PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' EXPERIENCES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY CHANGE

BY

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Goodness Xolile Tshabalala (student number: 18287957), hereby declare that the thesis entitled "**Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change***"* for the degree **Philosophia doctor** at the University of Pretoria has not been previously submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university. I declare that the thesis represents my own work, except where others were referenced.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother Linah who passed on when I was doing my second year of this study. I know how excited she would be to see me graduating as Dr. Tshabalala.

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As I add the final touches to this dissertation, I say Ebenezer: thus far the Lord has led me. I am grateful to God for the journey, for holding my hand and keeping me in good health while pursuing the study. I feel indebted to my family, school principals, colleagues, and friends who encouraged and assisted me in the production of this thesis. This dissertation would not have been possible had it not been for their generous and continuous support over the years.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	African Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AUC	African Union Commission
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
EDSEC	Education Sector
EFA	Education for All
FAR	Fiscal Adjustment Roadmap
FPE	Free Primary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GOK	Government of Kenya
HOD	Head of Department
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
NERCHA	National Emergency Response Change
OVCs	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PISA	Programme for International Standard Assessment
PTA	Parents Teacher Association
REO	Regional Education Office
SACU	Southern Africa Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SBA	School Based Assessment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	School Development Plan
SGB	School Governing Body
SMC	School Management Committee
SMT	School Management Team
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USA	United States of America

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE STUDY

Educational policy: a mission statement concerned with the allocation of educational resources in a way that the goals and broad philosophy of education in a country are realised effectively and efficiently.

Policy: a statement of intention by a government; a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve national outcomes.

Change: Any alteration or modification of organisational processes or structures.

Educational policy change: These are changes in existing educational principles and laws, which are used to govern an educational system. Those who are in authority and can have either a negative or a positive impact on the education system bring the changes.

Implementation: The process of executing an educational policy and rendering it operational in schools for fulfilling its aims. It, therefore, refers to the way a policy is introduced, participation of stakeholders in the implementation process, the implementation process used, economic and social demands around the policy.

Free Primary Education: The education of a Swazi child at the primary level in a public school without the parent of a child having to pay tuition fees for that education.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore and investigate the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. A literature review was conducted in line with the research questions and the research aim. A qualitative research approach, adopting a case study design, was used to explore Eswatini primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy changes. Twelve primary school principals participated in the study from both rural and urban schools of Eswatini. I used Viennet and Pont's (2017) framework to guide this study. This theory helped me to understand how policy implementation can be facilitated. The interpretive paradigm was employed to understand the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policies as key stakeholders who were directly involved in the implementation of educational policies. In this study, I used semi-structured interviews and document analysis to generate data. I purposefully selected participants to ensure relevant data was gathered. I drew participants from the two regions of the country: Hhohho and Manzini. I analysed data qualitatively through coding, categorising, and developing themes. I used the themes that developed from data interpretation as headings for the findings. Themes that developed from the study revealed that principals had a conceptual awareness of the policy; principals were not involved in the formulation of the policy nor prepared for its implementation. Principals execute a variety of roles in implementing policy changes and they employ different strategies to implement the policy. It was further revealed that schools were experiencing a shortage of funds in the implementation of the policy; the national policy had not been reviewed since inception while school policies are reviewed annually. Through the research findings, I then proposed a policy implementation model that is holistic in nature, which can help in the implementation of policy changes in Eswatini.

KEYWORDS

Policy, Educational Policy, Change, Educational policy change, Implementation

LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

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29 November 2021

I hereby confirm that I reviewed the PhD thesis, "Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change", by Goodness Xolile Tshabalala, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, for grammatical correctness, consistency and correct formatting. The final quality of the work remains the student's responsibility. I wish her all the best with this submission and her future work.

Yours sincerely,

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, RESEARCH PROBLEM, AND METHOD

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores the experiences of Primary School Principals (PSPs) in the implementation of educational policy changes within the context of the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in Eswatini. It explores the ways that principals think, act and feel about the implementation of educational policy changes. It asks, "What are the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy changes, from paying of school fees to the FPE policy?" A key aspiration was to unveil how these key stakeholders' engagement with issues of policy change might contribute to improving the implementation of educational policy changes in the primary schools of Eswatini. Using semi-structured interviews and document analysis, I spent many days and hours in the schools documenting the views, ideas, and activities of principals concerning implementing educational policy changes. Twelve principals shared their experiences of implementing educational policy changes in schools and reflected on possible solutions to be considered to improve the implementation process.

