



# Navigating a New Terrain: Exploring the Challenges Confronting Lesotho's Novice Secondary School Principals

Sepiriti Sepiriti<sup>1</sup> , Kelello Alicia Rakolobe<sup>1</sup>  & Tebello Tlali<sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> National University of Lesotho, Lesotho.

## ABSTRACT

Secondary school principals in Lesotho are tasked with specific duties generally aimed at promoting potency while scaffolding the development of skills and socially acceptable attitudes among the youth. Principals are therefore expected to lead various activities in order to achieve sustainable learning environments. Despite the magnitude of their responsibilities, novice principals are often susceptible to various challenges and hurdles while carrying out these responsibilities. To unearth the school-based administrative challenges and issues confronting novice principals in Lesotho, this qualitative study employed narrative research design to capture their lived experiences. Social Justice (SJ) theory, as the main philosophical underpinning, and Organisational Socialisation (OS) theory as the secondary lens were adopted as theoretical stances for this study. Ten novice principals who were in the first two years of their appointment were purposively identified from secondary schools in the Maseru district. The selected principals were interviewed through semi-structured interviews. Using the inductive thematic data analysis approach, some of the findings revealed that some novice principals in Lesotho secondary schools are continually confronted with challenges that include teachers' resistance to change, demoted principals' animosity, and poor recording of school finances. The study recommends prompt processing and issuing of appointment letters and aligned salaries, induction of novice principals, training of school boards and transfer of demoted principals. The current study provides a novel contribution to literature by not only focusing on the key challenges confronting novice principals in Lesotho secondary schools as they sought to create sustainable learning environments but by further suggesting context-based remedies to the identified predicaments.

### Correspondence

Sepiriti Sepiriti

Email: [s.sepirti@yahoo.com](mailto:s.sepirti@yahoo.com)

### Publication History

Received: 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2024

Accepted: 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2025

Published online:  
28<sup>th</sup> March, 2025

**Keywords:** *Challenges, Leadership, Novice Principals, Secondary Schools*

## INTRODUCTION

The vision of the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in Lesotho entails developing “a literate and productive society with well-grounded moral and ethical values.”<sup>1</sup> Schools, as a result, occupy a strategic position to influence the realisation of this vision hence the argument that education is an

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education and Training, *Education Sector Plan 2016 – 2026* (Lesotho: Government of Lesotho, 2016), 22. [https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=sites/default/files/education\\_sector\\_plan\\_2016-2026\\_lesotho\\_0.pdf](https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=sites/default/files/education_sector_plan_2016-2026_lesotho_0.pdf).

essential tool that enables personal, national and global development.<sup>2</sup> The provision of education is intended to bring about sustainable development in all aspects of life. The discourse of sustainability, as captured in the 2015-2030 agenda, advocates an equitable future irrespective of one's position in life.<sup>3</sup> Among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 4 offers an outline for the provision of quality education to all. Schools, through principals as instructional leaders, are therefore expected to ensure quality teaching and learning activities.<sup>4</sup> In Lesotho, principals are tasked with interwoven roles. Despite the assortment of these roles as indicated in the Education Act of 2010, they can generally be viewed as initiatives aimed towards the creation of sustainable learning environments. Sustainable learning environments are conceptualised as those that prioritise instructional activities for the attainment of goals.<sup>5</sup> Thus, they involve the creation and maintenance of collaborative engagement between and among stakeholders, mainly principals, teachers, learners and parents. The central agenda of a sustainable learning environment is to achieve sustainability and excellence in teaching and learning processes.

Principals, as a consequence, are expected to be efficient in their jobs of facilitating the creation of a sustainable learning environment. However, the idea of sustainability in learning processes may remain elusive, given the discovery that novice principals in particular are continually challenged.<sup>6</sup> During the transition process from being a teacher to a principal, an individual is prone to some difficulties. As a consequence, the trajectory of this study was ignited by the realisation of the dearth of research on the challenges of novice principals in Lesotho despite the surge of scholarship in other contexts.<sup>7</sup> Against the above perspective, the current study investigates the challenges encountered by novice secondary school principals in their pursuit to create sustainable learning environments and the possible remedies to these challenges in the Lesotho context. To achieve this aim, the study is guided by the following research questions:

- Which challenges do novice secondary school principals encounter while attempting to create a sustainable learning environment in Lesotho secondary schools?
- Which support mechanisms could be used to mitigate challenges encountered by Lesotho's novice secondary school principals?

<sup>2</sup> Makeresemese Mahlomaholo and Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "Creating Sustainable Posthuman Accounting Learning Environments: The Case for Green Accounting in South Africa," *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 6, no. 1 (2024): 90–101.

<sup>3</sup> Mahlomaholo and Mahlomaholo, "Creating Sustainable Posthuman Accounting Learning Environments: The Case for Green Accounting in South Africa."

<sup>4</sup> Godfrey Memela and Labby Ramathan, "The Perspective of School Leadership and Management: The Role of the School Principal in Academic Learner Performance," *South African Journal of Education* 42, no. 2 (2022): 1–8; Raj Mestry, "Principals' Perspectives and Experiences of Their Instructional Leadership Functions to Enhance Learner Achievement in Public Schools," *Journal of Education (University of KwaZulu-Natal)*, no. 69 (2017): 257–80; Yerbol Sarmurzin, Gulbakhyt Menlibekova, and Ainur Orynbeikova, "'I Feel Abandoned': Exploring School Principals' Professional Development in Kazakhstan," *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher* 32, no. 5 (2023): 629–39; Sepiriti Sepiriti, "Exploring the Predominantly Used Educational Management and Leadership Models in Selected Secondary Schools in Lesotho," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Explorer* 1, no. 10 (2021): 70–77; Sepiriti Sepiriti, "Considering Emotional Intelligence as a Leadership Competency for Lesotho Secondary School Principals," *European Journal of Educational Management* 6, no. 1 (2023): 1–13; Tebello Tlali and Ntjoetso Matete, "The Challenges Faced by Heads of Departments in Selected Lesotho High Schools," *School Leadership & Management* 41, no. 3 (May 27, 2021): 194–210.

<sup>5</sup> Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "Early School Leavers and Sustainable Learning Environments in Rural Contexts," *Perspectives in Education* 30, no. 1 (2012): 101–10.

