2018) constructivist teaching model, but the focus in this study is only on assessment.

Figure 2.1

Theoretical Framework for investigating constructivist teaching, learning and assessment.



2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework is a comprehensive, logical orientation and association of the research project's underlying thinking, structures, plans, practises, and implementation

(Kivunja, 2018). The goal of a conceptual framework is to categorise and describe study-related concepts and map relationships among them (Kivunja, 2018; Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). It, therefore, relates concepts that assist the researcher and the reader see how the research adds to the body of knowledge on the subject (Crawford, 2020). As a result, this study focuses on teachers' perceptions and a transition assessment portfolio.

2.3.1 Teachers' Perceptions

Teachers' perception is one of the concepts that shaped this study. This concept is made up of two words: teachers and perceptions. Therefore, to understand teachers' perception as a concept, the word "perception" is described as a generic concept and then "teachers' perception" as a technical concept. The descriptions of the two follow hereunder.

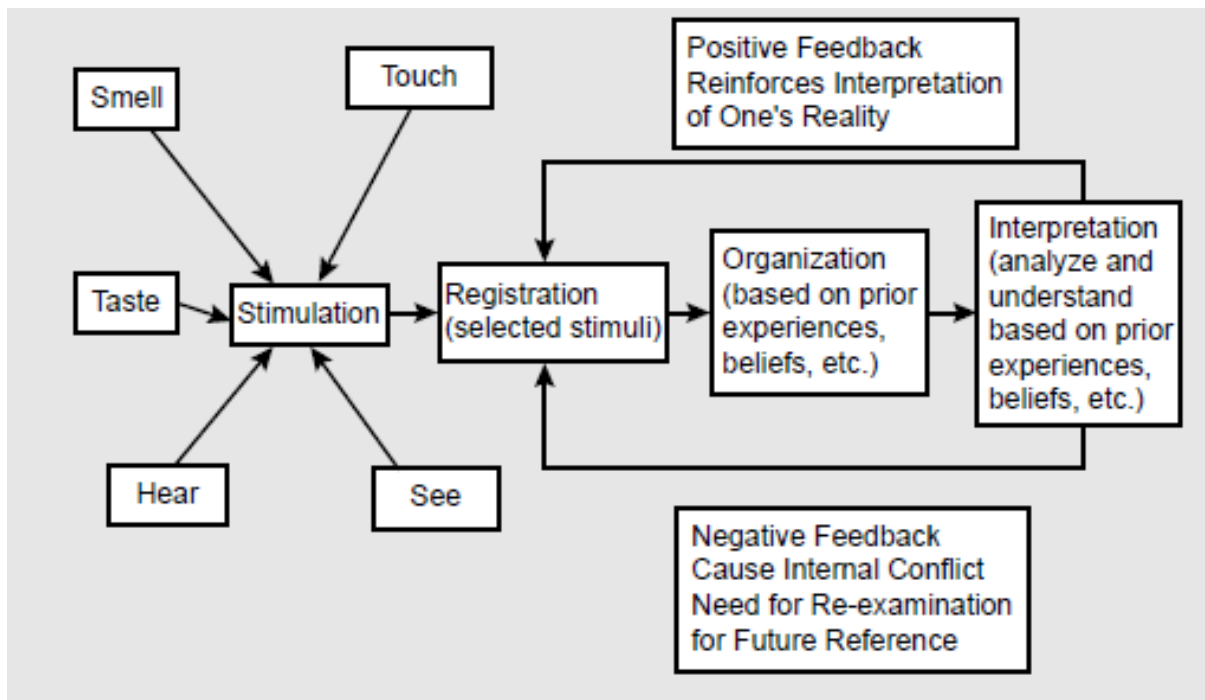
Perception. Qiong (2017) asserts that the word "perception" derives from the Latin words *perceptio* and *percipio*, which mean receiving, collecting, the action of taking possession, and apprehension with the mind or senses. Qiong (2017) adds that:

Perception is defined as the ability to gain awareness or understanding of sensory information through three processes in philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science: 1) selecting—noticing or recognising the stimulus around us; 2) organising—categorising, structuring, and giving coherence to our general knowledge about people and the social world; and 3) interpreting—attaching or assigning meaning to the selected stimuli (p. 18).

Pandit (2017) and Pickens (2005) also acknowledge that perception is how organisms select, organise, and interpret sensation to produce a meaningful world experience. They align their view with Qiong's (2017), adding that perception processing follows four stages: stimulation—assimilating stimuli through sense organs; registration—accommodating the selected stimuli into the schemas; organisation—associating prior experiences with the new information registered in the mind; and interpretation—analysing and understanding information based on the prior experiences, beliefs, and views.

Figure 2.2

The Perception Processing System (Adapted from Pickens, 2005, p.57).



DeNicola (2019) and Moore (2020) also view perception as what one interprets, one's understanding of a given situation, person, or object, and how a person thinks about or understands someone or something. DeNicola (2019) and Moore (2020) assert that it is the ability to perceive, see, hear, or become aware of something using one's senses.

The current study overlooked Pandit's (2017) and Pickens's (2005) definitions as they only concentrate on perceiving information through the senses and end there. That is, they are concerned with cognitive processes through which people organise, interpret, and assign meaning to sensory input, shaping their understanding of the world around them but eliminating the element of the fact that perception is a subjective experience, as it is influenced by individual differences, personal biases, past experiences, cultural factors, and cognitive processes (Baliyan & Moorad, 2018; Zigman, 2018). Therefore, it is not solely based on the objective properties of the stimuli but also involves the individual's interpretation and construction of meaning.

Hence, perception can vary among individuals, leading to different interpretations and understandings of the same stimuli (Moore, 2020; Qiong, 2017); as Baliyan and Moorad (2018) indicated that perceptions depend on experience and differ from person to person. As a result, this study adopted DeNicola's (2019), Moore's (2020), and Qiong's (2017) definitions as they cater for individual interpretation and construction of meaning. Their definitions refer to perception as the subjective interpretations, beliefs, attitudes, and understandings that people hold regarding an object, event, or person.

2.3.2 Teachers' Perceptions

Teachers' perceptions are viewed as a concept where teachers integrate and interpret information about other people, objects, or phenomena to understand them (Sheppard, 2013; Makhila, 2008). Makhila (2008) proclaims that teachers judge the attribution of how people behave and why they behave as they do. Yates (2007) considered teachers' perceptions to reflect their behavioural characteristics. Caldwell (2007) also defined the teachers' perceptions as knowledge about certain phenomena. Chere-Masopha (2018, 2022) refers to teachers' perceptions as their beliefs, views, and values about their profession that result from personal characteristics. Therefore, the teachers' characteristics, like knowledge, skills, and experiences, influence their attitudes, shaping their perceptions (Chere-Masopha, 2022).

In exploring teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios, teachers' perceptions refer to how teachers interpret, understand, and make meaning of these assessment tools. Therefore, teachers' perceptions may include their beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and experiences of using transition assessment portfolios (Chere-Masopha, 2022; Galotti, 2013; Qiong, 2017). These perceptions can influence their attitudes towards the portfolios, implementation practices, and recommendations for improvement. As a result, this current study identified the teachers' perceptions as the beliefs, views, values, and behaviours contributing to teachers' attitudes towards a transition assessment portfolio as a learner transition strategy, as Chere-Masopha (2018, 2022) advocated. The teachers' experiences are considered the influential characteristics of a portfolio as an assessment strategy used during Grade 7 learners' transition to Grade 8.

2.3.3 Transition Assessment Portfolio (TAP)

Proponents of a portfolio use different names for portfolios in teaching, learning, and assessment (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; Haghghi, 2016; Oja, 2021), but for

this study, "transition assessment portfolio," "learner portfolio," "assessment portfolio," "portfolio assessment," and "portfolio" have been used interchangeably.

Portfolio has many meanings in different contexts (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2017). Therefore, there are different definitions of "portfolio" in teaching and learning. These definitions are mainly influenced by the purpose a portfolio is used for (Chere-Masopha & Mothetsi-Mothiba, 2022; Mueller, 2018). This is reinforced by Suwaed (2018) and Eridafithri (2015), who profess that because there is no accepted universal definition of a portfolio, scholars tend to define it according to their different contexts. For example, Cohen and Swerdlik (2017) and Lam (2018a) define a portfolio from an art perspective. Cohen and Swerdlik (2017) define it as a file used by artists and architects to keep their work products, while Lam (2018a) views it as a collection of purposeful and meaningful artefacts that characterise a person's efforts, professional growth, and achievements. McMillan's (2018) definition focused more on teaching and learning, where a learner portfolio is defined as a tool used to collect and evaluate learners through formative and summative assessments purposefully and systematically. In this case, a portfolio is used to document learners' progress toward attaining learning targets or to show evidence of how learning targets have been achieved. This study adopted McMillan's (2018) definition, where a portfolio is viewed in the context of learner assessment. Hence, this study referred to it as a "transition assessment portfolio" (TAP) because it explored the teachers' perceptions of how portfolios were used to transition learners to the next level of education.

According to Hartley et al. (2014), a "transition assessment portfolio" is a strategy that documents essential information about an individual's transition from one level of education to another. It is a tool to organise information about learners in their transition (Hartley et al., 2014; Hawkins & Agoncillo, 2017). It is a valuable tool for schools to transition learners into a new learning setting (Oja, 2021). It could be concluded that it is a strategy that comprises the collection of learners' achievements over time and is used to transition them into the next level of learning. Transition assessment portfolios include learner information, characteristics, and academic skills (Oja, 2021). Therefore, this study adopted a transition assessment portfolio that Hawkins and Agoncillo (2017) and Oja (2021) suggested.

The Sections of TAP. Below are the descriptions of the sections of the transition assessment portfolio as advocated by Hawkins and Agoncillo (2017) and Oja (2021). This portfolio

consists of four sections: 1) demographic details; 2) learner learning characteristics; 3) extracurricular activities; and 4) grade-level transition expectations.

Demographic Details. This is an introductory part of a learner's profile that consists of basic demographics, including a learner's name, home address, parent's phone number, and email address, if any (Hartley et al., 2014; Oja, 2021). It also includes a learner's hobbies and interests or preferences (Oja, 2021).

Learner Learning Characteristics. This section highlights academic strengths and areas where support is needed concerning the learning objectives (Oja, 2021). These include academic skills shown in a transcript and academic awards: certificates of achievements, photos of trophies and medals with detailed descriptions, and samples of scripts showing the best-performed activities. This section also briefly describes areas where a learner needs support from teachers and parents (Hawkins & Agoncillo, 2017; Oja, 2021).

Extracurricular Activities. This section incorporates in- and out-of-school extramural activities. These are talent and artistic activities, including sports, art, and design (Oja, 2021). The awards like certificates, medals, and significant accomplishments of these activities are shown in this section (Hawkins & Agoncillo, 2017).

Grade-Level Transition Expectation. This includes the end-of-level objectives in every learning area and the degree to which a learner has performed each objective (Hawkins & Agoncillo, 2017; Oja, 2021). Apart from all the mentioned sections of the transition portfolio, there is also scoring criteria, learning outcomes to be assessed, evidence of conference between the learner and teacher, evidence of self-reflection and evaluation, and evidence of feedback (Oja, 2021).

Types of Portfolio. According to Mueller (2018), the portfolios could be classified according to their purpose and collected items. Melograno (2000) classifies them as personal, working, record-keeping, group, thematic, integrated, showcase, electronic, and multiyear portfolios, while Mokhtaria (2015) categorised them into six types: working, showcase, teaching, professional, course, and electronic. Lam (2018a), Mueller (2018), and Priscah, Ronald, and Tecla (2016) argue that portfolios can only be classified into three main types, which are showcase, working, and evaluation portfolios. They advance their argument by pointing out

that all other types or categories identified by Melograno (2000) and Mokhtaria (2015) are subsumed in the three main types. This study accepted Lam (2018a), Mueller (2018), and Priscah et al. (2016) classifications and focused on the showcase portfolio.

Showcase Portfolio. The showcase portfolio, a formal, presentation, professional, or career portfolio, presents a learner's best and most representative work (Port, 2021; Priscah et al., 2016). It is usually used as a summative assessment at the end of the term or programme to showcase the learner's accomplishments (Mueller, 2018). Through reflection and self-assessment, learners can select graded or non-graded pieces as their most representative works (Lam, 2018a). Hence, it focuses on the learner's best and most representative work supporting their high-level thinking and reasoning (Kaiser, 2016; Port, 2021). The content added to showcase portfolios is written after learning and frequently includes learner reflection (Port, 2021). This representation of a learner's best work is selected by both a learner and a teacher in a teacher-learner conference (Lam, 2018a). Hence, a transition assessment portfolio represents the summative work of a learner and helps teachers decide whether a learner should be transitioned into the next level of education (Gale & Parker, 2014). Thus, the transition assessment portfolio is part of the showcase portfolio.

Benefits of a Transition Assessment Portfolio. The assessment portfolio links curriculum and instruction with assessment (Matar & Al-Harithi, 2022). It documents and provides multiple ways of assessing learners' progress over time (Matar & Al-Harithi, 2022). It provides a more accurate assessment of academic content than pencil-and-paper tests (Brempong, 2019). It enables learners, parents, teachers, and other staff members to assess learners' strengths and weaknesses (Matar & Al-Harithi, 2022). It encourages learners to develop independent abilities (Matar & Al-Harithi, 2022). It allows learners to express themselves and reflect on their work during teacher-learner conferences and, as a result, develops learners' metacognition (Hanifa, 2017). It encourages teachers to change their instructional practices time and again to overcome challenges that hinder learners' understanding (Eridafithri, 2015).