1.2 Background

School Principals (SPs) have rarely served at a time more dynamic than the current one. In the past five to ten years, the education system of Eswatini has gone through drastic policy changes. Firstly, it is important to note that educational policy changes emanate from the Eswatini constitutional review that took place in 2005. International treaties influenced this review. Some of the international treaties include the Final Report of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, in Joimtein, Thailand in 1990; The Declaration of the World Education Forum; the Dakar Framework of 2000; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in 1990, and the SADC Charter of Fundamental Social Rights 2003, all of which Eswatini is a signatory to (MOET, 2011). This review has influenced the transformation of educational policies and legislation in Eswatini, which has emanated from the domestication of international commitments through new policies. These policies include the Swaziland National Children's Policy (MOET, 2009a), the National Plan of Action for Children (MOET, 2009b), the Draft Inclusive Education Policy (MOET, 2009c), the Free Primary Education Policy

(MOET, 2009d), the Special Education Policy Statement (MOET, 2009e), the Education Sector Policy (MOET, 2011a), the Minimum Standards for Quality Service Delivery to Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Swaziland, and the Schools Management Guide (MOET, 2011b) for the Inqaba schools programme. Moreover, Eswatini, as a developing country, has put in place the Vision 2022 strategy (MOET, 2017), which has a bearing on the roles and responsibilities of school principals as it calls for quality education and programmes in schools.

Significantly, principals are responsible for the implementation of these policies. It is important to mention here that in Eswatini, principals work as representatives of the Ministry of Education, and they represent the interests of their employers in schools. Williams (2018) observes that the principal is a representative of matters concerning public education. Therefore, a principal is responsible for the professional management of the school. As such, they must undertake the implementation of all educational programmes, including curriculum activities and the implementation of legislation and policies.

This indicates that school leaders, especially principals, are affected by these far-reaching policy changes. Fullan (2002:1) makes an important assertion about school principals and change. He argues, “Only principals who are equipped to handle a complex, rapidly changing environment can implement the reforms that lead to sustained improvement in student achievement”. This statement by Fullan (2002) suggests that policy change affects the work of principals and teachers. It is therefore important for this study to establish how principals are experiencing the implementation of education policy changes in schools.

In addition to these policy changes, the Eswatini education system has gone through curriculum changes. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has introduced new curricular innovations, which have been developed to comply with ever-changing societal needs. There has been a shift from a white-collar curriculum, a curriculum that prepares its people for jobs that are done in offices, not requiring the wearing of protective clothing (Norman, 2017), to the introduction of practical subjects from year three of the basic curriculum. These include the introduction of a competency-based curriculum, pre-vocational studies, and Information Communication and Technology (ICT). With the

advent of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, the Ministry has further introduced guidance and counseling programmes meant to empower learners (MOET, 2012) in a society that is characterised by social ills. These innovations have implications for timetabling and teacher supervision, which all boil down to the roles and responsibilities of the principal.

Fullan's argument presented earlier is relevant in the Eswatini context given that the transformation of policies has already contributed to significant changes in the roles executed by school principals. For example, the Schools' Management Guide of 2011 by the Ministry of Education and Training dictated that financial management planning could no longer be carried out haphazardly; procedures must be followed (MOET, 2011b).

This change and other policy changes imply that principals should be able to handle complex activities, adapt and bring school changes relevant to the changing policy environment (Myende & Bhengu, 2016). The work of principals, introduced earlier, becomes even more complex because of the contradictory nature of policies in the Eswatini context. For example, in 2010, FPE was introduced, but Circular no. 6 of 2017 mandates principals to charge fees to learners (MOET, 2017). Besides these contradictions, it is significant that policies introduced in the face of diminishing resources present many complications and challenges. Challenges faced by the country, besides limited finances, include lack of equipment such as furniture, lack of appropriately qualified teachers, and a shortage of support staff and counselors (Nsibande, 2016). This again may mean more pressure on principals as school leaders and policy implementers.

Studies conducted on leadership and the implementation of educational policy changes indicate that there are quite some challenges experienced by principals in the context of policy change. For example, in a study conducted by Kyahurwa (2018), in South Africa, on tasks faced by PSPs, it was found that South Africa, in its educational transformation, made changes to the curriculum and a strong emphasis was placed on effective management and leadership. The changes meant that the principal had to operate within new paradigms, which brought about many challenges.

Another study conducted by Myende and Bhengu (2016), on leadership for coping with and adapting to policy change in deprived contexts, revealed that policy changes brought by the democratic transformation have dramatically changed the way principals lead and manage their schools. This is a clear indication that policy change is a process that is likely to introduce different modes of working for school principals.