<sup>6</sup> Mito Atieno and Enose Simatwa, "Challenges Faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Bondo District, Kenya: An Analytical Study," *Educational Research* 3, no. 4 (2012): 388–401; Munira Abeid, "Issues and Challenges Experienced by Newly Appointed Secondary School Principals and the Strategies Used to Cope in Mombasa Country, Kenya," *Unpublished Thesis of Masters of Education*. Kenyatta University, Kenya, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Ramnan Saidun, Lokman Tahir, and Mohammed Musah, "Problems Faced by Novice Principals in Malaysia: An Exploration Study," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2015; Malesela Gilbert Sepuru and Mokgadi Agnes Mohlakwana, "The Perspectives of Beginner Principals on Their New Roles in School Leadership and Management: A South African Case Study," *South African Journal of Education* 40, no. 2 (May 31, 2020): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v40n2a1755>; James Spillane and Linda Lee, "Novice School Principals' Sense of Ultimate Responsibility," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (2014): 431–65; Lokman Mohd Tahir et al., "Initial Challenges and Possible Useful Countering Strategies: Perspectives From Malaysian Novice Principals," *Sage Open* 11, no. 1 (2021); M. F. B. Hernandez, "Dominican Public-School Novice Principals' Description of Their Early Career Experiences and the Needs Entering the Principalship" (Western Michigan University, 2020).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Shoho and Barnett, novice principals are conceptualised as those who are in the first three years of their appointment.<sup>8</sup> These new appointees are expected to perform various duties for schools to remain competitive and relevant. However, research reveals that some novice principals lack the essential skills to lead the implementation and management of the enacted curriculum.<sup>9</sup> Their incompetency often leads to poor learner performance at the national examinations.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, according to Jerdborg, novice principals' competencies and experiences are not aligned with practice.<sup>11</sup> Thus, research further hints that novice principals struggle with managing teachers and other non-academic personnel as well as applying education laws.<sup>12</sup> Research further demonstrates that these principals do not only struggle to appreciate various leave applications but are further challenged to equitably allocate teaching loads given individual teachers' talents.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the literature indicates that novice principals grapple with the management of finances resulting in mishandling and misappropriating school funds.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, novice principals are challenged by staff resistance to change in routines and school culture.<sup>15</sup> The novice principals' resilience is further challenged by learners. To this effect, previous research revealed that learners have tested novice principals by vandalising school property and causing unrest.<sup>16</sup> The literature further reveals that novice principals are often strained due to professional isolation.<sup>17</sup> In addition, research shows that novice principals are pressurised by various stakeholders to match or surpass the legacy left by their predecessors.<sup>18</sup>

To mitigate the challenges confronting novice principals, research suggests the introduction of rigorous induction and mentorship programmes.<sup>19</sup> In such induction programmes, experts share the best leadership practices that alleviate trauma and loneliness among novice principals. Similar induction programmes have proven to enhance principals' performance in areas including management

<sup>8</sup> Alan Shoho and Bruce Barnett, "The Realities of New Principals: Challenges, Joys, and Sorrows," *Journal of School Leadership* 20, no. 5 (2010): 561–96.

<sup>9</sup> Shoho and Barnett, "The Realities of New Principals: Challenges, Joys, and Sorrows"; Sepuru and Mohlakwana, "The Perspectives of Beginner Principals on Their New Roles in School Leadership and Management: A South African Case Study."

<sup>10</sup> Atieno and Simatwa, "Challenges Faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Bondo District, Kenya: An Analytical Study."

<sup>11</sup> Stina Jerdborg, "Novice School Principals In Education And Their Experiences Of Pedagogical Leadership In Practice," *Journal of Leadership Education* 22, no. 1 (January 15, 2023): 131–48, <https://doi.org/10.12806/V22/I1/R8>.

<sup>12</sup> Sepuru and Mohlakwana, "The Perspectives of Beginner Principals on Their New Roles in School Leadership...."

<sup>13</sup> Sepuru and Mohlakwana, "The Perspectives of Beginner Principals on Their New Roles in School Leadership...."

<sup>14</sup> Atieno and Simatwa, "Challenges Faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Bondo District, Kenya: An Analytical Study"; Sepuru and Mohlakwana, "The Perspectives of Beginner Principals on Their New Roles in School Leadership and Management: A South African Case Study"; Shoho and Barnett, "The Realities of New Principals: Challenges, Joys, and Sorrows"; Spillane and Lee, "Novice School Principals' Sense of Ultimate Responsibility."

<sup>15</sup> Spillane and Lee, "Novice School Principals' Sense of Ultimate Responsibility"; Linda Lee, "School Performance Trajectories and the Challenges for Principal Succession," *Journal of Educational Administration* 53, no. 2 (2015): 262–86; Qaiser Suleman and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, "Managerial Challenges Faced by Fresh Directly Appointed Secondary School Heads in Kohat Division, Pakistan," *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 5, no. 5 (2015): 91–104; Gilbert Arrieta and Inero Ancho, "Ready or Not: The Experiences of Novice Academic Heads in School Leadership," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 19, no. 5 (2020): 78–98.

<sup>16</sup> Atieno and Simatwa, "Challenges Faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Bondo District, Kenya"; Abeid, "Issues and Challenges Experienced by Newly Appointed Secondary School Principals and the Strategies Used to Cope in Mombasa Country, Kenya"; Clelia Pineda-Báez et al., "Challenges Facing Novice Principals: A Study in Colombian Schools Using a Socialisation Perspective," *Issues in Educational Research* 29, no. 1 (2019): 205–22.

<sup>17</sup> Tshupo Bathuleng, "Induction for Newly Appointed School Heads in Primary Schools in Botswana—the Case of Mahalapye Sub-Region," 2016; Lee, "School Performance Trajectories and the Challenges for Principal Succession"; Spillane and Lee, "Novice School Principals' Sense of Ultimate Responsibility."

<sup>18</sup> M. Davidson, "South Australian Primary School Principals Reflect on Their Experiences and Support during Their Socialization into the Principalship" (Flinders University of South Australia, 2016); P. Edwards, "The Preparation, Experiences and Challenges of Novice Principals in Ontario's Small Rural School" (University of Toronto, 2016); Tahir et al., "Initial Challenges and Possible Useful Countering Strategies: Perspectives From Malaysian Novice Principals."

<sup>19</sup> Johan Wiehahn and Pierre Du Plessis, "Professional Development of Newly-Appointed Principals at Public High Schools in Gauteng. Is Social Justice Served?," *Koers: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship= Koers: Bulletin Vir Christelike Wetenskap* 83, no. 1 (2018): 1–11; Arrieta and Ancho, "Ready or Not: The Experiences of Novice Academic Heads in School Leadership"; Tahir et al., "Initial Challenges and Possible Useful Countering Strategies: Perspectives From Malaysian Novice Principals."

of learners' discipline and instructional leadership in Tanzania.<sup>20</sup> In addition, training programmes are likely to further equip novice principals with essential competencies on aspects essential for effective school leadership.<sup>21</sup>

Previous research also suggests that novice principals should liaise with their more experienced counterparts for mentorship to gain relevant and context-based essential competencies.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it is suggested that some hardships confronting novice principals could be mitigated through recreational activities.<sup>23</sup> These activities will not only assist in establishing rapport between novice principals and teachers but will further enable expectations from both parties to be communicated. It is further highlighted that novice principals should also adopt more of a participatory leadership style than autocracy. These approaches will enable novice principals to elicit support from all stakeholders in developing school programmes.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by the theoretical grounding that triangulates Social Justice Theory (SJ) and Organisational Socialisation Theory (OST). On one hand, the pursuance of SJ, among others, is to achieve fairness, respect for others, good relationships, sensitivity to human rights and equal distribution of resources and privileges.<sup>24</sup> SJ is grounded on the ultimate processes of creating an enabling and supportive school environment underpinned by equal principles of SJ for novice principals to succeed in their new roles.<sup>25</sup> SJ therefore is aimed at confronting oppressive school cultures, structures and stakeholders' interactions that often marginalise novice principals.<sup>26</sup>

The foregoing suggests that the challenges peculiar to novice principals in Lesotho secondary schools are not random but are produced and maintained by the social injustices embedded in school culture, structures, priorities, expectations and interactions between and among stakeholders. These injustices over time create challenges that novice principals are confronted with. Such challenges may include discrimination, insubordination, lack of resources, either physical or fiscal, and violation of fundamental human rights. As a result, the emancipatory nature of SJ enables interrogating the injustices in terms of structural organization and culture, stakeholders' priorities, expectations and interactions that continually inhibit novice principals from facilitating the creation of sustainable learning environments.<sup>27</sup> These values are collectively concerned with creating equal opportunities and participation of novice principals in particular without exclusion.<sup>28</sup> With this advocacy, novice principals will not only be accepted but will further be supported by all structures while leading the instructional activities for the creation of sustainable learning environments.