Challenges and Critiques of a Transition Assessment Portfolio. Lam (2018a) believes that portfolio assessment design, development, and actual implementation are much more complicated than one could imagine, and therefore, they pose challenges in their design and implementation. Some of the challenges identified are:

- Even though many believe that the quality of portfolio assessment is worth the time spent (McMillan, 2018), it is time-consuming and requires considerable effort from learners and teachers to select the work that is aligned with a learning target (Cain, Henry, & Rampersad, 2005; Matar & Al-Harithi, 2022; Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2009; Phung, 2016).
- The learners' constructed responses are challenging to evaluate, mainly when those responses vary from learner to learner (McMillan, 2018); thus, consistently evaluating different learners' portfolios is challenging (Popham, 2017; McMillan, 2018).
- It is challenging to devise scoring guides embodying the right specificity level because the learners provide their subjective responses (Afrianto, 2017).
- It cannot be used for high-stakes tasks because it does not have the same potential for objectivity, reliability, and validity as the traditional assessment method, which are the key criteria for assessing the assessments (Afrianto, 2017; Cain et al., 2005). Afrianto (2017) maintains that many opponents of portfolio assessment argue that it is hard to use portfolios that meet the reliability requirements needed by many school systems. This is because teachers' views toward learners' portfolios often differ. Hence, scoring an assessment portfolio involves extensive rating scales and professional judgement as examples of subjective evaluation procedures which limit reliability (Soifah & Pratolo, 2020).
- It is usually a long process and is mainly reported in words rather than a single score or grade like one in standardised tests (Afrianto, 2017). Generally, teachers are too busy and do not have time to create elaborate scoring schemes. As a result, they often find themselves judging portfolios using loose evaluative criteria that tend to be interpreted differently by different people (McMillan, 2018).
- The effective use of the portfolio as an assessment tool depends on the knowledgeable and experienced teachers who apply it on a large scale (Afrianto, 2017; McMillan, 2018). Its successful development and implementation demand well-trained professional teachers (Afrianto, 2017). As a result, teachers who receive the minimum or who do not receive training on using a portfolio usually face serious challenges in developing and implementing an assessment portfolio.

2.3.4 Transition Assessment Portfolio: Development and Implementation

The benefit of an assessment portfolio lies in the relationship it demonstrates between instruction and evaluation, which is strengthened by learners' ongoing accumulation of work products (Popham, 2017). However, Huang (2012) observes that currently, no fixed model guides the development and implementation of assessment portfolios. Based on this observation, Kaur, Singh, Samad, Hussin, and Sulaiman (2015) believe that having an assessment portfolio model that could promote the portfolio's reliability and validity is essential. Huang (2012) and Popham (2017) agree that a portfolio assessment should comprise seven steps, which should act as a framework that guides its development and implementation. These steps include: (1) planning the assessment purpose; (2) determining portfolio tasks; (3) criteria for assessment; (4) determining organisation; (5) preparing learners; (6) monitoring the portfolio; and (7) assessing the portfolio. These steps are described below. **Figure 2.3** demonstrates this portfolio model as understood by Baranovskaya and Shaforostova (2017), Huang (2012), and Phung (2016).

Planning the Assessment Purpose. This is the first step of portfolio implementation, where a portfolio is introduced to learners, and a teacher discusses and negotiates with the learners on the purpose of a portfolio (Huang, 2012). The discussion includes how a learner would be engaged and assessed and the skills to be developed by the learner in the process.

Determining Portfolio Tasks. At this step, a teacher and the learners look at the learning outcomes and decide on the activities to be engaged in to accomplish each learning outcome. The learning experiences are expected to develop the skills outlined in the first step (Huang, 2012).

Establishing Criteria for Assessment. In this step, the assessment criteria for learning activities are decided by both the teacher and the learners (Phung, 2016). The assessment criteria to be decided include an assessment rubric, peer assessment, self-assessment and reflective assessment (Baranovskaya & Shaforostova, 2017; Huang, 2012).

Determining Organisation. Five aspects should be included in the organisation of the transition assessment portfolio: (1) representative samples of learners' work; (2) learning journals and reflections (reflections on his or her learning and the portfolio in general); (3) all the testimonies (including self-assessment, peer-assessment and teacher's feedback); (4)

weekly time management sheet, monthly and semester personal goals setting and checking, and a final summative assessment to describe a learner's progress in a year, strong and weak areas, plan for improving weak areas, and a self-assessment of work at the end of the year; and (5) all the guidelines to create a portfolio, including an essential requirement for the course, general idea about the portfolio assessment, criteria for the whole portfolio assessment, rubrics for the tasks, and standard description of levels in teaching syllabus. All entries in a portfolio are dated (Huang, 2012).

Preparing the Learners. At this step, learners engage in the process under the direction of a teacher until they can stand on their own in monitoring and self-assessing their work (Huang, 2012; Phung, 2016). A portfolio is an interactive assessment tool; the learner's involvement is essential. If learners are novices or know nothing about portfolio development, they are oriented to portfolios and helped to develop them (Huang, 2012).

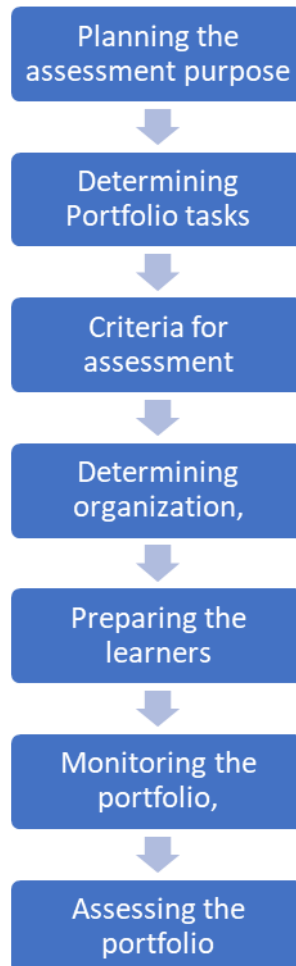
Monitoring the Portfolio Assessment. Teachers should help learners plan and manage their time at this stage. Teachers should assist learners in setting goals and assessing their progress weekly and monthly. These learners must peruse the material to include in their portfolio and write reflective statements for the selected pieces (Huang, 2012). Learners should be given time for peer conferencing and assessment regarding their progress. They should be allowed to present their work relating to the assessment portfolio to the class and be encouraged to keep a log that monitors and reflects their work and the whole portfolio process (Phung, 2016). A teacher should guide this process and give feedback immediately after presentations (Huang, 2012). During the process, a teacher has to organise class meetings to inquire about the problems or difficulties they encountered in compiling the portfolio and encourage them to keep their portfolios up-to-date (Lam, 2018a). The portfolios can be kept at school for safety (Huang, 2012; Kubiszyn & Borich, 2013).

Assessing the Portfolio. Formative assessments include class conferences and peer and self-assessments (Spotts & Meadow, 2015). Under the guidance of a teacher, learners frequently conduct formative assessments by referring to the rubrics and detailed criteria in class (Huang, 2012). At the end of the year, a teacher assesses the portfolios in a summative assessment by having a one-on-one conference with each learner, giving a comprehensive description of the transition assessment portfolio, pointing out strengths and weaknesses of each learner's portfolio, and giving suggestions for improvement (Huang, 2012). Hence, the

grading of the transition assessment portfolio incorporates formative and summative assessments (Huang, 2012).

Figure 2.3

Huang's (2012) Seven Steps of Developing and Implementing Portfolio Assessment



After the 7th step, a teacher decides to transition learners to the next level of education if they are eligible to be transitioned (Lam, 2018a, 2018b). For learners to be transitioned to the next level of education, they should have mastered the targeted competencies stipulated in the transition assessment portfolio (Lam, 2018b).

2.4 REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE ON PORTFOLIO

This section reports on the studies that were reviewed based on the three objectives of this study: (1) to establish how teachers interpret a portfolio as an assessment tool; (2) to explore

teachers' experiences of using assessment portfolios for learner transition; and (3) to investigate teachers' views about the practicality of using assessment portfolios for learners. The empirical studies related to these objectives are reviewed and discussed below.

2.4.1 Teachers' Interpretation of Portfolio

Many scholars conducted studies about portfolio assessment in different parts of the world, and such studies came up with different teachers' interpretations of portfolios. This is supported by Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022) and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2019) in their studies, which show that teachers interpret a portfolio in many ways. This is proved by the studies reviewed below.

Hanifa (2017) conducted a qualitative study about the teachers' views on using portfolio assessment in Indonesia. The study found that teachers interpreted portfolios as tools for teaching and learning purposes. The study established that portfolios could promote cooperation among learners and teachers during these two processes: teaching and learning. On the other hand, Soifah and Pratolo (2020), who investigated teachers' practices and challenges in portfolio assessment in Malaysia, established that most teachers understood portfolios as a strategy that develops learners' critical thinking skills, helps them demonstrate their different skills, and increases their self-confidence. These teachers also believed portfolios to be a strategy that can be used to assess the learners' work in progress and the final products and that a teacher and learners can use to reflect.

Again, Arumugham (2019) conducted a qualitative case study that explored teachers' understanding of portfolio assessment and how they have used portfolios in the classroom in Malaysia. The study found that, apart from being a tool for teaching and learning processes and collecting learners' work, portfolios are interpreted by teacher participants in this Arumagham's study as feedback and improvement tools and grading tools. The study established that after providing the tasks, some teachers would give feedback to learners, talk about common mistakes, and provide additional tasks for improvement. Moreover, the study found that, after observing learners' work, some teachers would discuss the rubric with the learners and grade their work. On the contrary, using a quantitative approach, Nungani (2020) studied teachers' and learners' perceptions of portfolio assessment in secondary schools in Kenya. The study established that teachers understand portfolios as a tool to promote and sustain learners' academic enrichment and personal growth. Once more, the study found that

teachers recommended using portfolio assessment as an effective alternative assessment tool because it inspires learners to become active, reflective, and engaged learners.

Moreover, Chere-Masopha (2022) conducted a qualitative study that used thematic analysis in Lesotho to establish how teachers were experiencing portfolios as a strategy used in learning, teaching, and assessment and its success in their classrooms. Chere-Masopha's (2022) findings concur with those reported by Arumugham (2019), Mothetsi-Mothiba (2019), and Soifah and Pratolo (2020). It found that some teacher participants indicated that a portfolio was a file or folder containing learners' academic work. The study also found that other teacher participants regarded portfolios as a tool to monitor their learners' progress and identify each learner's strengths and weaknesses.

In all studies reviewed concerning teachers' understanding of portfolios, none established teachers' views of portfolios as a tool for learners to transition to another level of education. Hence, this study sought to understand teachers' views and beliefs on portfolios as an assessment tool for Grade 7 learners' transition to Grade 8.

2.4.2 Teachers' Experiences of Using Assessment Portfolio

Transition assessment portfolios are valuable tools for facilitating successful transitions from one level of education to another (McMillan, 2018; Scully, O'Leary, & Brown, 2018; Soifah & Pratolo, 2020). However, they are not without challenges. This literature review explored teachers' experiences during transition assessment implementation, specifically the advantages and challenges associated with transition assessment portfolios as highlighted in scholarly studies.

Advantages. Regarding advantages, transition assessment portfolios are valuable tools for supporting learners transitioning from primary to secondary school (Farid, 2018). While these portfolios offer numerous benefits for learners, they also provide advantages for teachers involved in the transition process (Ali, 2014; Farid, 2018). The review examined scholarly studies that highlighted the positive impact of these portfolios on assessment, teachers' roles, responsibilities, and instructional practices.

In Pakistan, Ali (2014) conducted a quantitative study that explored teachers' attitudes towards using portfolios. The study found that transition assessment portfolios offered

teachers a comprehensive understanding of learners' abilities, interests, and support needs, enabling effective instructional strategies and personalised learning styles. This study reported that this enabled teachers to identify individual preferences and areas for support in the next level of education settings. Even though Ali's study addressed the advantages of a portfolio as a phenomenon, its area of concern was the teachers' attitudes, not transition issues, as proposed by this study.

Hanifa (2017) conducted a qualitative study in Indonesia, concentrating on teachers' understanding of portfolios to investigate teachers' conceptions of implementing the portfolio and the contents of the portfolio conformed. The study established that teachers proclaimed that learners' portfolios comprised various topics in different genres. The study further reported that transition assessment portfolios enabled teachers to implement differentiated instruction for transitioning learners, addressing varying academic levels and learning styles. These portfolios provided insights into learners' abilities and profiles, enabling teachers to design and adapt activities, materials, and assessments for individual success. The teacher participants in Hanifa's study proclaimed improved learners' performance when portfolios are used as a teaching, learning, and assessment tool. Thus, the improved learners' performance led to a smooth transition (Hanifa, 2017). As a result, the current study shared similar sentiments with Hanifa's report; however, this study specifically concentrated on the transition of Grade 7 learners in Lesotho, while Hanifa's study concentrated on secondary learners.

Farid (2018) conducted a quantitative study in Indonesia to reveal the significance of transition assessment portfolios in assessing Grade 10 learners' achievements. The study revealed that transition assessment portfolios enabled collaborative planning and coordination among teachers, promoting successful transition planning. By sharing information, teachers developed supports and strategies based on learners' experiences, ensuring smooth transitions and continuity of instruction and promoting positive academic and social-emotional outcomes. The study's results also revealed that learners who used portfolios performed better than those assessed by traditional assessment methods. Though Farid's study concentrated on the transition assessment portfolio and its significance, it was not on the perceptions of teachers of this strategy as a transitioning tool, but the study was on Grade 10 learners' performance.

Again, in Indonesia, Wulandari, Pratolo, and Junianti (2019) conducted a study that focused on lecturers, but its findings seemed to affect teachers of all levels because the university and the learners in primary and secondary levels are assessed the same, but the level of knowledge, skills, and content are different. Wulandari et al. (2019) found that assessment portfolios enabled teachers to make informed decisions on instructional strategies, resource allocation, and support services. Clear, accurate information was crucial for effective decision-making during the learners' transition. This data-driven approach optimised efforts and ensured appropriate support for learners during the transition process. Therefore, Wulandari et al.'s (2019) study differs from the current study by the level of the learners, but it is believed that they share the same benefits.

Likewise, Soifah and Pratolo (2020) conducted a study, also in Indonesia, to investigate teachers' practices and challenges while implementing an assessment portfolio. The study reported that transition assessment portfolios improved stakeholder communication, fostering meaningful dialogue and collaboration. Using portfolios strengthened partnerships between teachers and parents, enabling informed decision-making during the learners' transition. Soifah and Pratolo's study also reported that portfolios became an authentic assessment of learners' achievement, a comprehensive view of learners' performances, and encouraged them (learners) to develop themselves as independent learners and be responsible for their learning. Portfolio assessment turned evaluation into a positive force that encouraged learners' growth, maturity, and independence. That also helped them be engaged in their transition. Nungani (2020) also agreed with Soifa and Pratolo that portfolios promoted self-directed learning and increased collaboration among learners.

In short, all the benefits identified from the reviewed studies are believed to affect Lesotho Grade 7 learners during their transition, but Lesotho Grade 7 and 8 teachers' perceptions of portfolios, as an area of concern, are believed to differ as every teacher experiences portfolios differently depending on the context (Eridafithri, 2015). However, there are challenges experienced when portfolios are used for learners' assessment.