Another study, conducted by Kipkoech (2012) in Kenya, on the role of the principal in the implementation of policies during the country's educational reform, indicated that policies were often introduced in haste; hence, principals were not prepared for them. This study revealed that several challenges were experienced during the implementation period, including lack of funds, misconceptions by parents, and many more. Mingaine (2016) in Kenya conducted a similar study on the role of the school principal in the implementation of ICT policy in schools and it revealed that principals experience challenges in the implementation of educational policies. Therefore, there was a need for the government to provide effective and efficient in-service programmes to empower school principals. In an Australian report presented by Bergeson (2015) on school leadership, trends in policies, practices, and improvement in the quality of education, it was reported that school principals face various challenges in relation to policies and practices. Some of the challenges include bureaucratic obstacles, lack of resources, resistance to innovation, and lack of in-service training. It is evident therefore from the foregoing discussion that educational policy changes come with a myriad of challenges for school principals.

As a former principal in Eswatini, I am aware that no efforts have been made to address the challenges faced by school principals in helping them to be able to deal with the implementation of policy change issues. Moreover, to serve as a principal in Eswatini, one must have been a deputy school principal for at least five years and must hold a bachelor's degree in any education field. An implication of this is that people who have not been trained in school management can become school principals. I, therefore, became interested in understanding how principals experience the implementation of educational policy changes. This background and other considerations prompted me to problematise the study as presented in the following section.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The background as presented above demonstrates the backdrop to the need for the research and the problematisation of the study as argued below:

Currently, in Eswatini, the MOET is initiating and implementing a large-scale reform policy. Of significance is that policies, as operational tools in the country, are top-down, and school principals, as the personnel responsible for the general management of the school, are not involved in the development of the policies. Yet, their involvement can greatly contribute towards the effective implementation and survival of policies. Moreover, the policies are transplanted from elsewhere (Booysen, 2015) and influenced by a heterogeneous international community; hence, the context responsiveness of these policies remains questionable (Mbatha, 2016). Donohue and Borman (2014) have noted with concern that transplanted policies tend to experience challenges in terms of survival in the local context. The FPE policy is one good example of policies that are failing to thrive in the Eswatini context.

Importantly, some of the policies are enacted for their political symbolism rather than their practicality. When such policies are implemented, the funding and capacity to deliver them are often assumed (Booysen, 2015). Such assumptions make the implementation and survival of policies in the Eswatini context very problematic because of prevailing circumstances such as insufficient funds and the impracticality of the context. Thus, principals who are at the implementation stage feel the difficulty. Myende and Bhengu (2016) acknowledge that principals are expected to provide leadership and management in an ever-changing policy context, without distinct ways to ever achieve this. Some of these policies are lacking in their mandate, yet a clear policy mandate tends to be the most effective means by which to realise policy implementation and continued existence. Consequently, school principals are in a dilemma as they seek to find effective means of dealing with issues of implementing new policies. Equally, within the Eswatini context, little research has been done on the experiences of school principals in this area. As a result, the gap in the literature is that there is minimal research data that explores the experiences of school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. Up to now, studies (October 2009; Dlamini, 2017) have focused on curriculum change, paying particular attention to the principal's role as a curriculum leader and manager in a

changing education system. While policies in Eswatini have changed, limited attention has been given to how leaders in schools experience their work in the context of policy change.

1.4 Research purpose

Based on the problem, the purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes with reference to the FPE policy in selected Primary Schools (PS) in Eswatini. . I critically discuss the importance of keeping abreast with policy changes and dynamics in PSs for rules and guidelines underpin effectiveness of school leadership and accountability. It further aimed at contributing to the body of knowledge around the implementation of educational policy changes in the under-researched area of the experiences of school principals. Significantly, most studies have concentrated on policy change and policy implementation, with little attention paid to the experiences of school principals. In this study, therefore, I focused on the experiences of PSPs in implementing educational policy change, their roles and how the implementation process influences their thinking and the fulfilment of their roles.

1.4.1 Study aim

In this study, I aimed to explore the experiences of PSPs in the implementation of policy changes in Eswatini.

1.4.2 Study objectives

1. Elicit principals' knowledge and understanding of educational policy change.

2. Identify principals' roles in the formulation and implementation of educational policy changes.

3. Establish the reasons for Eswatini PSPs implementing educational policy in a certain way.

4. Develop a working framework through the pragmatic narratives of school principals to provide a guide on how to implement educational policy change in schools.

1.4.3 Research questions

Based on the purpose above, the following research questions were asked:

Main research question

- What are the experiences of primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes in Eswatini?