SJ is therefore not only considered in this study because of its ability to unpack the origin of challenges facing novice principals in Lesotho secondary schools but also because of its advocacy for schools and stakeholders reform.<sup>29</sup> SJ, as a consequence, is considered in this study not only because

<sup>20</sup> F. Micheal and R. Kitula, "Influence of Leadership Induction Training on the Performance of Newly Appointed Heads of Public Secondary Schools in Arusha City Council," *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education* 6, no. 3 (2022): 184–93.

<sup>21</sup> Govinda Lingam and Narsamma Lingam, "Leadership and Management Training for School Heads: A Milestone Achievement for Fiji," *International Studies in Educational Administration* 42, no. 2 (2014): 1–17.

<sup>22</sup> Atieno and Simatwa, "Challenges Faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Bondo District, Kenya: An Analytical Study"; M. Dayson, "Principals' Experiences in Managing Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Mopami District" (University of Pretoria, 2016); Bathuleng, "Induction for Newly Appointed School Heads in Primary Schools in Botswana—the Case of Mahalapye Sub-Region."

<sup>23</sup> Tahir et al., "Initial Challenges and Possible Useful Countering Strategies: Perspectives From Malaysian Novice Principals."

<sup>24</sup> Emma Barnett and Kevin Teise, "Initial Teacher Education for Social Justice in South Africa: A Higher Education Policy Perspective," *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 6, no. 1 (2024): 72–89; Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "Creating Sustainable Teacher Education Ecologies: A People's Education for People's Power Reimagined," *Southern African Review of Education with Production* 22, no. 1 (2016): 9–26.

<sup>25</sup> Mahlomaholo, "Creating Sustainable Teacher Education Ecologies: A People's Education for People's Power Reimagined."

<sup>26</sup> R. Govender and N. Mathukrishna, "Towards Sustainable Learning Environment: Deconstructing Discourses of Social Justice in the English Home Language Classroom," *Communitas* 17 (2012): 21–44.

<sup>27</sup> Barnett and Teise, "Initial Teacher Education for Social Justice in South Africa: A Higher Education Policy Perspective."

<sup>28</sup> Adri Du Toit, "Entrepreneurial Learning: Creating Value towards Social Justice," *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 5, no. 3 (December 24, 2023): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.46303/repam.2023.18>.

<sup>29</sup> Barnett and Teise, "Initial Teacher Education for Social Justice in South Africa: A Higher Education Policy Perspective."

it provides tools designed to understand the injustices and inequality constraining novice principals from effectively undertaking their duties but also to provide guidelines for mitigating them.

Organisational Socialisation Theory (OST), on the other hand, is conceptualised as an interactive process whereby novice principals are equipped with specific competencies to carry out their duties.<sup>30</sup> OST includes processes that entail the induction of novice principals on the distinctive characteristics, practices, roles of stakeholders, legislations and stakeholders' expectations.<sup>31</sup> In this way, novice principals will be equipped with essential competencies to improve their efficiency while creating sustainable learning environments.

Additionally, OST is based on the premise that through socialisation processes, a balance is struck between novice principals' prospects and the realities of being a principal.<sup>32</sup> Thus, OST proposes that novice principals should be prepared so that they can comprehend the job requirements, school culture, stakeholders' expectations, values and mission of schools.<sup>33</sup> The socialisation process could be structured or unstructured. With structured processes, the formal procedures for socialising novice principals are followed.

Additionally, teacher training institutions can also design their programmes in a manner that will permit both the student teachers and practicing teachers to be vigorously trained on school leadership issues. On the other hand, the unstructured socialisation processes imply that novice principals are responsible for their induction. In this model, the novice principals are left on their own to 'drown or swim'. With the above in perspective, it could be argued that the challenges encountered by Lesotho's novice secondary school principals are perpetuated by inadequately structured socialisation. This means the self-socialisation of novice principals becomes difficult because they have no point of reference. Therefore, to mitigate the challenges encountered by these principals, structured socialisation should be prioritised.

In the context of the above, SJ and OST allow the study to cover a wide spectrum on the challenges novice principals encounter. These theoretical lenses argue that the challenges confronting novice principals as they navigate the school leadership terrain in Lesotho are produced and sustained by both injustices in schools and the extent of novice principals' socialisation processes. This triangulation is beneficial in this study because a variety of perspectives crippling the novice principal's ability to create a sustainable learning environment will be unpacked and explained. These theoretical lenses further complement each other on the mechanisms to mitigate challenges confronting novice principals in Lesotho secondary schools. With the above in perspective, these theories provide a perfect theoretical triangulation for this study not only to explore the challenges Lesotho's novice secondary school principals are confronted with but also to suggest possible strategies for mitigating these challenges.

## METHODOLOGY

To explore the challenges encountered by novice principals in Lesotho secondary schools and the possible strategies to ease these challenges, this qualitative study adopted a narrative design. This design enabled the lived experiences of novice principals to become raw data.<sup>34</sup> The narrative inquiry

---

<sup>30</sup> Pineda-Báez et al., "Challenges Facing Novice Principals: A Study in Colombian Schools Using a Socialisation Perspective"; Ganli Liao, Jiao Zhou, and Jieli Yin, "Effect of Organizational Socialization of New Employees on Team Innovation Performance: A Cross-Level Model," *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* Volume 15 (April 2022): 1017–31, <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S359773>.

<sup>31</sup> Ed Bengtson, Sally J. Zepeda, and Oksana Parylo, "School Systems' Practices of Controlling Socialization During Principal Succession," *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 41, no. 2 (March 1, 2013): 143–64, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143212468344>; Liao, Zhou, and Yin, "Effect of Organizational Socialization of New Employees on Team Innovation Performance: A Cross-Level Model."

<sup>32</sup> Liao, Zhou, and Yin, "Effect of Organizational Socialization of New Employees on Team Innovation Performance: A Cross-Level Model"; Pineda-Báez et al., "Challenges Facing Novice Principals: A Study in Colombian Schools Using a Socialisation Perspective."

<sup>33</sup> Paula Gardner, "Contemplative Pedagogy: Fostering Transformative Learning in a Critical Service Learning Course," *Journal of Experiential Education* 44, no. 2 (2021): 152–66.

<sup>34</sup> Coral Pepper and Helen Wildy, "Using Narratives as a Research Strategy," *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 18–26; Damien Lyons and Janet Scull, "Critiquing Narrative Inquiry's Epistemological Pillars within a Large-Scale Study into the Teaching

is considered in this study because it permits studying the real experiences of novice principals in natural settings. Due to its nature, it enables participants to share their accounts of the hardships they endured while navigating the new leadership role.<sup>35</sup> To achieve the above, semi-structured interviews were used. This type of interview not only permits both the researchers and the participants to engage in a friendly and free-flowing conversation but also enables researchers to ask probing questions to solicit clarifications. The study was conducted in the Maseru district. Ten novice principals – who were in the first two years of their appointment and were ready to narrate their lived stories – were purposively identified. To observe the ethical research guidelines, participants were invited in writing which facilitated obtaining written consent. For purposes of maintaining participants’ anonymity, pseudonyms were used to report the findings as depicted in Table 1.