Challenges. While transition assessment portfolios offer numerous advantages for teachers in supporting learners during the transition process, they also present certain challenges (Soifah & Pratolo, 2020; Wulandari et al., 2019). This literature review explored the challenges experienced by teachers who use transition assessment portfolios. The review examined

obstacles and considerations teachers encounter when implementing and utilising these portfolios in their instructional practices during transitional periods.

Soifah and Pratolo (2020) reported that teacher participants claimed that using portfolios was time-consuming. The study found that large classes challenged the effective implementation of the portfolios. The participants in Soifah and Pratolo also reported the unreliability and subjectivity of portfolios in scoring and relied on rubrics, for which it was also a struggle for most teachers to develop good rubrics. Nungani (2020) also reported similar results, pointing out that teachers' lack of knowledge led to worse implementation, contributing more to time-consuming and worse portfolio scores. Nungani added that for novice teachers, portfolios were challenging to prepare. Moreover, Nungani reported that teachers with limited knowledge tend to be the centre of all knowledge, failing to engage learners in developing their portfolios.

Wulandari et al. (2019) and Ghany and Alzouebi (2019) had similar study results. Ghany and Alzouebi established that teachers faced challenges in gathering comprehensive and accurate data for transition assessment portfolios, balancing administrative responsibilities and instructional demands, and ensuring effective collaboration and communication among stakeholders involved in the transition process. Like the studies of Soifah and Pratolo (2020) and Nungani (2020), these studies revealed that data collection required thorough assessments, collaboration, and effective data management systems that were time-consuming and logistically complex. Balancing administrative workload and instructional demands impacts teachers' ability to deliver quality instruction to transitioning learners (Wulandari et al., 2019). Ensuring clear and consistent stakeholder communication was also challenging (Ghany & Alzouebi, 2019; Wulandari et al., 2019).

In addition, in their different studies, Chere-Masopha (2022) and Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022) found that a lack of knowledge and skills challenges Lesotho teachers to use portfolios for learning and assessing the learners. Their studies indicated that they rarely engage learners in planning portfolios and deciding what should be included in the learners' portfolios. These studies found that the Lesotho institutions entrusted with training teachers give limited attention to a portfolio as a strategy for teaching and assessing learners. These studies also established that even those who claim to use a portfolio in their classroom practices do not implement it as intended due to their limited knowledge and skills.

2.4.3 Teachers' Views About the Practicality of Using Transition Assessment Portfolios

Transition assessment portfolios are valuable tools for promoting successful transitions of learners from one educational stage to another. The practicality of assessment portfolios can vary based on teachers' teaching context, experiences, and individual perspectives. Several factors must be considered to ensure the practicality of school transition assessment portfolios. The literature reviewed in this study highlighted vital aspects that contribute to the practicality of transition assessment portfolios in schools.

Haghighi (2016) established that assessment portfolios were crucial for successful learners' transitions, but their practicality needed to be aligned with specific goals. The study reported that key factors included alignment with transition goals, accessibility and usability, collaboration and information sharing among stakeholders, and individualisation and learner involvement. Again, Haghighi's study found that, for portfolios to be practical in schools, they should include functional and person-centred planning assessments to provide a comprehensive picture of learners' skills, interests, and preferences. The study also reported that engaging learners in the portfolio development process empowers them to take ownership of their transition goals and outcomes.

Similarly, Kalra, Sundrarajun, and Komintarachat (2017) concur with Haghighi's findings that factors including self-assessments, reflections, and goal-setting activities enhance the portfolio's practicality and relevance. Kalra, et al.'s study reported that the portfolio's practicality should be dynamic, continuously updated, and integrated with transition planning to inform individualised plans and support interventions. Also, professional development and training are essential for ensuring the practical use of transition assessment portfolios (Kalra et al., 2017). Hence, by considering these factors, schools can create practical transition assessment portfolios that effectively support successful transitions for learners.

However, the studies reviewed for this current study about the portfolio, including those conducted in Lesotho, did not investigate teachers' perceptions of a portfolio as an assessment tool for Grade 7 learners' transition to Grade 8. A few studies have explored portfolios as a teaching, learning, and assessment tool, but virtually no studies were located on the transition of Grade 7 learners to secondary school. As a result, this study investigated teachers'

perceptions of portfolios as a strategy of assessment that transition Grade 7 learners to Grade 8.

2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the theoretical framework that supported this study, the conceptual framework that provided the orientation to the study, and the related empirical studies that were reviewed based on the three objectives of this study. The next chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study explored the perceptions of grade 7 and 8 teachers in Lesotho schools about a transition assessment portfolio used to evaluate the learners transitioning from Grade 7 to Grade 8. The previous chapter discussed the literature that was reviewed for this study. This chapter describes the research methodology used in the study. The chapter is divided into three major sections: Introduction (this section), Methodology, and Summary.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a scientific way to solve a research problem systematically (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). It is a strategy that justifies the researcher's use and choice of certain techniques (Dammak, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) attest that methodology addresses two main aspects: how the data are collected or generated and how they are analysed. According to Terrel (2016), a methodology is a step-by-step plan developed by the researcher to answer research questions or test hypotheses. These include a description of the research epistemology that orients a study, the paradigm, approach, design, data collection and analysis methods, and the study participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Dammak, 2015). Thus, this section describes the methodology that was used in this study. The description includes the Research paradigm that oriented this study, Research approach, Research design, Population and selection of participants, Methods and Instruments of Data Collection, Data Analysis, Trustworthiness, and Ethical Consideration.

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

Various scholars have understood the term "paradigm" differently (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) assert that the word "paradigm" was first used by Thomas Kuhn in 1962 to mean a philosophical way of thinking. Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Denzin and Lincoln (2018) refer to a paradigm as a worldview or a fundamental belief set that guides action. It is a way of viewing the world based on different assumptions about how we can understand or know about it (Cohen et al., 2018). In research, a paradigm is defined by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) as a perspective or a set of ideas or beliefs that guides the interpretation of research data or gives meaning to research findings. Khatri (2020) also refers to a research paradigm as the theoretical or philosophical ground for the research work.

Hence, the research paradigm could be viewed as a way of looking at the world with different assumptions about things and how people can learn about them. It is a term used in educational research to describe a researcher's worldview (Khatri, 2020; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). This suggests that the research paradigm directs the researcher's viewpoint or worldview on conducting the study. It also informs researchers about their worldview and influences how they conduct research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In other words, the paradigm guides how data will be collected, interpreted, and communicated.

The scholars, including Creswell and Creswell (2018), Denzin and Lincoln (2018), Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), Leavy (2017), and Mertens (2015), advocate that the major paradigms are postpositivism, constructivism, transformative, pragmatic, critical theory, and arts-based or aesthetic intersubjective, while Rehman and Alharthi (2016) attest that the dominant paradigms are positivist, interpretivist, or critical, and pragmatic participatory action paradigms. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, an interpretivist paradigm was adopted to direct it. Hence, the interpretivist paradigm is explained below.

Interpretivist Paradigm. Interpretivism, also known as a constructivist research paradigm, deals with the social world following legitimate productions that function in nature (Beuving & de Vries, 2015). Interpretivism as a paradigm assumes that reality is subjective and can differ depending on different individuals (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Therefore, interpretivists believe there is no single reality or truth but multiple socially constructed realities. That is why interpretivism believes that the problem in their research lies in the social environment (Gichuru, 2017; Nickerson, 2022). This paradigm also engages an active, constructive process of knowledge (Khatri, 2020).

This study adopted the interpretivist paradigm to understand the subjective world of the teachers through their experiences with the transition assessment portfolio. There are four significant assumptions used in the interpretivist paradigm. The researcher employed the following assumptions of interpretivists: subjectivist epistemology, relativist ontology, a naturalist methodology, and balanced axiology. These assumptions are described below as used in this study.

Subjective Epistemology in Interpretivism. Epistemology studies knowledge and knowledge formation (Bukve, 2019). In research, epistemology describes how people come to know reality and truth, how they value knowledge or what counts as knowledge in the world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Therefore, Al-Saadi (2014) posits various epistemological positions, mainly subjectivist epistemology and objectivist epistemology. As a result, this study adopted subjective epistemology due to its qualitative nature.

Subjective epistemology in interpretivism assumes that humans understand through reasoning, which is used to uncover the truth as seen by those being investigated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In exploring teachers' perceptions of portfolios as an assessment tool for learners' transition into the next level of education, a subjective epistemology involved understanding and interpreting the subjective perspectives and meanings, teachers attributed to transition assessment portfolios. It recognised that teachers' knowledge and understanding of transition assessment portfolios were socially constructed and influenced by their experiences, beliefs, and values (Gichuru, 2017; Nickerson, 2022).

Relativist Ontology in Interpretivism. Ontology deals with the nature of reality and the concept of knowledge (Rahi, 2017). It studies the world and what is in it (Bukve, 2019). It answers the question, "What is reality?" (Al-Saadi, 2014; Rahi, 2017). The interpretivists adopt a relativist ontology in which a phenomenon may have multiple interpretations rather than a measurable truth (Pham, 2018). Relativists suggest that there are multiple realities, that the reality is relative to individuals, and that it is based on the context and culture of an individual (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Pring, 2015).

Therefore, in the case of this study, a relativist ontology was adopted to acknowledge that teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios were shaped by various factors such as their teaching philosophies, educational background, and contextual influences. Relative ontology was believed to recognise that teachers actively constructed their understandings of transition assessment portfolios and that those understandings differed among individuals. Hence, the Lesotho Grade 7 and 8 teachers, through their experiences and different contexts, gave their different views on how the transition assessment portfolio was used to transition the learners into the next level of education.

Naturalist Methodology in Interpretivism. The methodology is the research design, methods, approaches, and procedures used to answer research questions or test hypotheses (Terrel, 2016). Khatri (2020) acclaims that it is the appropriate approach to systematic inquiry. Hence, interpretivists use a natural methodology to gather qualitative data.

In this study on teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios used to promote Grade 7 learners into Grade 8, a naturalist methodology approach was used to conduct semi-structured interviews with teachers to explore their views, beliefs, and experiences regarding portfolios as an assessment tool for learners' transition. These interviews allowed teachers to express their perceptions and elaborate on their understanding of the transition assessment portfolios to support learners' transition into the next level of education.

Balanced Axiology and Ethical Considerations. Axiology is an ethical consideration that must be made when planning research (Khatri, 2020; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It involves defining, evaluating, and understanding right and wrong behaviour related to research (Khatri, 2020). It addresses the nature of ethics or behaviour, the moral values and characteristics of a researcher and the participants, securing the participants' goodwill, and conducting research socially, psychologically, physically, legally, economically, peacefully, and respectfully (Khatri, 2020). Hence, interpretivist epistemology embraces a balanced axiology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). A balanced axiology assumes that the research's product breeds the researcher's values, presenting a balanced report of the findings (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

In this study, a balanced axiology was engaged to enable a researcher to present the findings on teachers' perceptions of the transition assessment portfolio for learners transitioning from Grade 7 to Grade 8 in a balanced manner, respecting the teachers' moral values and goodwill. It also involved respecting and valuing teachers' perspectives, ensuring their voices and experiences are accurately represented.

3.2.2 Research Approach

This study used a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is linked to the interpretivist paradigm (Antwi, Hamza, & Kasim, 2015). A qualitative approach investigates people in their natural settings and uses methods that collect and analyse non-numerical data (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). This approach engages a small group of participants to explore in-depth

human-related issues such as experiences, opinions, values, perceptions, and beliefs about a phenomenon of interest. Qualitative research focuses on the participants' meaning of a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The investigator carefully interprets this information and draws conclusions based on these interpretations (Cozby & Rawn, 2016).

This study examined the teachers' perceptions of the portfolio used during Grade 7 learners' transition into Grade 8. Hence, qualitative research was well-suited for exploring teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios. It allowed for a deep understanding of their experiences, considered contextual factors that influence their perceptions, valued multiple perspectives, encouraged exploration and emergent findings, and provided practical implications for practice and policy. It informed the development and improvement of transition assessment portfolios and provided insights into practical strategies for supporting learners' transitions.

3.2.3 Research Design

This study used a phenomenological design using multiple case studies because its primary purpose was to describe the perceptions of Grade 7 and 8 teachers in Lesotho schools about a transition assessment portfolio. Thus, this portfolio was intended to provide information about a learner transitioning from Grade 7 to Grade 8 (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Rodriguez and Smith (2018), phenomenology is the study of "phenomena": the things' appearances, or how they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, and thus the meanings they have in our experience.

Phenomenology studies' experiences are described from the subjective or first-person point of view (Hammond, 2022). Thus, these studies analyse participants' perceptions of events, objects or situations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). Further explained, phenomenology studies are not interested in things, objects or events but in the perceptions of those who experience them (Leedy & Ormrod 2015). As a result, these studies attempt to understand perceptions and perspectives relative to the participants' things, objects, events or situations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Rangarajan, Onkar, Kruiff, & Barron, 2022). They examine these experiences through the participants' descriptions (Eisenbach & Greathouse, 2020). Consequently, in phenomenological research, participants are asked to describe their experiences as they perceive them (Rangarajan et al., 2022).

When involved in phenomenological research, the researchers must identify what they expect to discover and deliberately put aside these ideas. This suggests that researchers set aside their experiences to collect and analyse data objectively and without prejudice. According to Creswell (2016), this practice is called "bracketing."

This principle was considered during the design, data generation, analysis, and interpretation of the results of this study. Phenomenology is valuable for exploring teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios. It sought to understand subjective experiences, meaning-making, and the in-depth exploration of individual cases. It emphasised the exploration of the meaning that individuals assigned to their experiences, helping a researcher understand how teachers made sense of the portfolios and how they impacted the transition process.

Case Studies. Yin (2013) defines a case study as an empirical investigation into a current phenomenon in depth and its real-world context. A case study focuses on single or multiple units, often called "cases." A case could be a small geographical area, a small group of people sharing characteristics, or a person (Du Plessis, 2016). It is studied to produce a description that is rich, holistic, and detailed (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010; Gerring, 2017). A case study may be a single or multiple case study. This study used multiple case studies.

Multiple Case Study. In this case, Du Plessis (2016) and Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe a design that studies multiple cases involving more than one case, which may be physically co-located with others. Accordingly, a multiple-case design explores real-life multiple-bound systems by collecting detailed, in-depth data from multiple sources of information (Du Plessis, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It describes the significance of a lived experience, such as teachers' daily teaching of a subject (Du Plessis, 2016). Brink (2018) observed that a multiple case study is believed to provide better light to a researcher because it enables observation of various units with similar elements. This design makes the research approach and methodologies consistent with each case or unit (Biggam, 2015).