Sub-questions

To answer the main question, the study was guided by the following sub-questions:

- What are principals' knowledge and understanding of education policy change in Eswatini?
- What are principals' roles in the formulation and implementation of education policy change?
- Why do school principals in Eswatini primary schools implement educational policy changes in the way that they implement them?
- How may the pragmatic narratives of school principals inform a working framework to provide a guide on how to implement educational policy changes in schools?

1.5 The rationale of the study

My interest in conducting a study that sought to explore the experiences of primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes developed for many reasons. Firstly, motivation came from my personal journey as a principal who has served in a context where there were rapid changes to educational policies and circulas. That is to say, the predicaments and the frustrations that are continuously facing principals in the implementation of educational policy changes prompted me to undertake this study.

Secondly, I observed that in the process of implementing educational policy changes, principals deviate from the government's guidelines and implement policy changes as they deem fit (Dlamini, 2017). In conducting this study, therefore, I wanted to understand the ways Eswatini primary school principals experience these changes and implement policy changes and the reasons for implementing changes in a certain way.

Moreover, Mahati (2016), Rivckin (2015) and Traverso (2018) established that a number of studies have been done on policy implementation and policy change issues. In Eswatini, for example, Nsibande (2016) examined changes in education, Dlamini (2017) investigated the implementation and sustainability of FPE in terms of the interplay of policy and practice, Botha (2016) conducted an analysis of the Swaziland public education sector environment, Magagula (1990) examined the implementation of educational policies in Swaziland, while Maseko (2015) analysed support given to teachers in the implementation of inclusive education. Other studies outside Eswatini (Valiant 2015; Elmore, 2018; Williams, 2018) have focused on institutions of higher learning, such as high and secondary schools as opposed to primary education level. Therefore, my interest was to undertake a study that could concentrate on and explore the experiences of school principals in the area of implementing educational policy changes, since very little is known in this area. Therefore, the findings of the study are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on the experiences of principals as they implement policy changes and unearth areas for further studies, thus eventually benefitting the whole research community.

Additionally, the significance of this study lies in the fact that the findings of the study are expected to provide a model that should assist school managers in making decisions on how to adopt and implement educational policy change in schools. Policymakers and policy planners may also use the model as a base for reviewing the current policy implementation strategies for the smooth implementation of policies in schools in Eswatini.

1.6 Overview of the theoretical framework

This study used Viennet and Pont's theory as a lens for exploring the experiences of being a school principal in the implementation of educational policy changes; that is from paying school fees to the FPE context. In providing the historical development of Viennet and Pont's framework, Harris (2019) states that it emanates from the works of Romane Viennet and Beatriz Pont in 2017 on education policy implementation. This framework offers four key dimensions to educational policy implementation, namely a coherent implementation strategy to reach schools, smart policy design, an inclusive stakeholder engagement, and a conducive institutional, policy and societal context.

A coherent implementation strategy to reach schools is at the centre of Viennet and Pont's framework. Viennet and Pont (2017) believe that at the onset of the policy process, there must be a clear strategy on how policies will eventually reach schools and be implemented. Therefore, smart policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement, and a conducive institutional policy and societal context are built on the strategy. The strategy outlines concrete measures that bring all the determinants together in a logical manner to make the policy operational at the school level. This makes this theory more appropriate as a lens through which to understand the experiences of school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. This study, through understanding principals' lived experiences, hoped to uncover how principals recognise organisational changes, deal with new policies and how they shape organisational strategies to cope with and implement educational policy changes.

Viennet and Pont (2017) advocate for smart policy design in their theoretical proposition. They argue that a well-justified policy offers a sound and feasible solution to the policy problem. Such a policy may determine to a great extent how it can be implemented and possibly how long it can survive. The smart policy design as an element of this framework a number of factors must be considered in the formulation of a policy. These factors can include the need for the policy to be developed, finances, personnel and infrastructure, among others. Applied in this study, this dimension guides the study in understanding the knowledge and understanding that principals have of educational policy change.

1.6.1 Inclusive stakeholder engagement

Viennet and Pont believe that for any policy to be implemented effectively there must an engagement of stakeholders. The Viennet and Pont proposition is of the view that engaging stakeholders in discussions early in the policy process are likely to have long-term benefits (Moloi, 2018). Arguing for the inclusion of stakeholders in the policy process, Viennet and Pont (2017) in their theoretical proposition see the school principal as the hub of educational policy implementation who cannot be excluded from the process. Applied in this study, this element of the theory was used in understanding principals' roles in the formulation and implementation of education policy changes, how they have been engaged in the policy process and how they have experienced working with all those in managerial positions.