**Table 1: Principals’ biography**

Pseudonyms	Sex
Pr1	F
Pr2	F
Pr3	M
Pr4	F
Pr5	M
Pr6	M
Pr7	M
Pr8	F
Pr9	F
Pr10	M

**Data Analysis**

In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyse data. The thematic analysis approach is the systematic coding of data to identify patterns in it.<sup>36</sup> To inductively identify themes from the data, the six-layered thematic analysis technique was used.<sup>37</sup> To avoid researchers’ biases and to guarantee them correctness, the identified themes were checked against the prescribed data by the participants. Some of the direct quotes from the raw data generated were included to strengthen the sincerity of the findings and interpretations.<sup>38</sup>

**PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The findings portray novice principals’ challenges in the initial years as principals, and the possible mitigation strategies.

**Challenges Confronting Beginning Principals**

***Lack of Handover***

The findings revealed that there was no proper handover – either from the previous principal or the concerned school board (SB) – before the new principals assumed their role. Thus, they stated as follows:

*There was no handover of work from previous principals to me. I therefore struggled with most information pertaining to school administration (Pr1).*

of Phonics,” *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 47, no. 2 (March 14, 2024): 114–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2023.2196066>.

<sup>35</sup> Lyons and Scull, “Critiquing Narrative Inquiry’s Epistemological Pillars within a Large-Scale Study into the Teaching of Phonics.”

<sup>36</sup> Kate Roberts, Anthony Dowell, and Jing-Bao Nie, “Attempting Rigour and Replicability in Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Research Data: a Case Study of Codebook Development,” *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 19, no. 1 (2019): 1–8.

<sup>37</sup> Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101.

<sup>38</sup> Ann Eldh, Liselott Årestedt, and Carina Berterö, “Quotations in Qualitative Studies: Reflections on Constituents, Custom, and Purpose,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 19 (January 1, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920969268>.

*I was not orientated for this work either by the departing principal or the school board, as a consequence, I relied more on my discretion (Pr2).*

The above excerpts indicate that novice principals had to rely on trial and error since they were not orientated into the existing priorities, ongoing projects, and debts among others.

### ***Teachers' Resistance to Change***

The data revealed that teachers in particular resist accepting novice principals as legitimate leaders. As a result, novice principals struggle to initiate any cultural or instructional changes.

*Teachers are comfortable with the status quo, but I am being criticised and called names when initiating cultural change (Pr3).*

*Teachers are resisting the change I am proposing. This complicates my work because I want to maintain good working relationships and collegiality (Pr4).*

*Teachers always have something bad to say about me and my leadership style (Pr5).*

*During the staff meetings, teachers don't participate. Consequently, I am compelled to make decisions for them. After the meeting, they go behind my back and criticise everything that I have said (Pr6).*

The reported teachers' resistance hinders novice principals' task of bringing positive change in schools. That is, instead of focusing on planning and implementing school programmes, they relentlessly deal with teacher misconduct and acts of insubordination.

### ***Animosity from Demoted Acting Principals***

In addition, the findings revealed that some novice principals constantly deal with the acrimony of the demoted long-serving acting principals. The new principals reported their predicament as follows:

*The demoted acting principal in my school is sabotaging my leadership. He is leading a group of outlaws who repeatedly defy instructions, dodge classes and neglect duties (Pr7).*

*In my school, the demoted former acting principal doesn't want to be managed. He is a bad influence, especially on young teachers (Pr3).*

The animosity of the demoted long-serving acting principal implies that the incumbent will struggle to get reports on the planned school activities. As such, the novice principal will not have any point of reference and will have to start from scratch to redesign the school path. Also, as novice principals navigate the new terrain of school leadership, they will not be able to focus on instilling fresh ideas in the school activities and administration as their attention will be divided between reprimanding misconduct and running the schools.

### ***Pressure to Live Up to the Legacy of Former Principal***

The study revealed that some novice principals' leadership style is often compared to that of the former principal as demonstrated by this response:

*Teachers, learners and parents compare me with the former principal. This is happening despite the difference in our leadership styles (Pr1).*

The foregoing implies that novice principals struggle to initiate new priorities, especially when their leadership styles differ from those of their predecessors. The differing leadership styles also lead to a lack of stakeholder support and approval for the decisions made by the novice principal.

### ***Insubordination***

The findings suggest that in some instances, young principals are deployed in schools. In some cases, these young principals face open disrespect and defiance of instructions from the older long-serving teachers. Some of these experiences emerged:

*Due to the age difference between me and some teachers, they challenge my authority. They do not perform the duties assigned (Pr6).*

*I am threatened by some older teachers and heads of departments just because I am young (Pr8).*

The reported acts of insubordination could severely disrupt planned school programmes and activities. Consequently, the schools' ability to implement innovative strategies may be crippled.

### ***Delayed Confirmation Letters and Aligned Salaries***

The findings revealed that MoET had delays in processing the appointment letters and aligned salary scales for the new principals. This reportedly affects their efficiency as they get demoralised and are subjected to derision by some of the teachers as evidenced by these statements:

*There is no appointment letter confirming my new role and worse, to date I am yet to be paid my adjusted salary. We are literally a laughing stock (Pr3).*

*I am reluctant to carry out my duties because some teachers mock me because to this day I am not yet paid my adjusted salary. As a result, I have reservations about fully performing my duties, especially to discipline teachers (Pr2).*

*Teachers call me names like stamp bearer because I have not yet been paid my headship salary. To survive the humiliation, I often lock myself in the office to avoid being in contact with them (Pr9).*

The uncertainty generated by the absence of documentation and failure to adjust salaries accordingly threatens novice principals' job security and negatively affects their enthusiasm.

### ***Improper Financial Recording and Insufficient Funds***

Novice principals indicated that the school the financial records they received from previous principals were incomplete and inconsistently compiled. In some cases, participants reported insufficient or no funds in the school bank accounts. Some of these narratives were shared:

*When I assumed office there were no funds in the bank accounts. Worse, there was no paper trail accounting for the missing funds. This was a problem because teachers had no teaching resources, and the supporting staff were owed two months' wages. Everything was a mess (Pr4).*

*There was no proper documentation in the office. The former principal was careless (Pr10).*

The inability to keep proper financial records by previous principals and embezzlement of funds has left many schools with inadequate resources to run their different programmes, gradually compromising the provision of quality education. Non-payment of wages for backup staff could severely impact the support services they provide to make schools function optimally.

### ***Pressure from the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)***

Participants revealed that they worked under immense pressure from MoET to effect the desired change. This response illustrates the sentiment:

*I work under a lot of pressure from the District Education Office. They are expecting sudden changes including an increase in learners' enrolment (Pr9).*

The novice principals find this unrealistic pressure overwhelming, more so when they are still acquainting themselves with the duties of the school principal.