This study was a multiple-case because Grade 7 and 8 teachers were purposely identified and recruited individually from ten (9) schools in the Maseru and Berea districts, and each teacher was considered an independent case. To investigate teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios, a multiple case study design was used because it allowed for a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, enhanced chances of

generalisability enabled comparative analysis, supported triangulation of data, and provided a holistic view of teachers' perspectives in diverse contexts.

3.2.4 Population and Selection of Participants

A "population" of a study refers to all the people or anything that can provide a researcher with the necessary data or information (Babbie, 2016). It is defined by Hoy and Adams (2016) as all people or items that one wishes to understand. It is a set of people of interest to the researcher that is believed to have a reasonable date for the study (Cozby & Rawn, 2016; Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019).

The population of this study was all Grade 7 and 8 teachers in the Berea and Maseru districts. Grade 7 and 8 teachers were assumed to work with transition assessment portfolios as stipulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy of 2009 and the Lesotho Basic Education Curriculum Policy (LBECP) draft of 2021. These policies require Grade 7 teachers, along with their learners, to prepare a portfolio that Grade 8 teachers would use to determine the abilities and interests of each learner. It is believed this would assist the Grade 8 teacher or the school to which a learner joins to address the learner's learning needs. This is why the study focused mainly on Grade 7 and 8 teachers.

Selection of Participants. The selection of participants is a procedure for selecting a subset of the population (Neuman, 2014; Showkat & Parveen, 2017). The available individuals are often selected to represent a subset of the population of interest. This group of people has the key characteristics of the entire population of the study (Showkat & Parveen, 2017).

As earlier indicated, the target population was Grade 7 and 8 teachers in Lesotho schools. However, due to resource restrictions (time and financial resources), the study was restricted only to schools in two districts, Berea and Maseru. The selection of the schools from these districts was also based on the convenience of a researcher (this study was not sponsored). So, considering financial implications was essential for the completion of this study and the willingness of the teachers to participate (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). For ethical reasons and the quality of the information, it was necessary that teachers willingly volunteer to participate during the recruitment. Willingness is critical as it influences the participants to share, without inhibitions, valuable insights into their perceptions.

For this study, ten (10) teachers were recruited, five (5) of whom were from four (4) schools (two primary and two secondary schools) in the Berea district. Three of these teachers came from three different schools, and two were recruited from one school with a larger population than the other three. The next cohort of teachers (5) was recruited from two primary schools (Grade 7) and three secondary schools (Grade 8) in the Maseru district. Also, in this case, a teacher was recruited from each school. These schools are called "School A to School I" for anonymity. Each participant is identified with a letter and a number (A1, A2, B, C, up to I) assigned to the school from which a teacher came. The teachers from one school were given one letter with different numbers; for instance, Teacher A1 and Teacher A2 were from one school. The schools were assigned the letters based on the order in which they were involved. For example, the first school to be conducted and involved was assigned letter A. Similarly, the teacher from this school was assigned the letter A. **Tables 3.1** (for Grade 7) and **3.2** (for Grade 8) display this information.

Table 3.4: Demographic information of Grade 7 teachers

District	School	Proprietor	Teacher Name	Age Range	Gender	Highest Educational Qualification	Teaching Experience
Berea	A	RCC	Teacher A1	30-39	M	B.Ed (Primary)	6+
			Teacher A2	30-39	M	Dip. Ed. (Primary)	6+
	B	GS	Teacher B	40-49	F	B.Ed (Primary)	6+
Maseru	C	Private	Teacher C	20-29	F	H. Dip. Ed. (Primary)	3-5
	D	Private	Teacher D	40-49	F	B.Ed Hons.	6+

Table 3.2: Demographic information of Grade 7 teachers

District	School	Proprietor	Teacher Name	Age Range	Gender	Highest Educational Qualification	Teaching Experience
Berea	E	LECSA	Teacher E	30-39	M	DES	6+
	F	ACL	Teacher F	30-39	M	DES	6+
Maseru	G	RCC	Teacher G	30-39	M	DES	6+
	H	RCC	Teacher H	40-49	M	B.Ed. Hons	6+
	I	Private	Teacher I	30-39	F	B. Ed (Sec.)	6+

3.2.5 Methods and Instruments of Data Generation

Terrel (2016) explains data collection as a systematic method of obtaining, observing, measuring, and analysing accurate information for a study. The methods associated with qualitative data collection include observations, focus group discussions, interviews, and document analysis (Cohen et al., 2018). This study used interviews to explore the perceptions of the teachers who participated in it.

Interviews. In research, interviews engage a researcher and a participant in a conversation where a researcher asks questions orally and records the participants' answers (Babbie, 2016). Interviews are usually used to generate data from people about their opinions, beliefs, and feelings about situations in their own lives (Ary et al., 2010). They help a researcher understand the meanings the participants attach to their experiences about the phenomenon being investigated (Ary et al., 2010). Interviews are of different types, including unstructured, structured, and semi-structured (Harvey, 2020). This study used semi-structured interviews, which are described below.

Semi-Structured Interviews. This study used semi-structured interviews to explore teachers' perceptions of a learner transition assessment portfolio. Rangarajan et al. (2022) support this choice of semi-structured interviews and observe that phenomenological case study design works well with semi-structured interviews because they elicit descriptions of the experience and perceptions.

The semi-structured interviews are in-depth methods of generating data that rely on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework. They enable the participants to verbally express their personal experiences, attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about the topic of interest (Dejonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The advantage of using semi-structured interviews in a phenomenological case study design is that this method allows a researcher to explore the emerging issues from the participants' responses that explain their perceptions and experiences.

Semi-structured interviews were suitable for exploring teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios due to their balance between structure and flexibility. They allowed for an in-depth exploration of teachers' perceptions, flexibility, and participant perspectives. This allowed for rich data to be gathered, provided insights into the complexities of teachers' perceptions, and facilitated a personal connection and rapport between the researcher and the participant.

Semi-structured interviews use protocols as instruments for data collection (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Hence, the interview protocol used in this study is described below.

Interview Protocol. An interview protocol or guide is a set of questions to facilitate and guide semi-structured open-ended interviews (Yahya, Maidin, & Safari, 2021). It is a script in which an interviewer reads, asks questions, and records responses (Yahya et al., 2021). They are the items (questions) that enable a study to answer the research questions and the central question of a qualitative study (Dejonckheere & Vaughn, 2019; Hunter, 2012). So, interview protocols include demographic items and standardised open-ended questions allowing participants to express their viewpoints and experiences (Yahya et al., 2021).

Because an interview facilitates the recollection of past experiences in a particular domain and allows participants to reflect on them (Hunter, 2012), interview protocol items should be designed according to the researcher's understanding of the topic and the experience of the subject (Hunter, 2012; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Yeong, Ismail, Ismail, & Hamzah, 2018). Moreover, a well-designed interview protocol ensures that comprehensive information is obtained within the prearranged time (Yeong et al., 2018). Again, as a data collection tool, the interview protocol must be tested before being considered reliable and valid (Dejonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Yahya et al. (2021) observed that an interview protocol must be designed before conducting any interview. The researcher may duplicate the list of items from previous studies or develop new items from scratch relevant to the purpose of the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Yeong et al., 2018). The interview protocol framework is comprised of four phases, which are:

Phase 1: Ensuring interview questions align with research questions,

Phase 2: Constructing an inquiry-based conversation,

Phase 3: Receiving feedback on interview protocols, and

Phase 4: Piloting the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p. 812).

The interview protocol items were developed from scratch for this study because a suitable instrument could not be found that could answer the current research questions. According to the reviewed literature, it was the first time a study of this nature was conducted. The questions were piloted with two teachers drawn from the targeted population. This instrument was mainly tested to determine its reliability in collecting the intended information. The interview protocol developed for this study consisted of two sections: Section A: Demographic Details and Section B: Main and Guiding Questions, which aligned with research questions. This research protocol is shown in Appendix B.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with teachers who were within reach and through telephone interviews with faraway teachers. Each Grade 7 teacher was interviewed for 45 to 60 minutes, while each Grade 8 teacher was interviewed for 10 to 15 minutes. The difference in the length of the interviews was due to the little knowledge the Grade 8 teachers revealed about the transition assessment portfolios. The interviews were all recorded over the phone and transcribed verbatim. The field notes were also taken during interviews. It took about a month to generate the data.

3.2.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis in this interpretivist study focused on identifying themes, patterns, and interpretations that emerge from the interviews; hence, a thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data collected in this study. Thematic analysis is an inductive data analysis approach that involves identifying, analysing, and reporting established patterns of data

(Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). It is a technique for detecting, analysing, and interpreting meaning patterns (themes) in qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). In this approach, data are generated through qualitative tools or techniques and analysed to interpret the data to answer the research questions (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Maxwell, 2013; Privitera & Ahlgrim-Dezell, 2019).

This approach follows different phases and stages as advocated by different scholars, including. This study used this approach based on four phase model framework of Vaismoradi et al. (2016): initialisation, construction, rectification, and finalisation (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).

Therefore, in this study, a researcher aimed to understand teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios and how those perceptions shaped their assessment practices and beliefs about learners' readiness for the next level of education. Overall, applying interpretivism to this study on teachers' perceptions of transition assessment portfolios involved understanding the subjective perspectives and meanings that teachers attributed to portfolios, recognising the complex nature of their perceptions, acknowledging the researcher's values and biases, and employing qualitative research methods to explore and interpret teachers' experiences and beliefs. Hence, this thematic approach helped a researcher analyse teachers' subjective perspectives using the thematic analysis phases explained below as used in this study.

Initialisation Phase. In this phase, the researcher transcribes the interview and obtains a sense of the whole by reading the transcripts actively, analytically, and critically several times and starting to think about what the data mean (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, 2016). This process codes the information, searches for abstractions in participants' accounts, and composes reflective notes (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Byrne, 2022). Other scholars consider this phase as familiarising oneself with data as it involves reading and rereading the textual data, listening to audio recordings, or watching video data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

Hence, in this study, data collected through audio devices were transcribed into textual files once the data generation stage was completed. Thus, during data analysis, the researcher read the transcripts and field notes to familiarise himself with the generated data. The transcribed data were then coded to categorise similar data.

Construction Phase. Braun and Clarke (2019) and Vaismoradi et al. (2016) attest that in this phase, the data analyst evaluates the process of organising codes and compares them according to similarities and differences to assign a place to each cluster based on the research question. This process transforms raw data into usable data, concepts, or ideas and identifies emerging patterns and themes (Braun & Clarke, 2014; Clarke & Braun, 2018). This process disassembles data units to reassemble them into meaningful groupings.

This process was followed in this study. In reading, the researcher in this study started searching for patterns across the entire data set and used different colours to highlight phrases or sentences in the data that described similar ideas and gave them codes to describe their content. The raw data was coded and organised to identify relationships and recurring themes. Accordingly, this information was disassembled and reassembled to arrange emerging themes into major themes and sub-themes.

Rectification. In this third phase, the analyst relates the themes to produce established knowledge (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). An analyst defines each theme in this phase and explains its relevance to the broader study question (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The themes are aligned with the literature reviewed to show how the study phenomenon has advanced and to facilitate understanding (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Accordingly, in this study, the codes were organised in a tabular form, which helped to show the relationships across the data and between the participants. Then, those themes were related and defined in line with the main research question of this study, which was about the perceptions of Grade 7 and 8 teachers of transition assessment portfolios for learners' transition from Grade 7 into Grade 8.

Finalisation Phase. In this phase, a researcher develops a written commentary that describes and connects different themes and answers the study question (Byrne, 2022). A clear "storyline" that provides an overall view of the study phenomenon is developed through the narration (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

In this study, the data sets were examined, and several related codes were combined to make up themes, further divided into sub-themes. The commentary was finally written that

answered the research question of this study. On another level of analysis, demographic information was used to provide an overall picture of the research participants' perceptions of a transition assessment portfolio. **Figure 3.1** indicates phases and stages of theme development, as Vaismoradi et al. (2016) suggested, and **Figure 3.2** demonstrates the summary of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data generated for this study. These themes are presented and described in detail as the findings in the next chapter.

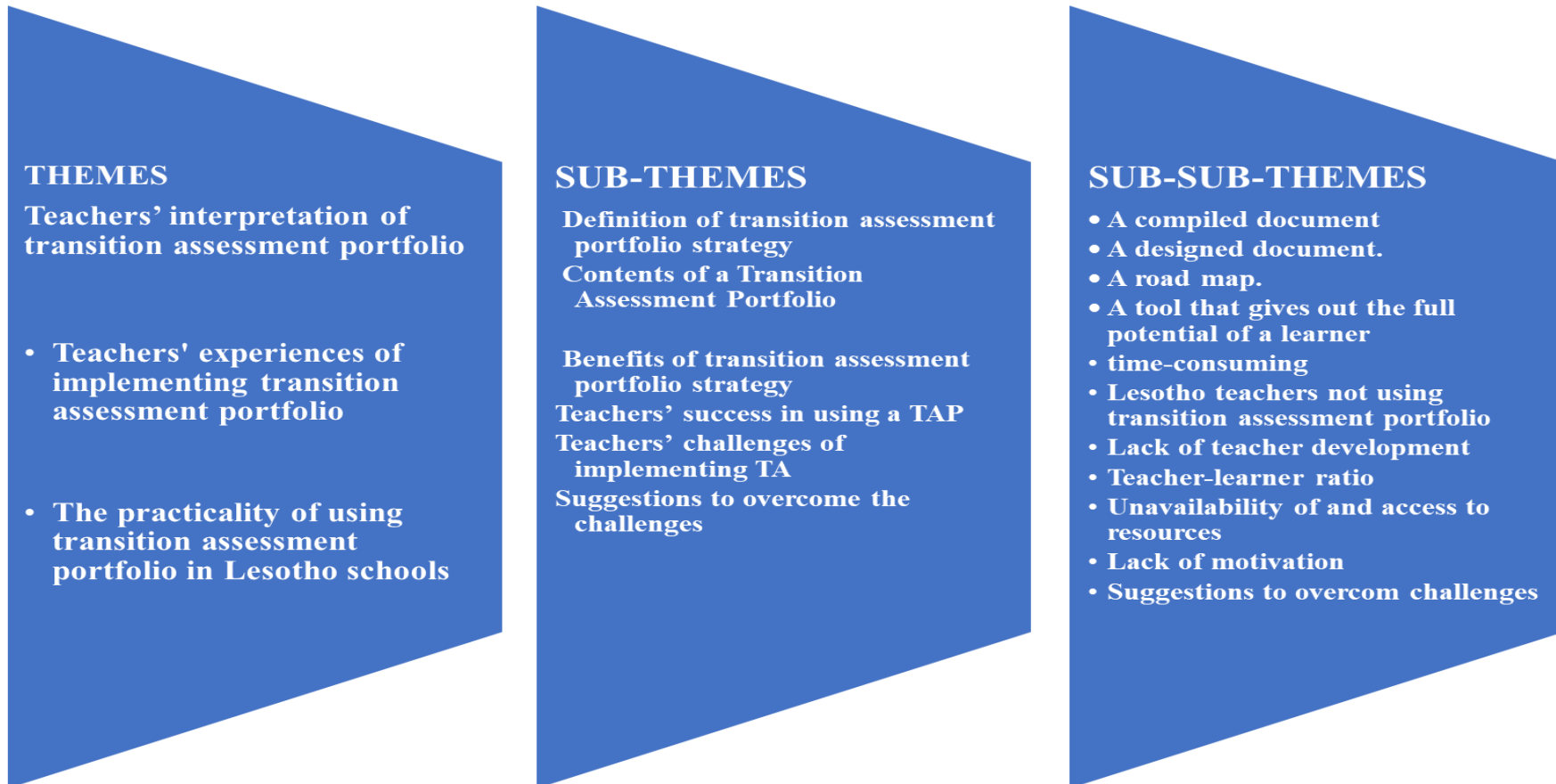
Figure 3.1

Phases and stages of theme development by Vaismoradi et al. (2016)