1.6.2 A conducive institutional, policy, and societal context

For Viennet and Pont (2017), an effective policy process recognises the existing policy environment. The policy environment may include educational governance, institutional settings and the external context. This element of conducive institutional, policy and societal context in this study will be used to explore how the context of educational policy changes influence principals' thinking and fulfilment of their roles, how principals create harmony between competing and conflicting demands from different units of their schools.

Given these arguments, it can be noted that Viennet and Pont's theory describes policy implementation as a complex interactive dynamic that promotes the emergence of adaptive outcomes that include the engagement of stakeholders, learning, innovation and adaptability (Tourish, 2016), making it more appropriate for understanding the experiences of the school principal in the implementation of educational policy changes. A detailed description and applicability of this theory to this study is presented in chapter four.

1.7 Research methodology

This section discusses the methodology that I employed in undertaking the study. The focus was on the following key areas: research paradigm, research design, data generation instruments, selection of participants and data analysis. Trustworthiness and ethical considerations will form the last part of this section.

1.7.1 Research paradigm

The study was situated in the interpretative paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1985), Henning et al. (2013) and Maree (2020) agree that this is a paradigm that is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or objective, but is shaped by human experience and social contacts. Wealther (2016) acknowledges that the interpretative paradigm holds the view that there is no single route to knowledge. This paradigm was deemed fit for the study because each principal has unique experiences in the implementation of educational policy changes. Maree (2020), Creswell (2017) and Morrow (2015), who claim that interpretivists aim to understand the world from the point of view of participants, support this argument. A significant amount of time was spent

interacting with principals in their natural contexts to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences as far as educational policy change is concerned (Creswell, 2017).

1.7.2 Research design

The study drew on qualitative case study design. Merriam (2009), Guba and Lincoln (1985), and Henning et al. (2013) say qualitative studies are studies that target depth of information rather than quantity; thus, they rely heavily on non-numeric data. This approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed for a deeper and detailed understanding (MacMillan & Schumacher 2016) of school principals' experiences and for data to be generated in the natural setting of participants.

Mcmillan and Schumacher (2016) Henning et al. (2013), Merriam (2009), and Raymond (2017) refer to a case study as a bounded system or a case that can be a person, a group of people, or an event that is examined in detail using multiple sources of data in the setting. Creswell (2017) views a case study as an in-depth study of a particular situation rather than a sweeping statistical survey. In adopting the case study, I was able to gather in-depth exploration of the study that would not be easily done through other research designs (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, a case study allowed for the use of multiple sources and techniques in data generation (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport, 2015) and Maree (2020). Thus, I was able to use interviews and document analysis.

Data generation methods

In line with the qualitative approach and the case study design, data was generated using semi-structured interviews as the primary means of data generation, coupled with document analysis. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative method of inquiry that combines a predetermined set of open questions that enable the interviewer to explore certain themes or responses further (Henning et al. 2013; Mushoriwa, 2018). I chose semi-structured interviews because participants could convey their views, experiences and opinions candidly, and they further allowed for probing and prompting (Henning et al., 2013). Moreover, because of their flexibility, interviews allowed for an intimate involvement with participants that enabled me to get to the core of the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2017), namely the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy change.

Document analysis, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2016) and Mushoriwa (2018), is a common approach to qualitative inquiry. As a data generation method, it allows for the examination of different types of documents. Punch (2017) acknowledges that documents can serve as a good source of data both in educational and social research. Additionally, conducting documentary research allowed me access to information that would be difficult to obtain in any other way. Finally, I used documents in this study for the main purpose of comparing information gathered from interviews and to manage an overly subjective interpretation that might be incurred using interviews only (De Vos et al, 2015). Documents that were analysed in the study were the FPE policies of all the schools that participated in the study.

1.7.3 Selection of participants and location

For this study, all principals who had been in school leadership for a period of ten years were considered for participation. Participants of the study were then purposively and conveniently sampled. McMillan and Schumacher (2016) and Creswell (2017) define purposive sampling as selecting information-rich individuals when one wants to understand something about those cases without generalising findings. Purposive sampling was fitting for this study because the study was not concerned with the generalisation of results but with the quality of information (De Vos et al., 2015). In the selected region, there are 158 school principals, and 12 principals were part of the study; this is sufficient for a qualitative study, but is not fit for generalising findings.

1.7.4 Data analysis

Data were analysed qualitatively through content analysis, specifically conceptual analysis. Conceptual analysis can be described as establishing the presence and frequency of concepts that are often represented by words or phrases in a particular text (Maree, 2020). The adoption of conceptual analysis enabled me to identify conflicting opinions and existing issues regarding the implementation of educational policy changes. In analysing the data, I followed the phases suggested by Henning et al. (2013). In the first phase, which is an orientation to data, I read and study the data sets to form an overview of the whole data text as well as understand the context. After gaining an intensive understanding of the data, I moved to the second phase, which entails coding segments of meanings. Within this phase, I categorised all related codes into groups and

sought relationships within categories to form thematic patterns. Finally, the third phase comprised writing the final themes of the sets of data where patterns of related themes are being presented.