### ***Lack of Support from the School Board (SB)***

The research findings revealed that some novice principals do not get enough support from the SB. The findings indicated that the SB was reluctant to make tough decisions as exemplified by these excerpts:

*Members of the SB do not know or understand their responsibilities. As a result, I was not fully supported while attempting to make changes to the school culture and practices, as well as when dealing with teacher misconduct (Pr8).*

*I experienced unreliable support from the SB. They are easily intimidated by both parents' and learners' pressure and antics (Pr2).*

### ***Lack of training***

The study also revealed that novice principals were never trained after they were recruited. Thus they lack knowledge regarding the best practices that inform proper school leadership. The following responses capture this difficulty.

*Primarily, I was not even aware of leadership procedures. For example, who is responsible for calling the SB? (Pr5)*

*Everything to me was new. It took me time to understand the expectations and duties (Pr4).*

*I was not aware of the relevant educational policies and legislations, so I had to learn on the job (Pr10).*

The reported shortcomings not only compromise the school's overall effectiveness but also cast doubt on stakeholders' confidence in the appointed principal.

### ***Low Teacher Morale***

The study revealed that novice principals confronted the challenge of leading groups of demotivated teachers due to the appalling overall school performance and inadequate resources.

*When I assumed the headship office, teachers were highly demotivated and I had to intervene despite having limited facts on the causes of teacher distress (Pr9).*

*Teachers here are demoralised; they have no enthusiasm to work (Pr3).*

Low staff morale is a real challenge because teaching and learning activities are negatively affected, resulting in failure to achieve the school's core business.

### ***The mitigating strategies***

To mitigate the above-mentioned challenges, participants suggested several strategies discussed in the sections below.

### ***Prompt processing and issuing of appointment letters and aligned salaries***

To mitigate the challenge of delayed headship salaries, participants urged MoET to speed up the issuing of appointment letters and the payment of adjusted salaries in line with the positions the principals currently occupy. Some expressed these views:

*MoET should speed up paying the headship salaries, especially now that the responsibilities have increased considerably from being a class teacher to a school leader (Pr2).*

*In the space of a month, MoET, through the Teaching Service Commission and Teaching Service Department, should quickly issue the appointment documents and process due payments (Pr9).*

*As a matter of urgency, MoET has to initiate our payments (Pr3).*

MoET's promptness to process these due payments will enable the novice principals to confidently perform their duties, which may catalyse into overall school effectiveness.

### **Induction of Newly Appointed Principals**

The findings suggested that to empower novice principals to satisfactorily perform their duties, they should be inducted into the realities of the position as some suggested:

*Novice principals should continuously be inducted by experts, either on the job or through short courses (Pr9).*

*MoET and institutions of higher learning should run programmes that are meant to capacitate novice principals with essential competencies (Pr10).*

*We need to have regular training forums with experts from universities and MoET on issues of good school leadership (Pr5).*

The suggested training is likely to equip novice principals with the essential competencies to perform their duties successfully. Continuous training programmes provide new leaders with skills to run academic and administrative enterprises and turn their schools into hubs of excellence.

### **Training of School Boards**

The participants further suggested that SBs should, regularly, be inducted on their oversight duties as shown by these responses:

*SB should be trained to guarantee good school governance (Pr8).*

*Every time a new SB is inaugurated, there should be training sessions (Pr2).*

The suggested training of SBs will capacitate them to support novice principals to ensure they lead the academic programme efficiently.

### **Transfer of the Demoted Principal**

The research findings also revealed that to avoid a hostile relationship between the novice principal and the demoted one, the latter should be transferred to another school.

*In a case where the previous principals are being demoted, they should quickly be transferred to other schools (Pr3).*

*The demoted principal must be transferred to another school because he/she is likely not to support the successor (Pr7).*

The transfer of a former principal may enable the incumbent to successfully influence the cultural development of the school in a new direction which could have a bearing on the school's competitiveness.

### **Democratic Dialogue and Teachers' Sensitisation**

To deal with teacher resistance, it was suggested that novice principals should use more participative leadership styles, as captured below.

*Novice principals should open channels of communication and be ready to accommodate different opinions and personalities. In this way, stakeholders will easily participate in the planning process and own the disseminated decisions (Pr6).*

The findings further suggest that teachers, in particular, should be sensitised to accept and render support to whoever the appointing authority has deemed suitable to occupy the office of the principal. Some of the suggestions provided useful advisory for teachers to place the success of the school ahead of any other interest:

*Teachers should be helped to understand that it is MoET that appoints a school principal and as such, should render support to the appointed candidate (Pr1).*

*Teachers, individually and collectively, must be sensitised to prioritise school success not who leads (Pr3).*

These suggested approaches not only facilitate equal participation of all stakeholders but further empower teachers to render support and assistance.

### ***Mandatory Handover***

Moreover, the findings revealed that protocols for financial reporting should be adhered to. These protocols will enable a smooth handover process between the vacating principal and the incumbent. These arguments were raised:

*The departing principals or the SB when the principal is deceased or ill must properly tender the audited financial records and other important documents to the incoming principal (Pr1).*

*MoET should mandate that before a principal leaves office, he or she should meet the incumbent for a proper handover (Pr2).*

These suggested strategies will swiftly help the new principal familiarise with the school's financial status and other priorities. These procedures could also control embezzlement of funds and engender a culture of accountability.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study has revealed that Lesotho's novice secondary school principals face multiple challenges. These include a lack of proper handover of financial statements and documents detailing school priorities by either the departing principal or the SB. Such a handover signifies a lack of accountability. This practice leaves novice principals stranded since they may not know where to begin, resulting in inefficiency and failure to create sustainable learning environments. Lack of handover further implies that novice principals may not be timely aware of urgent issues including payment due to creditors, documents required by MoET, and expected shipment. This, as a consequence, may impede the smooth operations of the school and instigate reputational damage to both the school and the principal. According to the Social Justice Theory (SJ), the lack of accountability is a structural issue.<sup>39</sup> These injustices in handling school affairs may be attributed to both the MoET and the SB lacking the proactiveness to regulate the mandatory handover by the former principals. They may further be ascribed to principals' negligence. An outgoing principal should be mandated to prepare a comprehensive report detailing, among others, the financial status of the school, pending and ongoing projects, priorities, and outstanding payments.

The findings further indicated that novice principals are challenged by teachers' resistance, which is consistent with the literature.<sup>40</sup> This resistance implies that most schools are static despite the

---

<sup>39</sup> Barnett and Teise, "Initial Teacher Education for Social Justice in South Africa: A Higher Education Policy Perspective."

<sup>40</sup> Shoho and Barnett, "The Realities of New Principals: Challenges, Joys, and Sorrows"; Arrieta and Ancho, "Ready or Not: The Experiences of Novice Academic Heads in School Leadership."

need for cultural and structural expansion. The lack of innovative ideas in schools deters the creation of a sustainable environment. The study further revealed that the resistance encountered by novice principals is worsened by the animosity of the long-serving acting principals who were demoted. These circumstances suggest that instead of collegiality in many secondary schools in Lesotho, there are two centres of power resulting in delinquency and inability to provide astute leadership in schools. The resistance the novice principals encounter defies the principles of SJ. This means these principals are discriminated against, resulting in inefficiency and possible stagnation of the school. Due to this undue prejudice, instead of focusing on creating a sustainable school environment, the novice principal's energy is diverted towards survival.