Phases	Stages
Initialization	Reading transcriptions and highlighting meaning units; Coding and looking for abstractions in participants' accounts; Writing reflective notes.
Construction	Classifying; Comparing; Labelling; Translating & transliterating; Defining & describing.
Rectification	Immersion and distancing; Relating themes to established knowledge; Stabilizing.
Finalization	Developing the story line

Figure 3.2

A summary of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews data



3.2.7 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the quality, authenticity, and truthfulness of qualitative research findings and, thus, the level of trust or confidence readers have in the study's findings (Babbie, 2016; Edmonds & Nichols, 2019; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). This implies that researchers must conduct their studies to ensure the quality of their findings. Qualitative researchers must consider both determining and ensuring the trustworthiness of their studies to ensure the findings are trustworthy (Creswell & Clark, 2018). Since qualitative research aims to explore subjective experiences and meanings, establishing trustworthiness is crucial to ensuring the validity and reliability of the study (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Privitera, 2017). Therefore, the trustworthiness of qualitative research should be established, assessed, and judged on four criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Biggam, 2015; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Mutepa, 2016; Payne, 2021). These four criteria that contribute to trustworthiness in qualitative research are described below:

Credibility. This refers to how the findings accurately represent the participants' experiences and perspectives (Mutepa, 2016; Packer, 2018; Payne, 2021). To enhance credibility, researchers can employ various strategies, such as prolonged engagement (spending time with participants), triangulation (using multiple data sources or methods), member checking (validating findings with participants), and detailed, thick descriptions of the research context (Mutepa, 2016). This study enhanced credibility by conducting in-depth interviews with ten (10) teachers with experience with transition assessment portfolios. The researcher established rapport with the participants, clearly articulated the research objectives, and employed techniques such as member checking to validate the accuracy and authenticity of the data. Again, a researcher provided detailed descriptions of the participants' characteristics, the research context, and the process of data collection to contribute to credibility.

Dependability. Dependability refers to the consistency and stability of the research findings over time and across different researchers (Babbie, 2016; Payne, 2021; Yeong et al., 2018). Payne (2021) affirms that to establish dependability, researchers should ensure that their methods and procedures are well-documented and transparent, enabling others to replicate the study and achieve similar results. Keeping an audit trail of decision-making processes and conducting peer debriefing or independent coding can also contribute to dependability (Yeong et al., 2018). To enhance dependability in this study, a researcher documented the

study's research design, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures. The researcher reviewed empirical studies on transition assessment portfolios to see how they are implemented and how teachers' perceptions were captured in different studies. By ensuring that the research process was clearly articulated and could be replicated, other researchers could be able to obtain similar results when conducting a similar study at the exact locations with similar participants.

Confirmability. Confirmability refers to the objectivity and neutrality of the research findings (Mutepa, 2016). Researchers should strive to minimise biases and preconceived notions throughout the research process (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). This can be achieved by maintaining reflexivity (acknowledging and documenting personal biases), engaging in peer debriefing or external audits, and providing clear explanations of the analytical process (Privitera, 2017; Yeong et al., 2018). The researchers in this study minimised personal biases and maintained an unbiased stance throughout the study by acknowledging and documenting the researchers' perspectives and potential biases and employing various peers and colleagues to analyse the data independently.

Transferability. This is how the findings can be applied or transferred to other contexts or populations beyond the study sample (Babbie, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Mutepa, 2016). Researchers should provide detailed descriptions of the study context, participant characteristics, and research procedures to enable readers to assess the findings' applicability to their circumstances (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Hammond, 2022). It is important to note that transferability does not aim for generalisation in the statistical sense but rather for making meaningful connections to other contexts (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). This study addressed transferability by providing detailed descriptions of the participants, the educational settings, and the specific characteristics of the transition assessment portfolios.

In addition to these factors, transparent reporting, clear documentation of the research process, and the researchers' commitment to ethical considerations contribute to trustworthiness in qualitative studies (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017; Hammond, 2022). By addressing these aspects, researchers can enhance the consistency and trustworthiness of their qualitative research findings (Creswell & Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.2.8 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are significant in any study, from its design to its conclusion (Babbie, 2016; Bukve, 2019; Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019). Due to the involvement of human subjects and the requirement that they be shielded from damage in any way, ethical issues in qualitative research studies in educational contexts are raised (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In other words, the primary purpose of ethical considerations in research is to perform the study in a morally and legally acceptable manner while respecting the participants' rights and without fabricating the results (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). As a result, the researcher must adhere to accepted research ethics standards (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Researchers are expected to describe data accurately and never create research results by inventing information that was never observed or recorded (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019). Therefore, a researcher's level of scientific integrity is based on honesty and truthfulness (Terrel, 2016).

The following ethical considerations were considered during data generation and after that in this study: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice (Bukve, 2019; Privitera, 2017; Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019; Taylor et al., 2016). In terms of autonomy, all teacher participants had the right to freely decide to participate in this research study without fear of coercion and with full knowledge of what was being investigated. For non-maleficence, a researcher had no intention of harming the participants but had to prevent harm from occurring to them, both physically and psychologically. Moreover, for benevolence, this research was intended to benefit the participant and society. Lastly, for justice's sake, all teacher participants were treated as equals, and no one group of individuals received preferential treatment because, for example, of their position in society.

3.3 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the research methodology used in the study. In this discussion, the following was explained: Methodology, which reinforced this study; detailed discussion on the research paradigm, the research approach, research design, population and sampling; methods and instruments of data collection, and data analysis used in this study. The next chapter presents the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study investigated teachers' perceptions of a transition assessment portfolio as an assessment strategy for learners' transition to the next level of education in Lesotho schools. The preceding chapter presented, discussed, and explained the research methodology used in this study. It highlighted the research approach, methods of data collection and analysis, and participants of the study. This chapter, Chapter Four, presents the results generated by this study. The chapter is divided into four major sections: Introduction (this section), Participants' profiles, Presentation of results, and Summary.

4.2 PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

The participants' profile provides general information about the teachers and demographic information. Below are the profiles of Grade 7 and Grade 8 teacher participants of this study. **Table 4.1** and **Table 4.2** are the summaries of Grade 7 and 8 teacher participants, respectively.

4.3.1 Grade 7 Teachers' Profiles

The selection of these Grade 7 teacher participants was discussed in the previous chapter. Below are descriptions of their profiles:

Teacher A1 was a male between 30 and 39 years of age. He held a bachelor's degree in primary education (B.Ed. Primary). He taught at School A. The Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in the Berea district owns his school. He had teaching experience, which is over six years.

Teacher A2 was a male teacher aged between 30 and 39 years. He held a Diploma in Education Primary (DEP). He had been teaching for more than six years. He worked at School A in the Berea district. The school belongs to the Roman Catholic Church.

Teacher B was a female aged between 40 and 49 years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education (B.Ed. Primary). She had more than six years of teaching experience, and

she worked in School B. School B is owned by the government and is located in the Berea district.

Teacher C was a female whose age ranged between 20 and 29 years. She holds a Higher Diploma in Primary Education (HDPE), and she was pursuing Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education (B.Ed. Primary). Her teaching experience ranged between 3 and 5 years. She was teaching at School C, a private school in the Roma Valley in the Maseru district.

Teacher D was a female whose age ranged from 40 to 49 years. She held an Honour's Degree in Education (B.Ed. Honours). Her teaching experience lasted more than six years. She taught at School D, a private school located in the Maseru district.

Table 4.5

Demographic information of Grade 7 teachers

District	School	Proprietor	Teacher Name	Age Range	Gender	Highest Educational Qualification	Teaching Experience
Berea	A	RCC	Teacher A1	30-39	Male	B.Ed (Primary)	6+
			Teacher A2	30-39	Male	Dip. Ed. (Primary)	6+
	B	GS	Teacher B	40-49	Female	B.Ed (Primary)	6+
Maseru	C	Private	Teacher C	20-29	Female	H. Dip. Ed. (Primary)	3-5
	D	Private	Teacher D	40-49	Female	B.Ed Hons.	6+

4.3.2 Grade 8 Teachers' Profiles

As indicated before, the Grade 8 teacher participants' selection was described in Chapter Three. Below are their profiles described. They were given pseudonyms, from Teacher E to Teacher I.

Teacher E was a male aged between 30 and 39. He holds a Diploma in Education (Secondary) (DES). He had over six years of teaching experience. He worked at School E in the Berea district. The Lesotho Evangelical Church in Southern Africa (LECSA) owns the school.

Teacher F was a male holding a Diploma in Education (Secondary) (DES). He had more than six years of teaching experience. He worked at School F in the Berea district. The school belongs to the Anglican Church of Lesotho (ACL).

Teacher G was a male whose age ranged between 30 and 39 years. He held a Diploma in Education Secondary (DES). He had more than six years of teaching experience. He taught at School G in the Maseru district. The school belongs to the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

Teacher H was a male whose age ranged between 40 and 49 years. He held an Honour's Degree in Education (B.Ed. Hons). He had more than six years of teaching experience. He taught at School H in the Maseru district of Roma Valley. The school belongs to the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

Teacher I was a female aged between 40 and 49 years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in secondary education (B.Ed. Secondary). She had over six years of teaching experience at School I in the Maseru district. The School I is a private school.

Table 4.6

Demographic information of Grade 8 teachers

District	School	Proprietor	Teacher Name	Age Range	Gender	Highest Educational Qualification	Teaching Experience
Berea	E	LECSA	Teacher E	30-39	Male	DES	6+
	F	ACL	Teacher F	30-39	Male	DES	6+
Maseru	G	RCC	Teacher G	30-39	Male	DES	6+
	H	RCC	Teacher H	40-49	Male	B.Ed. Hons	6+
	I	Private	Teacher I	30-39	Female	B. Ed. (Sec.)	6+

4.3 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This study explored the perceptions of teachers who participated in it about a portfolio as an assessment strategy used to assess learners during their transition from Grade 7 to Grade 8 in Lesotho schools. The following sub-research questions were asked to collect data that would answer this question:

1. How do teachers interpret assessment portfolios for transition?
2. What are the teachers' experiences of using this portfolio for learner transition?
 - Effectiveness of this strategy.
 - Challenges encountered when implementing this portfolio
3. What are teachers' views about the practicality of this strategy in Lesotho schools?

These questions were used to guide the analysis of the generated data. As such, three major themes emerged: (1) Teachers' interpretation of a portfolio as an assessment tool during learners' transition; (2) Teachers' experiences of implementing a transition assessment portfolio; and (3) Teachers' views about the practicality of implementing a transition assessment portfolio strategy in Lesotho schools. To give detailed and thick descriptions of the teachers' viewpoints, their straight quotations and unfiltered statements are presented to support the claims made in this chapter.

4.3.1 Teachers' Interpretation of Transition Assessment Portfolio

This section presents the results of teachers' interpretations of the transition assessment portfolio strategy. This information is presented as 1) teachers' definitions of the transition assessment portfolio strategy, 2) the transition assessment portfolio's contents, and 3) the benefits of the transition assessment portfolio strategy.

Definition of Transition Assessment Portfolio Strategy. The teacher participants in this study varied in how they defined the transition assessment portfolio. The definitions that emerged from the results are a compilation or collection of learners' work; a tool that helps learners unleash their full potential; a road map; a designed document; a file; and a form. These definitions are presented hereafter.

Compilation of Learner's Work. Three (3) teachers viewed a transition assessment portfolio as a compilation of a learner's work over time. These participants indicated that the transition assessment portfolio consists of learners' work that is in progress or completed. The responses of the teacher participants indicated that these comprehensive collections of information help teachers know and support learners as they move from one educational level to another. These participants attested that the learners' academic work and other forms of educational evidence are compiled in one file to evaluate the quality of achievement of a learner so that a decision would be made for a learner to proceed to the next class. Hence, they articulated that such compilation assists in determining if the learners have accomplished learning standards or other requirements of a certain level of education. They further indicated that the compilation should display a learner's learning progress and achievements. This is how Teacher C described it:

A transition assessment portfolio is a learner's work collected over time, such as quarterly or semesterly work, to help teachers determine whether the learner would proceed to the next class or should repeat the same class.

One Grade 8 teacher, Teacher I, also confirmed, "It is a file that collects work done by learners; it is a collection of actual work, not their results or scores; that is actual work they had done." This teacher's interpretation of the transition assessment portfolio aligns with Arumugham (2019), Farid (2018), and Matar and Al-Harithi (2022), who described this type of portfolio as a file that compiles facts and evidence of a learner's progression that would enable them to be promoted into the next class.

A tool that helps learners unleash their full potential. Two (2) other teacher participants, Teacher A2 and Teacher B, interpreted a transition assessment portfolio as a tool that enables learners to unleash their potential to achieve the learning targets. Teacher B specified that learners could reflect on their work, which grants them some behaviours they may employ to improve their learning strategies. She indicated that this tool helps the learners develop diverse skills that assist them in achieving the learning objectives that enable them to be promoted to the next class. She attested that for learners to make the most of their abilities, this strategy provides a comprehensive evaluation, facilitates individualised planning and goal setting, supports progress monitoring, encourages collaboration, and empowers self-

advocacy. She further showed that a transition assessment portfolio is a powerful tool for optimising a learner's cognitive and non-cognitive skills. She explained:

It is a tool that gives out the full potential of a learner's cognitive and non-cognitive skills. These skills help a learner achieve the learning targets, which help teachers assess their readiness for the next class and include being responsible for their learning, personal philosophy, and generic skills.