1.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to a strong argument and clear demonstration that results that are presented are sound and valid (Shenton, 2004; Maree, 2020). To achieve trustworthiness in this study, I employed Guba and Lincoln's (1985) constructs, namely dependability, credibility, conformability and transferability.

1.8.1 Dependability

Dependability denotes whether "the findings of the research would be consistent if the study was repeated with similar participants in a similar context" (Creswell, 2017), allowing for the acceptance of research findings with confidence in the research community. Guided by Shenton (2004), to achieve dependability in this study, I have provided a detailed description of the research process and proper research practices that were followed.

1.8.2 Credibility

This criterion deals with how congruent or accurate the research findings are in reflecting the participants' reality through data (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Morrow, 2015). I achieved credibility in this study through the triangulation approach, where data was generated through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Additionally, I employed acceptable procedures in this research throughout the study, including selection of participants, data generation methods and data analysis, as suggested by Shenton (2004).

1.8.3 Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) view transferability as the extent to which the findings of the study relate to other similar environments. However, Shenton (2004) acknowledges that qualitative research is not transferable. Therefore, to cater for transferability, I provided adequate information about the study and a detailed description of the context in which the study was conducted (Shenton, 2004; Morrow, 2015; Mushoriwa, 2018).

1.8.4 Conformability

Conformability is a trustworthiness criterion in a qualitative study that deals with the authenticity and genuineness of a study. Tichapondwa (2015), Creswell (2017) and Maree (2020) concur that conformability is the degree of researcher neutrality so that the findings of the study come from participants, not researcher bias and interests. In this study, I shared the findings of the study with participants so that they could check whether all their responses were recorded accurately without sifting and alterations (Shenton, 2004; Morrow, 2015). Additionally, I provided a detailed description of the research methods employed to allow the reader to determine the extent to which the data and findings presented can be accepted (Shenton, 2004).

1.9 Ethical issues

Ethical considerations are a prerequisite to be observed by researchers in a study (Maree, 2020). As a researcher, I ensured that I observed all necessary research ethics as suggested by Henning et al. (2013) and De Vos et al. (2015) and these include voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw. To ensure that these ethics are upheld I applied for permission from the Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, and the Ministry of Education and Training in Eswatini, from school principals as gatekeepers in schools and as participants in the study. Additionally, participants were made aware of all research practices that were involved and they were assured that all information they disclosed was to be used for research purposes only and their identities were to be kept anonymous; the data generated would not be linked to anyone (Creswell, 2017). A detailed description of the ethics that were observed while conducting the study is provided in the methodology chapter, chapter 5.

1.10 Summary

In this chapter, I presented an overview of the study. Within the overview, the chapter consisted of the introduction, a brief description of the background, the problem statement, rationale and key questions that guide the study. I further provided a summary of the method that was used to conduct the study. It concluded with a description of the organisation of chapters. In chapter 2, I provide literature on the experiences of principals in implementing educational policy changes.

1.11 Mapping chapters for the study

This thesis aimed to contribute to knowledge not only about how principals experience the implementation of educational policy changes but also about how the experiences influence principals' thinking and enacting of their roles. It illuminates how principals in Eswatini experience educational policy changes. Therefore, my research report comprises seven chapters:

Chapter 1 – Introduction, research problem and method

This chapter serves as an introduction and background to the study. It sets the scene and gives an overview of the whole study. It begins with an introduction where I present the background of the study. Within the background, I present the conditions of policies in Eswatini. The study aimed to explore principals' experiences in the implementation of policy change. It considered how the participants' perceptions, experiences and enactments of policy change influence their roles of principals in the primary schools within the context of FPE.

Chapter 2 – Principals' experiences of implementing educational policy changes.

This chapter deals with a critical discussion of principals' experiences of implementing educational policy *changes* with literature focusing on concepts that are crucial to the study, reviewing current scholarship, both local and international.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical framework

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework that underpins the study. Viennet and Pont's (2017) framework was used as a lens of interrogating the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy changes.

Chapter 4 – The changing policy landscape in Eswatini; challenges of implementing free primary education

This chapter presents the education policy landscape in the country. The relevant legislation is reviewed to identify its relevance to the introduction and implementation of FPE.