Similarly, research findings suggest that novice principals are compared to their predecessors and pressured to match the legacy of the former principal. As a result, the findings indicate that this undue comparison causes unnecessary pressure on the new principals.<sup>41</sup> This therefore implies that the incumbent may find themselves anxious to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, and thus fail to fully harness their independence of thought and action to steer the school in the direction they want. The foregoing suggests that novice principals are likely to struggle to implement new praxis if they fail to imitate the legacy created by the former principals. According to the principles of SJ, this challenge could also be attributed to the nature of stakeholders' interactions and their priorities.<sup>42</sup> The unjust comparison may not only deny the new principals a chance to get acquainted with the requisite leadership styles but further obstruct them from rejuvenating the existing school culture.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that some long-serving older teachers and heads of departments sometimes rebel against the authority of some younger novice principals. This behaviour undermines the authority of principals and complicates their role even more as they cannot perform all the school activities on their own. This behaviour goes against the principles of social justice which, according to Mahlomaholo et al., are about 'respect for the other person.'<sup>43</sup> The above discussions hint that the level of interaction between the novice principals and some stakeholders does not promote school efficacy and bothers on a lack of respect for authorities. The insubordination indicates that the teachers purposely sabotage the creation and promotion of a sustainable learning environment. This conduct is counterproductive and delays the successful implementation of new plans and programmes. The suffering endured by novice principals challenges the very basic principles of interdependence and equal opportunities and treatment as described by SJ.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, the study revealed that novice principals lack job security due to delays in receiving their appointment letters and adjusted salaries from the MoET. Due to these setbacks, they are disheartened to perform some duties because of persistent mockery instigated by some teachers. The delays violate good labour practices and further restrict novice principals from making crucial decisions including instituting disciplinary action against teachers, reallocating teaching loads, and ensuring effective implementation of the relevant school policies. This indecisiveness by the principals further affects the tenets of good school management and renders a creeping paralysis of malfunction in their schools.

Additionally, there seems to be no strict monitoring mechanisms forcing principals to be accountable for dispensing their duties. As such, they see themselves as indispensable regarding financial administration. This perception, at times, results in mismanagement of funds where – in some cases – finances are poorly recorded or unaccounted for, while in other cases funds in the school bank accounts are depleted. More so, as a study by Motsamai et al. found, despite the existence of a policy on financial management and several training sessions on handling finances, principals still lack the

---

<sup>41</sup> Lee, "School Performance Trajectories and the Challenges for Principal Succession"; Edwards, "The Preparation, Experiences and Challenges of Novice Principals in Ontario's Small Rural School."

<sup>42</sup> Govender and Mathukrishna, "Towards Sustainable Learning Environment: Deconstructing Discourses of Social Justice in the English Home Language Classroom."

<sup>43</sup> Sechaba Mahlomaholo, Milton Nkoane, and John Ambrosio, "Sustainable Learning Environments and Social Justice Comment," *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 9, no. 3 (2013): V–XIII.

<sup>44</sup> Barnett and Teise, "Initial Teacher Education for Social Justice in South Africa: A Higher Education Policy Perspective"; Mahlomaholo, "Creating Sustainable Teacher Education Ecologies: A People's Education for People's Power Reimagined."

requisite skills for school financial management.<sup>45</sup> The purported failure by the former principals to adhere to the stipulations and proper implementation of the financial policy can be detrimental to the proper running of school programmes, thus affecting sustainable learning environments in such schools. The reported maladministration of funds is tantamount to corruption, a factor that Rakolobe identifies as detrimental to the advancement of education and its attainment in the Lesotho education sector.<sup>46</sup> This is because the prevalence of corruption presupposes that schools cannot successfully improve their infrastructure, procure additional teaching and learning materials, or sufficiently finance any other projects. Delays in the issuance of confirmation letters to novice principals and misappropriation of funds by former principals are structural issues that contravene the principles of SJ. Thus, MoET has to ensure the timely processing of principals' appointments for them to settle down quickly and perform all their tasks as expected.

The findings indicated that despite being new in office, novice principals are pressurised by MoET to bring about instantaneous changes. This challenge is further exacerbated by the lack of support from the School Boards. The immense pressure, coupled with a lack of support, aggravates the principals' dependence on trial and error. The purported pressure from MoET and the little support from SBs suggest a misalignment of expectations and priorities. This disparity contravenes the core principles of interdependence and relationship which are central to structured socialisation as explained by the Organisational Socialisation Theory (OST).<sup>47</sup>

The findings revealed that novice principals were not familiar with best leadership practices and procedures, resulting in many inconsistencies in their work. Their deficiencies have a detrimental impact on stakeholders' confidence and could ruin prospects of support in their working relationship. The findings further indicated that as novice principals attempted to create sustainable learning environments, additional challenges were posed by demoralised staff in the schools. The reported low teacher morale adversely affects effective instructional practices. As a result, the principals had to redirect their attention from the core functions of their schools to diagnosing the factors contributing to low morale and instituting appropriate remedies. Issues of lack of relevant skills and unmotivated teachers reflect the extent of socialisation to the position that the novice principals received. As suggested by OST, efforts should be made by MoET, training institutions and SBs to sensitise the novice principals about the realities of the position.<sup>48</sup> Thus, principals should be prepared with relevant skills and be informed about the kind of contexts in which they are going to operationalise their leadership skills.

The study has identified several ways in which novice principals in Lesotho secondary schools can be supported. The findings suggested that MoET should promptly issue the appointment letters and payment of salaries aligned with the new positions. For job security purposes, it is vital that MoET as the appointing authority, fast-track the granting of appointment letters and payment of adjusted salaries. The promptness is likely to enhance the novice principals' confidence to perform their tasks with diligence as their positions would be more secure. This suggestion synergises with the principle of fairness and respect for fundamental rights as suggested by SJ.<sup>49</sup> Delays in issuing appointment letters and payments of adjusted salaries violate principals' rights.

The research findings further proposed induction programmes for novice principals, thus resonating with the literature that the principals' induction initiatives should be prioritised.<sup>50</sup> To facilitate seamless school leadership, the findings also suggested that SBs should be trained to empower them to play their oversight role satisfactorily. The suggested induction initiatives, as

<sup>45</sup> Motsamai J Motsamai, Lynette Jacobs, and Corene de Wet, "Policy and Practice: Financial Management in Schools in the Mafeteng District of Lesotho," *Journal of Social Sciences* 26, no. 2 (2011): 105–16.

<sup>46</sup> Kelello Alicia Rakolobe, "Towards a Framework for Education Policy Implementation in the Lesotho Education Sector" (University of the Free State, 2022).

<sup>47</sup> Liao, Zhou, and Yin, "Effect of Organizational Socialization of New Employees on Team Innovation Performance: A Cross-Level Model."

<sup>48</sup> Gardner, "Contemplative Pedagogy: Fostering Transformative Learning in a Critical Service Learning Course."

<sup>49</sup> Sechaba Mahlomaholo, "The Question of Fairness: Creating Opportunities to Succeed," in *Educational Leadership for Transformation and Social Justice* (Routledge, 2016), 40–62.

<sup>50</sup> Lingam and Lingam, "Leadership and Management Training for School Heads: A Milestone Achievement for Fiji."

advocated by OST, will acquaint novice principals with stakeholder expectations and priorities, as well as educational objectives.<sup>51</sup> The training will further equip these novice principals with relevant competencies essential for creating a sustainable learning environment. Inducting SBs into their role as overseers and governing bodies of school administration could empower them with skills to play this all-important function more effectively, thus enabling them to create environments that accelerate the growth and development of their schools.