This interpretation aligns with Afrianto's (2017), Eridafithri's (2015), Haghghi's (2016), and Mokhtaria's (2015) views on transition assessment portfolios that, for learners to be transitioned to the next level through portfolios, they need to be independent thinkers who can self-evaluate their work and unleash their ability to solve problems outside the classroom.

A road map. Two teachers, Teachers C and D, described a transition assessment portfolio as a guide that lists all the learners' activities and ways of implementing such activities. Teacher D explained, "It's a road map that tabulates all the activities that need to be done by a learner and how things should be executed over a given time." Hence, this approves that the transition assessment portfolio provides a roadmap for transition.

According to these two teachers, a transition assessment portfolio is a road map that defines the desired outcomes and includes the significant steps needed to reach them. Birgin and Baki (2007), Kubiszyn and Borich (2013), McMillan (2018), and Popham (2017) hold the same view that portfolios guide the activities to be executed and provide direction towards achieving learning targets.

Designed Document. Teacher A1 defined a transition assessment portfolio differently. He viewed it as a well-designed document for a teacher to quickly assess learners' work, understand it, and reflect on each learner's work before deciding to transition them to the next level of education. This is what this teacher said: "It is a document designed to shed light on or as a reflection of the work of an individual child. It is also designed to direct teachers to know what to assess." This interpretation is consistent with Afrianto (2017), who suggested that portfolios help teachers plan for assessment opportunities as they plan their instruction so that it becomes easy to promote learners at the end when targets are accomplished.

Teachers' Lack of Knowledge of a Transition Assessment Portfolio. According to these findings, some teachers, most of whom were Grade 8 teachers, appeared to have limited knowledge about a transition assessment portfolio. While some unsuccessfully attempted to define it, others did not even bother. For example, Teachers I and G did not attempt to describe it. Teacher E defined it as a file and Teacher F as a form.

A Portfolio as a File. Teacher E described a transition assessment portfolio as a file containing the learner's information. However, this teacher could not clarify this definition because he declared that he did not know much about this type of portfolio. This is what this teacher explained:

I heard about it while studying at one of South Africa's (SA) universities. I heard about it from my classmates, who are teachers in SA. I was uninterested in it because I knew it was not used in Lesotho. I had never been taught or trained about it, and we are not using it in my school. I do not know if anyone knows about it at my school.

This teacher, unfamiliar with portfolio assessment, might encounter challenges in understanding portfolio purpose, design, and implementation. Research highlights the importance of professional development and training for teachers like Teacher E to effectively implement portfolio assessments (Soifah & Pratolo, 2020).

A Portfolio as a Form. Teacher F described a transition assessment portfolio as a form that gives information about the qualities of a learner. According to the findings, Teacher F did not know much about portfolios. The teacher explained that he could only guess the definition because Grade 7 learners have been submitting forms when applying for Grade 8 admissions. This teacher also pointed out that, as a school, they knew about the policy that advocates for using transition assessment portfolios for learners' admission into Grade 8. So, from his point of view, a form that a learner submits for admission into Grade 8 is a transition assessment portfolio. He said they take those forms at his school, copy the learner's details, and throw away other papers that are submitted with that form. This is how this teacher explained it:

It's a form that describes the calibre of a child. We know about the policy and tried to use it around 2017, but we had no information about how it was developed or designed. Even the people from our primary school here did not have enough information about how it is done. So, we decided to have our interviews as a formality, but the reality is that we take all learners who have applied with E80A forms supplied by the District Education Office to primary schools around here.

Teacher I claimed he had heard about this strategy but knew little about it. This is what he said.

I heard about it from our neighbouring primary school teachers. Their kids bring some papers here that they say are portfolios. I cannot even describe it because we are uninformed about it. We just picked up the names of the applicants. We admit all the Grade 7 learners who have applied because we were told that we should take the children whose homes are around our school, those for whom our school is within their reach. We usually take those papers they say are portfolios, look at the names of the learners and the villages where they come from, and throw away those papers. We do not know what is written on those papers because we are not given workshops on using them.

Teacher G also indicated that he knew nothing about this type of portfolio. This is how he put it.

I've never heard of it and know nothing about its policy. I am only familiar with formative and summative evaluations. I do formative assessments in class and summative assessments at the end of each quarter, and then I prepare the reports, period!

These responses revealed that Grade 8 teachers were unprepared to use this assessment strategy. While the literature might not explicitly address teachers with no prior knowledge of portfolios, the fact is that teachers gain knowledge and skills through training, workshops, and support for portfolios (Soifah & Pratolo, 2020).

Contents of a Transition Assessment Portfolio. As part of their interpretation, teachers who participated in this study were also asked to describe the contents that should be included in a

transition assessment portfolio. Only the Grade 7 teacher participants responded to this question. For Grade 8 teacher participants, it became apparent with the first question that they lacked knowledge of this assessment strategy. As a result, they were excluded from the questions that followed. Grade 7 teacher participants listed the learner's academic and extra-curricular records, personal details of the learner, targeted competencies, assessment plan, and instruments as the important contents of the transition assessment portfolio. These sub-themes are presented herein.

Learner's Academic and Extra-Curricular Records. All Grade 7 teacher participants believed the transition assessment portfolio should include the learner's academic and extra-curricular records. They described learning academic records as the activities in which a learner was engaged, including assignments, homework, selected classwork, quizzes, and other types of coursework. , they indicated that these activities are some of the contents teachers should rely on when transitioning learners. This is how Teacher B put it: "We should include all the work that has shown academic growth and achievements, like weekly tests and quizzes, homework, and assignments." Teacher C indicated that these activities are arranged to make it easy for the teacher to use the collection to transition them. Teacher C said, "This work should be arranged to show the learner's progress and what a learner has accomplished. The achievements and all those things are compiled in a transition assessment portfolio."

Regarding extracurricular records, four (4) teacher participants suggested that learner achievements and interests in sports, art, and other interests should be included in the transition assessment portfolios. Teacher A1 justified this view by saying, "It should include extra-curricular activities, like talents and interests," while Teacher D summed it up by saying, "It's all about everything that talks about the learner as a whole, their entire school life, including extra activities outside the classroom like athletics." This finding is in line with Abend (2021), Hanifa (2017), and Marshall (2018), whose views are that, apart from academic activities, learners' success through engagement in the performing arts and extracurricular activities is equally important to their academic achievements.

Contrary to this view, Teacher B believed it unnecessary to include extra-curricular activities in a transition assessment portfolio because they only consider academic achievements when they promote learners to the next grade. She said, “Extra-mural activities should not be included in this portfolio because we are only concerned with academic issues needed for a child to be moved to the next class.”

Personal Details of a Learner. Teacher D was the only one who mentioned the personal details of a learner as one of the contents to be included in the transition assessment portfolio. She pointed out that the personal details of a learner should form the preliminary part of the contents of a transition assessment portfolio, and this should be included at the initial stage of the development of a portfolio. This teacher suggested that the following information about the learner be included: name, date of birth or age, gender, grade, and a subject done by the learner. Oja (2021) is of the same view that the transition assessment portfolio should specify the personal details of the owner of the portfolio on its first page. The other four participants were not sure about the personal details of a learner that should be included in a transition assessment portfolio.

Targeted Competencies. Only one (1) Grade 7 teacher participant, Teacher D, believed that targeted competencies should be part of a transition assessment portfolio. This teacher referred to targeted competencies in a transition assessment portfolio as the specific skills, knowledge, and abilities that learners should have possessed or developed during the transition process. She insisted that those competencies include self-awareness, decision-making, goal setting, transition planning, self-advocacy, research and information gathering, adaptability, and problem-solving. Hence, Teacher D’s response concurs with what Soifah and Pratolo (2020) reported: the competencies in a transition assessment portfolio help learners build a strong foundation for a successful transition by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge. Teacher D argued that this aspect is important because it shows the activities a learner is expected to have achieved in a certain subject to attain the end-of-level goal. She further pointed out that these targeted competencies should be given a timeframe within which they should have been developed.

Assessment plan and instruments. From Teacher D's responses, a researcher believed that a transition assessment portfolio should include the assessment plan used by the teachers and the tools used to assess what a learner achieved. The plan and the tools should indicate the number of times learners have been assessed, which should be indicated or evidenced by the number of learners' works. According to this participant, the plan is vital because it provides evidence that a learner was not surprised by the assessments. This is what she said:

A portfolio with an assessment plan shows that learners were given enough time to prepare themselves. Thus, knowing what is coming in advance gives learners more time to prepare. If they know what they are assessed on, they have enough time to prepare and stay organised. This assessment plan in a transition assessment portfolio also involves gathering information about an individual's skills, interests, preferences, and goals to help them transition from one education level to another. The assessment procedure also gathers information about a learner's skills, abilities, interests, and preferences to help them transition from one level of education to another.

Singh and Samad (2013b) and Virgin and Bharati (2020) also support the view that a portfolio should include a plan of assessment and the procedure for implementation.

4.3.2 Teachers' Experiences of Implementing Transition Assessment Portfolio

The participants were asked to give their views on their experiences while implementing a transition portfolio. From their responses, these themes emerged: benefits of a transition assessment portfolio; teachers' success in using a transition assessment portfolio; challenges experienced by teachers when implementing an assessment portfolio; and teachers' suggestions on how to remediate the challenges experienced during implementation. The themes are presented below.

Benefits of Transition Assessment Portfolio Strategy. Four (4) teacher participants in this study believed that where a transition assessment portfolio is adequately understood and used appropriately to assess a learner for the next level of education, it makes this work easy because everything about a learner and all evidence about his or her work is in one document. Teacher A1 further explained that compiling the learners' work helped a teacher identify their

weaknesses and strengths at the level at which the learners were transitioning. This is how he explained, “It shows the strengths and weaknesses of an individual child. It also includes extra-curricular activities, like talents and interests. It reflects the life of a child at school both academically and non-academically.” Hence, this cohort of participants further indicated that, in the end, the transition portfolio demonstrates the learners’ accomplishments and competencies.

Again, these four teacher participants viewed implementing the transition assessment portfolio as opening opportunities for teachers and learners to demand training for new skills. According to these teachers, if this strategy is done effectively, it can allow learners to acquire the self-critique skills needed to revise their work. This means it gives learners more time to prepare for their work and transition to the next level of education. Teacher D confirmed this by saying, “The transition assessment portfolio gives teachers a chance to have in-service training to upgrade their knowledge and skills and the learners an opportunity to revise their work before the final assessment.”

Teacher B also supported this, who explained that because learners are allowed to reflect on their work, they are likely to develop diverse skills that can enable them to improve their learning strategies and widen their chances of being transitioned to the next class. Hence, these teachers believed that a portfolio assessment strategy could help learners become independent thinkers who can self-evaluate their work and unleash their ability to solve problems outside the classroom. These benefits that the respondents stated were also reported by Afrianto (2017), Chere-Masopha (2022), and Eridafithri (2015). These scholars also attested that portfolios advance learners’ performance beyond the standard, giving them a better chance of transitioning to the next level of education.

4.3.3 Teachers’ Success in Using a Transition Assessment Portfolio

The teachers who participated in this study were asked if they successfully used a transition assessment portfolio to promote learners to the next level of education. Only Grade 7 teacher participants responded to this question. At the beginning of the interviews, the Grade 8 teacher participants proclaimed that they knew nothing about a transition assessment portfolio. As a result, they were again excluded from this question. The responses from three

Grade 7 teacher participants indicated that they successfully used this strategy. Teacher D avowed, “I think I successfully use this strategy because I am more knowledgeable and skilled to implement this type of assessment. I think my skills allow me to implement a portfolio.”

These teachers indicated that they acquired these skills in a teacher training programme to upgrade their qualifications at the National University of Lesotho. Teacher D indicated that she acquired the skills while working as a teacher in the Republic of South Africa (RSA). She specified that they were forced to use portfolios for teaching and assessment. She said:

My HOD (Head of Department) was the one who took the initiative to make sure that I understood how to execute or how to eer! (pause) What things I should put in, and how often I should be working with the learners concerning their portfolios. So, I was capacitated by my HOD. I think the way I was trained, I must say I don’t have a problem; I think I’m confident.

This response from Teacher D concurs with what Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022) reported in their findings. They reported that teachers who acquired some qualifications from South African institutions could implement portfolios. There was another teacher, Teacher B, who also claimed that she was confident and was successfully using this strategy. She pointed out that she was taught about portfolios when pursuing a B.ED. Primary degree at the National University of Lesotho.

On the contrary, two teacher participants, Teacher A1 and Teacher B, were sceptical of their knowledge and skills in using a transition assessment portfolio. They were not sure whether what they were doing was correct or not. Teacher A1 said, “I, personally, don’t know the correct portfolio design. I’m not sure whether the way I do it is correct or there are some elements that I’m missing.”

These teachers also believed that teachers (Grade 7 and Grade 8) who are expected to use this type of portfolio were not using it because they knew very little about it. Teacher A1 pointed out that they could not use this assessment strategy because the teachers were not well-equipped when it was introduced. According to this teacher, education officers held only one

workshop for teachers from a few selected schools. He proclaimed, “Teachers were not fully exposed to how the assessment would be carried out. We were not oriented on how to keep records of learners' learning through a portfolio.” Teacher B supported this by saying, “Few teachers who were workshopped from a few selected schools did not even disseminate information to other teachers because they did not fully understand what they were supposed to do.”

4.3.4 Teachers’ Challenges in Implementing Transition Assessment Portfolio

Five (5) teachers who participated in this study identified some challenges that they believed hindered the effective implementation of a transition assessment portfolio. All of them reported that the transition assessment portfolio was time-consuming. Teacher D supported this by reporting, “It takes much time to help each learner to develop a portfolio and monitor each of them.”

All these teacher participants also complained about its subjectivity, which they believed led to its unreliability in reporting learners’ abilities. This was affirmed by Teacher D, who said, “This strategy is not reliable when it comes to grading. Where five graders or more grade a learner’s portfolio, they are likely to come up with different scores.”

These teachers also pointed out that this portfolio's contents may not reflect learners’ capabilities, interests, and talents. They cited learners' achievements in homework as an example that can mislead teachers because they are not sure if it is the work of a learner or a parent. This is what Teacher C said:

When kids are given homework, I am not sure if they did it themselves or if they were assisted by their parents or guardians. So, though homework should be included in the portfolio, I do not think it honestly reflects a child’s abilities.