Chapter 5 – Research design and method

In this chapter, I present the research design and methodology that I used in the study. I discuss the research methodology that I employed to generate and analyse data on the experiences of primary school principals in implementing policy changes with reference to the FPE policy in Eswatini. I started by identifying the research paradigm and its applicability to this study. The qualitative case study research design as a design in which this study is embedded is also discussed in detail. In selecting participants, I used purposive and convenience sampling. The research instruments and data collection procedures as well as data analysis are discussed extensively within this chapter. Ethical considerations undertaken in the process of conducting the study are articulated. Finally, measures that were put in place to ensure the trustworthiness of the study comprise the last part of the chapter. Subsequent chapters present the findings of the study.

Chapter 6 – Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data

This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study based on the experiences of principals in the implementation of policy change. The findings revealed that principals were not involved in the formulation of the policy nor prepared for its implementation. Principals execute a variety of roles in implementing the policy and they employ different strategies to implement the policy. Through the research findings, I proposed a policy implementation model that is holistic in nature to help in the implementation of policy changes in Eswatini.

Chapter 7 – Being the final chapter it discusses the findings of the study. In so doing it considers future directions for research in policy implementation. The chapter concludes that through engaging stakeholders, principals in particular, we can find ways to implement policy change effectively and efficiently.

CHAPTER 2: PRINCIPALS IMPLEMENTING EDUCATIONAL POLICY CHANGES

2.1 Introduction

In chapter one, I set out the focus and contextual background of the study, which explored the experiences of primary school principals as they grapple with the implementation of educational policy changes, with direct reference to the FPE policy in Eswatini. In this chapter, I present a critical review of international, continental, and local literature related to this study. In reviewing this literature, I have adopted the funnel approach with the hope to gauge the extent to which the topic under scrutiny has captured the imagination and received the attention of the global educational research community. I hope to use this literature as a litmus test for understanding the best practices from a global perspective. The local literature afforded me the opportunity to both assess the research focus the topic has received and the extent to which local practice either resonates with or deviates from global standards. It is from this assessment, in part, that this study could ascertain existing gaps in practice, as well as formulate strategies for addressing any emerging gaps. I have broken the chapter into five sections. In the first section, I present the key concepts used in the study and further provide the definitions that this study upholds. In the next section, I discuss educational policy change paying attention to both international and African literature. In the third section, I present the process of policy formulation and implementation. The next two sections concentrate on the principals' roles and experiences in the implementation of educational policy change. I conclude this chapter by briefly discussing the gap that this study addresses.

2.2 Policy and educational policy

Since this study hinges on issues of educational policy implementation and the experiences of principals in Eswatini, understanding the concepts of policy and educational policy is crucial. Policy is conceptualised differently by different scholars. For example, Tosun (2018) states that a policy is a statement by governments concerning what they intend to do or not. Gale (2016) shares the same sentiment and views the term policy as a country's developmental course of action proposed by the government and submitted as a legislative document stating what has to be done and by whom, regarding

a major change in organisational operations. Thurlow (2016) expands on the definition provided by the above scholars, indicating that a policy document by nature is not a neutral text. Instead, it is an authoritative allocation of values written, providing guidelines and principles to aid decisions and achieve rational outcomes that can be adopted by members within an organisation regardless of whether they are public services or private sectors. It is evident from the foregoing that policies are authoritative statements as well as commanding documents.

Intriguingly, McMenamin (2018) view policies as blueprints that are in place before the actual implementation is done. Souto-Otero (2015) adds that these blueprints are to be implemented through a guided process. Bridges and Watts (2014) remark that what makes a policy look like a policy are the policy statements found within the policy itself. Policy statements show the sorts of actions that are desirable at the end of the implementation (Gale, 2016). However, Bridges and Watts (2014) suggest that policy statements are not globally uniform; rather they vary from place to place and from country to country within their values and contexts. For instance, some policy statements are expressed as categorical endorsements of certain moral or social principles while others express educational principles more specifically (Gale, 2016). While these scholars have similar views about policy, Nilsen (2015:113) suggest that “policy is of little value if it does not yield the intended impact on practice”. Policy and policy statements are accordingly not confined to one particular person. Rather, the policy lies in an evaluation of different stakeholders, and it is open to anyone’s interpretation, construction, reconstruction, and even criticism in the channel of implementation.