The findings hinted that if a principal is demoted, they should be transferred to another school. In doing so, the incumbent is likely to be less challenged and will, instead, focus on cultural elaboration. The findings further proposed that the novice principal should adopt more participatory leadership approaches. These approaches are likely to enable equal participation of stakeholders in the decision-making processes.<sup>52</sup> The suggested strategy conforms to SJ principles that equal opportunities in schools should be created.<sup>53</sup> As a result, the transfer of demoted teachers will allow the novice principals to start on a clean slate with less interference, which may afford them a chance to get fair treatment and grow in leadership confidence. In addition, participatory leadership approaches are likely to emancipate novice principals to learn about the school culture and priorities from teachers and other stakeholders.

Similarly, the findings advocated teacher sensitisation. That is, attempts should be made to help teachers accept whoever is appointed and to have faith in the recruitment processes. Teacher sensitisation will strengthen principles of tolerance as suggested by SJ.<sup>54</sup> Thus, through teacher sensitisation, the legitimacy of the novice principal may not be questioned, and resistance to administrative changes in schools could be minimised.

Lastly, the findings revealed that the former principals and or SBs should be mandated to hand over audited financial reports and other documents stating the school's priorities. In this way, the incumbent will know about issues related to school debts and other matters of greater importance. The mandatory handover by the former principals promotes principles of fairness as advocated by SJ.<sup>55</sup> Novice principals will know the school's priorities and, as such, make informed decisions about the intended direction.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The strategic discourse advanced in this study is that to inculcate sustainability in Lesotho secondary schools, stakeholders should be willing to collaborate with novice principals on various processes not limited to planning, implementation and reflection. Thus, the stakeholders' interaction with novice principals should be directed towards improving instructional activities in schools. These strategies will not only address the injustices in a school environment but will further enable the socialisation of novice principals in their new roles.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article evolved from a standpoint that attempts to explore the challenges faced by novice principals in Lesotho secondary schools in their mission to facilitate the creation of a sustainable learning environment, and how these challenges could be mitigated. The study was underpinned by a theoretical triangulation of Social Justice and Organisational Socialisation Theory. The findings revealed that while some adversities confronting novice principals could be attributed to social injustices in schools, others were perpetuated by the insufficient socialisation of novice principals.

On one hand, it was revealed that the following lack of proper handover by the previous principal or SB, teachers' resistance to change, the animosity of the demoted acting principals, pressure to match the legacy of the previous principal, insubordination, delayed confirmation of their position

---

<sup>51</sup> Gardner, "Contemplative Pedagogy: Fostering Transformative Learning in a Critical Service Learning Course."

<sup>52</sup> Tahir et al., "Initial Challenges and Possible Useful Countering Strategies: Perspectives From Malaysian Novice Principals."

<sup>53</sup> Mahlomaholo, "The Question of Fairness: Creating Opportunities to Succeed."

<sup>54</sup> Mahlomaholo, "The Question of Fairness: Creating Opportunities to Succeed."

<sup>55</sup> Mahlomaholo, "The Question of Fairness: Creating Opportunities to Succeed."

and aligned salaries, improper recording of school finances and insufficient funds. On the other hand, the following challenges were identified and presumed to be compounded by insufficient structured socialisation of the novice principals: unrealistic timelines and pressure from MoET, lack of support from the SB, lack of training and low teacher morale are the challenges inhibiting novice principals from creating sustainable learning environments, sustained by injustices in Lesotho secondary schools. These challenges, individually or collectively, hinder novice principals from diligently performing their varied tasks. As a consequence, addressing the above-mentioned challenges will act as a pillar for inculcating sustainable learning environments in Lesotho secondary schools. Efficient running of a school – through an astute administrator – could be the key difference between success and failure. As institutions geared towards developing future leaders, schools cannot be left to their means through ineffective leadership structures. Preparing and socialising new principals into their roles could be a springboard to academic and administrative success.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abeid, Munira Mbarak. “Issues and Challenges Experienced by Newly Appointed Secondary School Principals and the Strategies Used to Cope in Mombasa Country, Kenya.” *Unpublished Thesis of Masters of Education*. Kenyatta University, Kenya, 2015.
- Arrieta, Gilbert S, and Inero V Ancho. “Ready or Not: The Experiences of Novice Academic Heads in School Leadership.” *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 19, no. 5 (2020): 78–98.
- Atieno, Mito Evaline, and Enose M W Simatwa. “Challenges Faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Bondo District, Kenya: An Analytical Study.” *Educational Research* 3, no. 4 (2012): 388–401.
- Barnett, Emma Priscilla, and Kevin Teise. “Initial Teacher Education for Social Justice in South Africa: A Higher Education Policy Perspective.” *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 6, no. 1 (2024): 72–89.
- Bathuleng, Tshupo B. “Induction for Newly Appointed School Heads in Primary Schools in Botswana—the Case of Mahalapye Sub-Region,” 2016.
- Bengtson, Ed, Sally J. Zepeda, and Oksana Parylo. “School Systems’ Practices of Controlling Socialization During Principal Succession.” *Educational Management Administration & Leadership* 41, no. 2 (March 1, 2013): 143–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143212468344>.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology.” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101.
- Davidson, M. “South Australian Primary School Principals Reflect on Their Experiences and Support during Their Socialization into the Principalship.” Flinders University of South Australia, 2016.
- Dayson, M. M. “Principals’ Experiences in Managing Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Mopami District.” University of Pretoria, 2016.
- Edwards, P. A. “The Preparation, Experiences and Challenges of Novice Principals in Ontario’s Small Rural School.” University of Toronto, 2016.
- Eldh, Ann Catrine, Liselott Årestedt, and Carina Berterö. “Quotations in Qualitative Studies: Reflections on Constituents, Custom, and Purpose.” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 19 (January 1, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920969268>.
- Gardner, Paula. “Contemplative Pedagogy: Fostering Transformative Learning in a Critical Service Learning Course.” *Journal of Experiential Education* 44, no. 2 (2021): 152–66.
- Govender, R., and N. Mathukrishna. “Towards Sustainable Learning Environment: Deconstructing Discourses of Social Justice in the English Home Language Classroom.” *Communitas* 17 (2012): 21–44.
- Hernandez, M. F. B. “Dominican Public-School Novice Principals’ Description of Their Early Career Experiences and the Needs Entering the Principalship.” Western Michigan University, 2020.