These views align with those of many scholars, such as Birgin and Baki (2007), Kalra et al. (2017), Mokhtaria (2015), Priscah et al. (2016), and Soifah and Pratolo (2020), who claim that teachers are reluctant to use portfolios in teaching and learning because they are time-consuming and do not reliably provide trustworthy information about learners’ abilities. They gave an example of homework, claiming that some parents do homework for their children.

Concerning grading, they pointed out that unless, as has been suggested by Haghghi (2016) and Nungani (2020), the marking rubrics that guide a grader are included in the portfolio, grading learners' work will remain highly subjective.

Teacher B's challenge was that where the scores were not given, as was the case, she could not determine the level of a learner (below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced level). This is what she said:

My lecturer at NUL who taught me to use this assessment strategy said there are no scores in a portfolio as a continuous assessment because it shows the progress of a child, but at the end, when we promote Grade 7 learners, we must specify if a child is below basic, basic, proficient, or advanced.

This teacher believed that scores should be awarded for every activity a learner participates in to determine a learner's level.

Apart from these general challenges, some sub-themes emerged from the participants' responses: teachers not using transition assessment portfolios, lack of teacher development, teacher-learner ratio, availability and access to the resources, and teachers' and learners' motivation.

Teachers not using transition assessment portfolios. All Grade 7 teacher participants complained that not all Lesotho teachers use transition assessment portfolios. They indicated that the policy was meant for the whole country, but when it came to implementing this assessment strategy, it was only piloted in Berea and Maseru districts. The other teachers in other districts did not bother to promote their learners through this assessment strategy as if it were optional. Teachers A1 and D complained that because there were no repercussions for teachers who did not use this strategy, many felt that they were not bound to use this assessment strategy, and as a result, they were not interested in learning about it or using it for the transition of their learners. The participants also indicated that those who did not use the transition assessment portfolio claimed that they could not see any significance in using this assessment strategy and that it added more load to their work. These findings are against

the reports of Enery (2017) and Hawkins and Agoncillo (2017) about the transition assessment portfolio, who reported the significance of the transition assessment portfolio. They reported that transition assessment portfolios comprehensively overview learners' skills, interests, and goals.

Lack of teacher development: All teachers (Grades 7 and 8) who responded to this question believed they were not trained enough to use this strategy. Some complained that they heard about portfolios after introducing the 2009 Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP). To emphasise this point, Teacher D said:

We were not sensitised about transition assessment portfolios. I just heard my principal tell the staff that the PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examination) will no longer be administered, so we have to use the portfolio to transition the learners to Grade 8.

This was supported by Teacher A2, who said, “Out of 23 teachers in our school, only one teacher was invited to attend a workshop that focused on the implementation of this strategy.” As the results further indicated, only a few Grade 7 teachers were invited to attend training on a transition assessment strategy. Grade 8 teacher participants reported that they were excluded from this training. Teacher F particularly emphasised this, who said, “There were no seminars, no in-service training, or any workshop for us, but we were told to admit Grade 8 learners after going through the portfolio of each child from Grade 7.”

The teacher participants believed there should have been an initiative by the Ministry of Education or relevant bodies to provide in-service training or advise the institutions of higher learning to design and develop courses that focus on using a portfolio in teaching, learning, and assessment. The findings align with Chere-Masopha’s and Mothetsi-Mothiba’s (2022), which revealed that Lesotho teachers received limited training on using portfolios in teaching and learning.

Teacher-learner ratio. All Grade 7 teacher participants mentioned a teacher-learner ratio as a challenge in implementing the transition assessment portfolio. They viewed a teacher-learner ratio as a barrier preventing a transition assessment portfolio from being efficiently

implemented in Lesotho schools. They all have the same perception that learners are so many to one teacher that it becomes impossible for learners to be promoted to the next level of education with this assessment strategy in Lesotho schools. The large number of learners in one class does not allow teachers to determine the actual performance of learners but instead promotes cheating and plagiarism. Teacher B explained this: "I actually say no, this strategy cannot be practically effective in our schools, simply because we, as teachers, won't assess all learners accurately because of their large numbers and the limited time we have."

However, this view was highlighted by Teacher D, who pointed out that, compared to public schools, private schools are better in terms of class sizes. Private school classes are small, so this assessment strategy can work. She, therefore, supported the view that it is not possible to implement the strategy in public schools because the teacher-learner ratio is unacceptable. This is what she said:

Public schools have many children. It's not easy to carry out this portfolio strategy; there are many public schools as opposed to private schools. You know, normally, they have numbers like eer! (pause)... thirty or thirty-five at most. However, imagine a teacher in a public school who has to organise portfolios for about sixty learners or more: it's taxing.

The main challenge these teachers saw with the large classes was that they could not give learners equal opportunities to be checked by one teacher. All Grade 7 teacher participants believed that classes with sizes ranging between 30 and 35 learners might be able to implement this strategy effectively. The teachers emphasised that with the current class sizes in the public schools, which range from 60 to 70, there is just no way this strategy could be effective. This observation that Lesotho primary teachers are discouraged from using portfolios because of the large class sizes has also been reported by Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022) and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2019).

Availability of and Access to Resources. Four (4) Grade 7 teachers mentioned inadequate resources as a challenge when implementing a transition assessment portfolio. They pointed out that most public primary schools in Lesotho are supplied with resource materials and human resources by the government. However, in most cases, the government fails to deliver

because of a shortage of funds. Hence, the resources are lacking. These participants indicated that the lack of resources at the school sometimes forces teachers to ask parents to provide resources such as files or folders for their children. However, there is usually some resistance from these parents, who say that the government introduced the Free Primary Education policy and, therefore, the government is responsible for everything. Some teachers explained that it is not all the parents who refuse. Sometimes the parents are poor themselves or are not even there to assist their children. This was emphasised by Teacher B, who said, “We cannot force children to buy such files because we know we teach needy kids, vulnerable kids, and orphans.”

All Grade 7 teacher participants agreed that private schools are in a better position regarding resources because parents who send their children to private schools can afford to pay for the material or school fees required by the school. Teacher C explained this by saying, “In private schools, this can be practical because resources such as money are there, and work can be carried out regularly. But in the public schools, it’s very hard.”

On the contrary, Teacher C believed that public primary schools have better access to resources because the government supplies free stationery. She viewed the Free Primary Education programme as an advantage for needy children. She believed that there should not be a problem for both teachers and learners to have access to resource materials because they are available and supplied by the government. This is what she said:

Since Lesotho provides Free Education in primary schools that the government supplies, there is a lot of stationery for kids to access. There are double sheets of lined paper that could be improvised as folders so that the compiled work of a learner can be put in them.

According to this participant, the Free Primary Education programme benefits public schools by providing them with the tools and access needed for transition assessment portfolios.

The other limited resource that the participants pointed out was understaffing. For example, two teachers pointed out that in some schools, one teacher was responsible for many classes because of understaffing. The government is only concerned with the school rolls, not what is necessary and transpiring at school.

The other limited resource that the participants pointed out was understaffing. For example, two teachers pointed out that in some schools, one teacher was responsible for many classes because of understaffing. The government is only concerned with the school rolls, not what is necessary and transpiring at school.

Teachers' and Learners' Motivation. All five (5) Grade 7 teacher participants claimed that teachers often lack interest in using the strategy because they lack the skills to use it. For instance, Teacher C said, "I am not prepared to use it, so I think even most teachers find it challenging because we do not know how to do it."

Some teachers even further indicated that because of this calibre of teachers, learners' motivation is another major challenge that has become a significant problem. They believed that Lesotho learners are so unmotivated that they have lost faith in their abilities and are not eager to do anything to improve their performance. The participants claimed that this challenge is sometimes caused by teachers' classroom strategies, which are often teacher-centred. According to these participants, teachers of this calibre lack interest in promoting effective teaching and learning and, in the process, demotivate even learners who otherwise would be enthusiastic about advancing beyond their learning scope. This was supported by Teacher D, who said, "A teacher who himself or herself is not motivated is a problem because she or he is unlikely to motivate a learner."

4.3.5 Suggestions to Overcome the Challenges

The participants were also asked how their listed challenges could be addressed. These participants suggested that:

- The Ministry of Education and Training should standardise how the portfolio is used to minimise subjectivity.
- The stakeholders should be engaged in the design of this strategy so that they all have a common understanding of how it works. This was empathised by Teacher C when she confirmed it by saying:

They should engage all the stakeholders to design the proper portfolio for Basotho children so that all the teachers have a common understanding of developing and designing a portfolio that promotes Grades 7s to Grade 8.

- Many teachers should be recruited so that the teacher-learner ratio is decreased, at least 35 to 40 learners in a classroom, to enable some activities to occur regarding the use of the strategy.
- Teachers should use teacher-learner-centred activities, such as regular conferences, to promote successful implementation.

These suggestions concur with the findings of Mothetsi-Mothiba (2019) that the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training should train teachers on the issues concerning portfolios, reduce the teacher-to-learner ratio, and inform parents about how portfolios work.

4.3.6 The Practicality of Using Transition Assessment Portfolio in Lesotho Schools

The participants were asked if, according to their experience, it was practical to implement this assessment strategy in Lesotho schools. All Grade 8 teacher participants did not respond to the question because they all proclaimed that they had never experienced the use of portfolios, as indicated earlier in this study. The question was only answered by Grade 7 teacher participants. From their responses, teachers believed that if teachers and learners were adequately prepared for this strategy, it could be successfully used in Lesotho classrooms. Four (4) teacher participants pointed out that teachers must first understand this portfolio and how it can benefit the whole school education system. For instance, Teacher A2 said, “For the portfolios to be successfully implemented, teachers must understand their benefits. As it is now, we do not understand its importance, and as a result, it is not quite practical in Lesotho schools.”

Teacher C supported this view, arguing that Lesotho is not ready to implement this assessment strategy. In her view, currently, this assessment strategy is not benefiting the school system in Lesotho because of all the barriers that have been outlined. This is what this teacher said:

In my view, I actually think it is not worth it for us to use it in the current situation. I think Lesotho has a long way to go before this strategy can be successful in the classroom. First of all, we, as teachers, have not only been involved when this strategy was deliberated and designed. As a result, this strategy has been met by the teachers who are supposed to implement it with challenges, hostility, and reluctance. Up to this point, only a few teachers have used this strategy.

This participant insisted that implementing this assessment strategy will never be effective unless the challenges are solved. Her argument is supported by the suggestions reported by Chere-Masopha (2022), Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba's (2022), and Mothetsi-Mothiba's (2019) studies that the implementation of portfolios will be successful in Lesotho schools when its challenges are overcome.

4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the results collected from ten teachers (five Grade 7 teachers and five Grade 8 teachers) through interviews. The introduction gave an overview of this chapter. The participants' profiles were described in the Participants' Profiles section. The presentation of results, which was a significant section, presented the findings of this study, and the summary (this section) summarised this chapter. The next chapter discusses the findings of this study. In the same chapter, conclusions were drawn, recommendations were made, and the limitations of this study were presented.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study investigated the perceptions of Lesotho Grade 7 and 8 teachers of a transition assessment portfolio used for Grade 7 learners' transition into Grade 8 in selected schools in the Berea and Maseru districts. Curriculum and assessment policy requires Grade 7 teachers to develop assessment portfolios for their learners. These portfolios are supposed to accompany learners during their transition into Grade 8. Grade 8 teachers should use these portfolios to inform themselves of the learners' abilities, interests, weaknesses, and skills. The schools where the Grade 7 and 8 teachers were recruited were purposively identified. Teachers that participated in this study were also purposively. A qualitative approach that used semi-structured interviews to collect data and a thematic approach to analyse data was used in this study. The following were the main questions asked in this study:

1. How do teachers interpret the assessment portfolio used for learner transition from one level of education to another?
2. What are the teachers' experiences of using this portfolio for learner transition?
3. What are teachers' views about the practicality of using this strategy in Lesotho schools?

Chapter 4 presented the findings of this study. This chapter discusses the findings of this study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations. The chapter is structured as follows: Introduction (this section), Major findings, Discussions, Conclusion, Limitations of the study, Recommendations for further studies, and Summary. The sections are presented hereafter.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section summarises the significant findings and discusses them in three folds: (1) teachers' interpretation of a portfolio as an assessment tool for learners' transition to the next level of education; (2) teachers' experiences of enacting a transition assessment portfolio; and (3) teachers' views about the practicality of using a transition assessment portfolio strategy in Lesotho schools.

5.2.1 Teachers' Interpretation of a Portfolio as an Assessment Tool for Learner's Transition to the Next Level of Education

This study established that only Grade 7 teachers knew about transition assessment portfolios. Grade 8 teachers knew nothing about this strategy, so they could not define or interpret it. In an attempt to interpret the assessment portfolio for transition, the Grade 7 interpretations varied widely; others defined it as (a) an assessment strategy used during learners' transition, (b) a compilation of the learner's work file, (c) a tool that gives out the full potential of a learner, or (d) a road map, and (e) a designed document. The study also established these teachers' views on what should be the contents of the transition assessment portfolio differed from learners' academic and extra-curricular records, personal details, targeted and achieved competencies, and an assessment plan that both a teacher and a learner followed.

These findings corroborate previous research. In previous studies, such as Chere-Masopha (2022), Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022), Mani (2016), Nitko and Brookhart (2014), Popham (2017) and Port (2021), teachers interpreted assessment portfolio as a strategy that contains evidence of learners' achievements and educational competencies. The findings also indicated that because Grade 7 teachers have different understandings, they used this strategy differently, according to how each understands it. This was also observed by Chere-Masopha (2022) and Chere-Masopha and Mothesi-Mothiba (2022), who reported that teachers use a portfolio strategy differently in the classroom because of their different understandings.

Moreover, for the contents that should be included in the transition assessment portfolio, the findings demonstrated that Grade 7 teachers focus on tests and examinations as portfolio content for transitioning learners. This understanding is also reported by Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022), who reported that Lesotho teachers still value and rely on traditional assessment methods, including summative tests and examinations.

5.2.2 Teachers' Successful Use of a Transition Assessment Portfolio

This study also discovered that Grade 7 teachers were using transition assessment portfolios for learner transition assessment. Grade 7 teachers developed and prepared transition assessment portfolios in preparation for learner transition assessment. Contrary to this, Grade 8 teachers knew nothing about this strategy. Further, because of their lack of knowledge, Grade 8 teachers do not use these portfolios when submitted for learner admission into secondary education. Basically, the study found that this strategy was used in a limited way for learners' transition into secondary education.

Teachers who participated in this study believed that teachers were not using this strategy because of their limited knowledge. Thus, they were ignorant of the benefits associated with this strategy. These findings are consistent with those reported by Chere-Masopha (2022), Chere-Masopha and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2022), and Mothetsi-Mothiba (2019) that even though some Lesotho teachers were aware of portfolios they had limited knowledge on how to define, interpret and implement them and the implementation of portfolios is influenced by their knowledge. This suggests that teachers' lack of knowledge led to poor implementation.

Nitko and Brookhart (2014), Port (2021), and Popham (2017) also reported similar results that portfolios improve learners' learning and development by allowing them to reflect on their work and develop strategies that enhance their learning experience. They attested that portfolios provide a comprehensive and holistic assessment of learners' skills, enabling them to set goals, monitor progress, and reflect on their learning experiences for examinations. They further attested that knowledgeable teachers tend to implement this strategy as intended. This means that when teachers are vigilant of the benefits of portfolios, they are likely to implement them successfully.

5.2.3 Factors Influencing the Unsuccessful Use of Transition Assessment by Teachers

The teachers identified many factors that influenced their unsuccessful use of a transition assessment portfolio, including limited time, knowledge, and skills, a high learner-teacher ratio, and limited resources required to implement this strategy. According to these teachers, these factors obstruct them from engaging learners equally, leading to learners' cheating and

dishonesty and submitting incomplete portfolios. Particularly, they attribute this to large class sizes and inadequate human resources.

The teachers believe that the reason this strategy is not successfully used could be associated with how teachers were prepared. Their view is that, when this strategy was introduced in schools, teachers were not well informed about it. Thus, there is a need to address their lack of knowledge and skills. They emphasised the importance of proper training and involvement in the decision-making relating to this strategy. They also pointed out a need for policymakers to reconsider reducing the learner-teacher ratio or class size if they want to see this strategy successfully used by teachers.

The views of these teachers were also reported by Hanifa (2017), Lam (2018a, 2018b), and McMillan (2018). The studies reported that teachers with limited knowledge about assessment portfolios could cause inaccurate evaluations, biased evaluations, limited feedback, and misaligned instruction, resulting in suboptimal learning outcomes and reduced engagement. These scholars also advocated for proper teacher training and professional development. For example, McMillan (2018) attested that addressing concerns and providing information about transition assessment portfolios can help teachers understand their benefits.

5.2.4 Teachers' Views on the Realism of Using Transition Assessment Portfolio in Lesotho Schools

This study established that teachers believed implementing transition assessment portfolios was impractical in Lesotho schools because of the prevailing conditions. They believed a transition assessment portfolio could only succeed if the issues outlined in the preceding sections were addressed. These include teachers being adequately prepared in attitude, knowledge, and skill; reducing class sizes; providing necessary resources; reducing teachers' workload; and providing all the stakeholders in education with training that gives them essential awareness of the reform.

These findings are in line with Virgin and Bharati (2020), who reported that implementing a transition assessment portfolio with limited knowledge can present several challenges, such as lack of understanding, inadequate assessment tools, inconsistent data collection, inaccurate

interpretation, incomplete or irrelevant goals, and limited resources and supports. Their study established that these issues can lead to incomplete or inaccurate information being included, reducing the portfolio's effectiveness. To address these issues, these scholars believed it was essential to understand the purpose, content, and methodologies of creating a transition assessment portfolio. This says that for the transition assessment portfolio to be effectively practical in Lesotho schools, teachers should be trained, collaborate with other professionals, and consult sources of knowledge like books, articles, and the internet because limited knowledge will not help the schools in this country prosper using this assessment strategy.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The study examined Grade 7 and Grade 8 teachers' perceptions of portfolios as an assessment strategy for learners' transition to the next level of education in Lesotho schools. Thus, the objectives of this study were: (1) to investigate how teachers interpret the assessment portfolio used for learner transition from one level of education to another; (2) to explore the teachers' experiences enacting a transition assessment portfolio; and (3) to explore teachers' views about the practicality of using a transition assessment portfolio strategy in Lesotho schools.

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that Grade 7 teachers in Lesotho have limited knowledge about transition assessment portfolios, while Grade 8 teachers absolutely lack knowledge. Grade 7 teachers have varying interpretations of this strategy, so their approach to this strategy differs. In addition, the study concludes that the portfolios that Grade 7 teachers develop for learners' transitions are not used during their admission into Grade 8. This is due to the Grade 8 teachers' lack of knowledge about this strategy.

This study concludes that teachers are not motivated to use this strategy because they believe it is impractical to use it in Lesotho schools due to current schools' conditions. Some conditions in Lesotho schools are teachers' limited knowledge and skills, high learner-teacher ratio, and limited resources. Addressing challenges through proper teacher preparation, class size reduction, provision of resources, and reducing teachers' workload could benefit implementing this strategy.

In conclusion, this study has established that teachers are not using transition assessment portfolios for Grade 7 learners' transition into Grade 8 due to the current above mentioned conditions in the schools that make it impractical for teachers to use it. This also implies that schools were not adequately prepared when this strategy was introduced through the Curriculum and Assessment Policy of 2009 in the education system in Lesotho.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the qualitative character of this study, there were some limitations. First, the number of participants in this study was too small to represent teachers in Lesotho or even the districts from which they were recruited. Only ten teachers from nine schools in the Berea and Maseru districts of Lesotho were selected to participate in this study. Because of these limitations, this study cannot generalise its findings.

Further, data collected through interviews only depended on what participants said when they shared their experiences with the transition assessment portfolios. There was also a chance that the participants concealed incidents that might have cast them as poor teachers. It is also possible that some teachers exaggerated their experiences. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalised. Hence, combining different data collection and analysis methods might have produced more and richer findings.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that both Grade 7 and 8 teachers be exposed to seminars, workshops, or in-service training on the assessment portfolio strategy for learners' transition. Secondly, the study recommends that policymakers develop guidelines that specify how schools should implement this strategy. Due to the limitations identified in the methodology used in this study, future research with the same focus should employ other approaches, such as quantitative or mixed methods approaches. Also, multiple qualitative methods such as combining interviews, observations and documents analysis could be used to allow numerous interpretations and meanings and to increase the credibility of the findings (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Yeong et al., 2018; Privitera, 2017; Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2019).

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the findings of this study. These findings answered the questions set at the beginning of this study. In addition, the discussion compared the findings of this study to those of previous studies. Based on this discussion, the conclusions have been drawn. This chapter also highlighted the study's limitations. Recommendations for practice, policymakers, and future research in this area have been outlined.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter to the principals

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

Telephone: +266 22340601/3631

Fax: +266 22340000

<http://www.nul.ls>



P.O. Roma 180

Lesotho

Africa

Postgraduate Research Studies

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

21 December 2022

Dear School Principal,

My name is 'Mathabo Julia Chere-Masopha, a Postgraduate Research Programme Coordinator and the supervisor of Mr Thamae Makau (200705414) whom I would like to introduce to you. Mr Thamae is a postgraduate student who is enrolled in the Master of Education Programme in the Faculty of Education. Mr. Thamae is investigating *Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Transition Assessment Portfolio as part of his study* The Faculty has approved his research proposal and he has identified your school/schools in Maseru/Berea District as a site for possible data collection for his study. On behalf of the Faculty of Education and Mr Makau, I am requesting that your good office allows him to collect data for his proposed study.

Should you require additional information regarding Mr Thamae and his study, please contact me using one of the following contacts:

Mobile #: 5775 6658

Email address: juliachere@gmail.com.

Yours Faithfully,

Julia Chere-Masopha (PhD)

Appendix B

Consent Letter to the Principals

Dear Principal

I am Lefa Thamae (200705414), a Master's student in the Education Foundations (EDF) department, Faculty of Education, at the National University of Lesotho. I am researching *Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Transition Assessment Portfolio in the Selected Schools in Two Lesotho Districts*. I kindly request that you allow me to interview one of your Grade 7 teachers for my study at your school. Your school was selected because it is one of the schools using Grade 7 learners' portfolios to transition learners to Grade 8. Again, I kindly request that you allow me to interview a Grade 7 teacher.

Your Grade 7 teacher's participation will be voluntary. Also, note that the discussion session in this study will be recorded to assist in gathering the information so I can concentrate on our discussion. However, a teacher participant should feel free to object to the audio recording if he/she is uncomfortable. I will take some notes as we talk. The discussion session is intended to take a maximum time of 1 hour. Your participation will be highly valued.

For a teacher's identity and confidentiality of the information he/she will provide, be assured that they and your school will be protected. In case you are not happy with the way your teacher is treated in the study interviews or would like to withdraw your teacher from participating, you can contact the following people:

Dr Chere- Masopha (My supervisor and Postgraduate Research Programme Coordinator), juliachere@gmail.com, +266 2234 3390

Dr Tlali (Head of Educational Foundations Department) tebello58@gmail.com, 58858380

Dr Mosia (Dean of Faculty of Education), mosia296@gmail.com, +266 2234 3631

Yours Faithfully



Lefa Thamae (A scholar)

Appendix C**Teachers' Statement of Consent**

I agree to participate in this study. The research study and the procedures that will be conducted have been explained to me and understood. My participation in the study is voluntary, and I may choose to answer only the questions I feel comfortable with, and I can discontinue or withdraw participation at any time.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Title: Exploring Teachers' Perceptions of a Portfolio as Learner Assessment Strategy for Transition into the Next Grade in the Selected Schools in Lesotho

Introduction

This interview aims to understand how you perceive a learner assessment portfolio as a strategy used during the Grade 7 learners' transition into Grade 8. In this interview, you will be asked about your views on a learner assessment portfolio as an assessment strategy to promote Grade 7 learners to the next level of education. Your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential, and the interview will take 15-20 minutes to complete. I will be recording the session because I do not want to miss any of the information you provide (Afterwards, I will transcribe the interview and send the transcript to you for approval).

SECTION 1: PERSONAL BACKGROUND

This section collects information about your personal and educational details. Please tick the appropriate option or write your answer in the space provided.

1.1 BIOLOGICAL TRAITS

1.1.1 Age:

- Under 20
- From 20 – 29
- From 30 – 39
- From 40 – 49
- From 50 – 59
- From 60 – 69

1.1.2 Gender:

- Male
- Female

1.2 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

1.2.1 Highest teaching qualification:

- Certificate
- Diploma in Education
- Higher Diploma in Education (Primary)
- B.ED (Primary)
- B.ED (Secondary)
- B.ED. Hons
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate

1.3 TEACHING BACKGROUND

1.3.1 Years of teaching experience

- 1 – 2 Years
- 3 – 5 Years
- 6 and more

1.3.2 Which Grade do you teach?

- Grade 7
- Grade 8

1.3.3 District of the School

- Berea
- Maseru

1.3.4 Proprietor of the school

- Government School (GS)
- Roman Catholic Church (RCC)
- Lesotho Evangelical Church Southern Africa (LECSCA)
- Anglican Church of Lesotho (ACL)
- Seventh Day Adventist (SDA)
- Private School (PS)

SECTION 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GRADE 7 TEACHERS

2.1 Teachers' interpretation of a portfolio as an assessment tool for learners' transition from one to another level of education

- a. How would you describe a portfolio meant to assess learners during the transition from one to another level of education?
- b. Explain the contents that should be included in this type of portfolio.
- c. From your viewpoint, which aspects of a learner's learning records do you find essential to include in this type of portfolio and why?

2.2 Teachers' experiences of implementing a transition assessment portfolio

- a) Based on your experience, what are the benefits of an assessment portfolio during learners' transition to another level of education?
- b) What are the challenges encountered during the implementation of portfolio assessment during the learners' transition into Grade 8?
- c) What could be your suggestion for implementing a transition assessment portfolio effectively?

2.3 How practical is it to implement (develop) this type of portfolio in Lesotho schools in terms of:

- a) Teachers' knowledge and skills?
- b) Availability of and access to resources?
- c) Learner calibre (interest, abilities, motivation)?
- d) Learner-teacher ratio

3. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GRADE 8 TEACHERS

3.1 Teachers' interpretation of a portfolio as an assessment strategy for learners' transition from one to another level of education

- a. How would you describe a portfolio meant to assess learners during the transition from one to another level of education?
- b. Explain the contents that should be included in this type of portfolio.

- c. From your viewpoint, which aspects of a learner's learning records do you find essential to include in this type of portfolio and why?

3.2 Teachers' experiences of implementing a transition assessment portfolio

- a) Based on your experience, what are the benefits of an assessment portfolio during Grade 7 learners' transition into Grade 8?
- b) Describe the challenges you encounter when using this type of portfolio to assess learners and their implications on the quality of assessment.
- c) What could be your suggestion for effectively implementing the transition assessment portfolio when you admit Grade 7 learners into Grade 8?

3.3 The practicality of a learner assessment portfolio for transition in Lesotho schools

- a) How practical is it to implement (develop) this type of portfolio in Lesotho schools in terms of:
- i. Teachers' knowledge and skills?
 - ii. Availability of and access to resources?
 - iii. Learner calibre (interest, abilities, motivation)?
- b) According to your viewpoint, how accurately does this portfolio reflect the learners' capabilities, strengths, interests, and weaknesses?

How do you find the suitability of this assessment strategy for the Lesotho Education system?

CLOSING QUESTIONS

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

Thank you for answering my questions.

Appendix E

Turnitin Results

Teachers perceptions of a transition assessment strategy			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
9%	7%	4%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	Julia Chere-Masopha, Lipuo Mothetsi-Mothiba. "Teachers' experiences of using a portfolio for teaching, learning, and assessment in Lesotho primary schools", <i>Cogent Education</i> , 2022 Publication		1%
2	www.ccsenet.org Internet Source		1%
3	Julia Chere-Masopha. "A Survey of Teachers' Perceptions of a Learning Portfolio in Lesotho Classrooms", <i>International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research</i> , 2022 Publication		1%
4	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source		<1%
5	hdl.handle.net Internet Source		<1%
6	Charles Kivunja. "Distinguishing between Theory, Theoretical Framework, and		<1%

Appendix F

English Language editors's letter



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

27 July 2023

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

Dear Madam

Re: Copy-editing of Mr Lefa Thamae's MEd dissertation titled: *Teachers' Perceptions of Learner*

Transition Assessment Portfolio in the Selected Schools in Two Lesotho Districts

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

Yours sincerely

Tankie Khalanyane (Mr)
Senior Lecturer, EDF & B Ed Honours Coordinator