- Jerdborg, Stina. "Novice School Principals In Education And Their Experiences Of Pedagogical Leadership In Practice." *Journal of Leadership Education* 22, no. 1 (January 15, 2023): 131–48. <https://doi.org/10.12806/V22/I1/R8>.
- Lee, E. J. "Competency-Based Human Resource Management in Public Sector Organizations." *Public Personnel Management* 44, no. 4 (2015): 453–69.
- Lee, Linda C. "School Performance Trajectories and the Challenges for Principal Succession." *Journal of Educational Administration* 53, no. 2 (2015): 262–86.
- Liao, Ganli, Jiao Zhou, and Jielin Yin. "Effect of Organizational Socialization of New Employees on Team Innovation Performance: A Cross-Level Model." *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* Volume 15 (April 2022): 1017–31. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S359773>.
- Lingam, Govinda I, and Narsamma Lingam. "Leadership and Management Training for School Heads: A Milestone Achievement for Fiji." *International Studies in Educational Administration* 42, no. 2 (2014): 1–17.
- Lyons, Damien, and Janet Scull. "Critiquing Narrative Inquiry's Epistemological Pillars within a Large-Scale Study into the Teaching of Phonics." *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 47, no. 2 (March 14, 2024): 114–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2023.2196066>.
- Mahlomaholo, Makeresemese R, and Sechaba M G Mahlomaholo. "Creating Sustainable Posthuman Accounting Learning Environments: The Case for Green Accounting in South Africa." *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 6, no. 1 (2024): 90–101.
- Mahlomaholo, Sechaba. "Creating Sustainable Teacher Education Ecologies: A People's Education for People's Power Reimagined." *Southern African Review of Education with Education with Production* 22, no. 1 (2016): 9–26.
- . "Early School Leavers and Sustainable Learning Environments in Rural Contexts." *Perspectives in Education* 30, no. 1 (2012): 101–10.
- . "The Question of Fairness: Creating Opportunities to Succeed." In *Educational Leadership for Transformation and Social Justice*, 40–62. Routledge, 2016.
- Mahlomaholo, Sechaba, Milton Nkoane, and John Ambrosio. "Sustainable Learning Environments and Social Justice Comment." *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa* 9, no. 3 (2013): V–XIII.
- Memela, Godfrey Khululekani Sihle, and Labby Ramrathan. "The Perspective of School Leadership and Management: The Role of the School Principal in Academic Learner Performance." *South African Journal of Education* 42, no. 2 (2022): 1–8.
- Mestry, Raj. "Principals' Perspectives and Experiences of Their Instructional Leadership Functions to Enhance Learner Achievement in Public Schools." *Journal of Education (University of KwaZulu-Natal)*, no. 69 (2017): 257–80.
- Micheal, F., and R. P. Kitula. "Influence of Leadership Induction Training on the Performance of Newly Appointed Heads of Public Secondary Schools in Arusha City Council." *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education* 6, no. 3 (2022): 184–93.
- Ministry of Education and Training. *Education Sector Plan 2016 – 2026*. Lesotho: Government of Lesotho, 2016. [https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=sites/default/files/education\\_sector\\_plan\\_2016-2026.\\_lesotho\\_0.pdf](https://www.globalpartnership.org/node/document/download?file=sites/default/files/education_sector_plan_2016-2026._lesotho_0.pdf).
- Motsamai, Motsamai J, Lynette Jacobs, and Corene de Wet. "Policy and Practice: Financial Management in Schools in the Mafeteng District of Lesotho." *Journal of Social Sciences* 26, no. 2 (2011): 105–16.
- Pepper, Coral, and Helen Wildy. "Using Narratives as a Research Strategy." *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 18–26.
- Pineda-Báez, Clelia, Rosario Bernal-Luque, Luz Yolanda Sandoval-Estupiñan, and Crisanto Quiroga. "Challenges Facing Novice Principals: A Study in Colombian Schools Using a Socialisation Perspective." *Issues in Educational Research* 29, no. 1 (2019): 205–22.

- Rakolobe, Kelello Alicia. "Towards a Framework for Education Policy Implementation in the Lesotho Education Sector." University of the Free State, 2022.
- Roberts, Kate, Anthony Dowell, and Jing-Bao Nie. "Attempting Rigour and Replicability in Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Research Data; a Case Study of Codebook Development." *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 19, no. 1 (2019): 1–8.
- Saidun, Ramnan, Lokman Mohd Tahir, and Mohammed Borhandden Musah. "Problems Faced by Novice Principals in Malaysia: An Exploration Study." *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 2015.
- Sarmurzin, Yerbol, Gulbakhyt Menlibekova, and Ainur Orynbekova. "'I Feel Abandoned': Exploring School Principals' Professional Development in Kazakhstan." *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher* 32, no. 5 (2023): 629–39.
- Sepiriti, Sepiriti. "Considering Emotional Intelligence as a Leadership Competency for Lesotho Secondary School Principals." *European Journal of Educational Management* 6, no. 1 (2023): 1–13.
- . "Exploring the Predominantly Used Educational Management and Leadership Models in Selected Secondary Schools in Lesotho." *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Explorer* 1, no. 10 (2021): 70–77.
- Sepuru, Malesela Gilbert, and Mokgadi Agnes Mohlakwana. "The Perspectives of Beginner Principals on Their New Roles in School Leadership and Management: A South African Case Study." *South African Journal of Education* 40, no. 2 (May 31, 2020): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v40n2a1755>.
- Shoho, Alan R, and Bruce G Barnett. "The Realities of New Principals: Challenges, Joys, and Sorrows." *Journal of School Leadership* 20, no. 5 (2010): 561–96.
- Spillane, James P., and Linda C. Lee. "Novice School Principals' Sense of Ultimate Responsibility." *Educational Administration Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (August 17, 2014): 431–65. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13505290>.
- Suleman, Qaiser, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "Managerial Challenges Faced by Fresh Directly Appointed Secondary School Heads in Kohat Division, Pakistan." *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 5, no. 5 (2015): 91–104.
- Tahir, Lokman Mohd, Narina A. Samah, Mohd Hilmi Hamzah, Abdul Halim Abdullah, Mohd Fadzli Ali, and Sanitah Mohd Yusof. "Initial Challenges and Possible Useful Countering Strategies: Perspectives From Malaysian Novice Principals." *Sage Open* 11, no. 1 (January 17, 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211000052>.
- Tlali, Tebello, and Ntjoetso Matete. "The Challenges Faced by Heads of Departments in Selected Lesotho High Schools." *School Leadership & Management* 41, no. 3 (May 27, 2021): 194–210. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2020.1851672>.
- Toit, Adri Du. "Entrepreneurial Learning: Creating Value towards Social Justice." *Research in Educational Policy and Management* 5, no. 3 (December 24, 2023): 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.46303/repam.2023.18>.
- Wiehahn, Johan, and Pierre Du Plessis. "Professional Development of Newly-Appointed Principals at Public High Schools in Gauteng. Is Social Justice Served?" *Koers: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship= Koers: Bulletin Vir Christelike Wetenskap* 83, no. 1 (2018): 1–11.

## ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Sepiriti Sepiriti is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Foundations, at the National University of Lesotho. His research focuses on issues related to educational management, leadership and administration as well as educational policy studies. With these, he aims at informing those at the helm of school management and other educational institutions with the best practices that may influence efficacy in achieving both national and institutional aspirations.

Dr. Kelello Rakolobe is a lecturer in the Department of Education Foundations at the National University of Lesotho where she teaches courses including Introduction to the Foundations of Education, Critical Issues in Education, Education Law and Education Policy, Planning and Practice. She also supervises Masters and PhD students. Her research interests are in Education Law, Education Policy, children's rights in education, social justice and sexual diversity in the education sector.

Dr. Tebello Tlali is a Senior Lecturer of Philosophy of Education in the Department of Educational in the Faculty of Education, at the National University of Lesotho. Her research focuses on philosophical issues in education, with more interest in epistemological matters related to Decoloniality and Afrocentricity; teacher professional ethics and teacher educators.