Based on the above discussions, it is evident that a policy is an overall guide or method of action embracing goals and acceptable procedures to guide and determine current and future decisions especially those of a governmental body. A policy is thus a body of norms and an instrument that is used to introduce, implement, or manage a common agenda within an organisation. It can take the form of a holistic framework that meets both the current and future demands of an organisation. Education policy, as defined by Melford (2019), is a set of laws and processes that educational institutions or organisations put in place and follow to achieve academic goals. Similarly, Nilsen (2015) define education policy as principles of government in the educational sphere. Bridges and Watts (2014) expands on this definition and views educational policies as principles, collection of laws,

and rules that govern the operations of educational systems in a particular country. Moreover, Fletcher (2014) perceives education policy as a body of rules, regulations, and guidelines that guide the procedures of the education system in a geographical region, which is usually a country.

In contrast, Gale (2016) perceives education policies as plans and underlying principles for enlightening or educating students. These plans encompass goals that evolve with society and culture over time. Changes that are taking place in society are likely to influence or contribute to the initiation of new educational policies (Souto-Otero, 2015). His perception of education policy, unlike Fletcher (2014) and Gale (2016), is in contrast with other scholars as it is not law-based. Castles' explanation is significant to this study because it clarifies that the introduction of new educational policies at times may not be intentional or well planned, but rather be influenced by occurrences in the society. It is of interest to this study to understand how school principals have experienced unplanned or unintentional policies.

The FPE policy that is being used as a focal point in this study thus qualifies as a policy document because it is a legislative manuscript that has been developed by the Government of Eswatini in response to global directives in providing Education for All (EFA). Furthermore, the FPE policy specifically expresses educational principles ensuring that all Eswatini primary school-going learners have access to education (MOET 2009:3). The FPE policy clearly articulates what has to be done by different stakeholders including the state and the parents (Dlamini, 2017). Further, it is an authoritative document providing guidelines on how the FPE programme should be delivered and how other stakeholders should abide. Hence my interest in this study is to understand how Eswatini primary school principals have experienced the implementation of the FPE policy changes.

Drawing from the discussions above, almost all scholars share the view that educational policy is a document consisting of laws, principles, and processes that guide the operations of an educational institution. They also point out that policies must be intentional and have timelines. They must be aimed at achieving certain goals at stipulated times. Hence, I was interested in understanding how principals in Eswatini primary schools have experienced the implementation of educational policy changes.

2.3 Change and educational change

Change is believed to be about adding something new to what exists. Research evidence (Rue & Byars 2016; Wallace, 2016; Botha, 2016) portrays change as any transformation in the design or functioning of an organisation aimed at improving that particular organisation's performance. Bush (2016) and Fullan (2007) add that change brings with it new experiences and knowledge by challenging people's habitual practices and beliefs as well as raising the potential for unintended consequences among stakeholders. Fullan (2007) goes further to argue that real change involves loss, anxiety, and struggle. There are things one has to forego to achieve change and that change often entails apprehension and divided attention. Nthontho and Niewenhius (2016) agree with the above scholars and have rightly defined change as what it means to be human because as human beings we are constantly changing.

Although the wording of the above scholars' definitions of change has variations, the message within them is complementary. For instance, Wallace (2016), Rue and Byars (2016), and Botha (2016) define change from the transformation perspective where organisational improvement is the main goal. On the other hand, Bush (2016) and Fullan (2007) view change from the outcome perspective, where the unintended consequences and apprehension are for both those bringing change and those to be affected by the change. Because the two definitions are inseparable regarding where transformation takes place, there are expected outcomes regardless of the nature of their effects, and this study adopts both. For this study, change is seen to represent the anticipated transformation of the existing Eswatini school system to one desired as a result of educational policy reforms while at the same time there are costs to bear in the change process.

Having discussed how the different scholars view the concept of change, it is imperative to look into the definition of educational change as the study hinges on that concept too. Botha (2016) and Rue and Byars (2016) argue that educational change entails a constant flow of new requirements, added responsibilities, and extended expectations related to achieving the prime goal of building a knowledgeable and skilled workforce that is capable of functioning in a knowledge-based society. In line with Botha (2016), Rue and Byars (2016) and Fullan (2015) argue that educational change involves education systems such

as educational policies, vision for teacher education, strategy and standards in the education sector, structural changes, and curriculum changes. In other words, educational change as seen by Wallace (2016) is preceded by legislative and policy changes.

Although there is congruence amongst these scholars (Rue & Byars 2016, Fullan 2015, Botha 2016) that educational change is a result of forces such as new requirements, policy, and curriculum changes, the level of caution about change in education among them differs. Botha (2016) and Rue and Byars (2016) see change in education as a good and effective tool that fosters human capital development for nations and communities. Fullan (2015) agrees with that and goes further than simply defining a change in education but also articulates its forces to explore the uniqueness of change in education. The unitary features of all these varying definitions of change globally are the notions of inherent transformation or renewal and desired improvement. Nevertheless, for this study, educational change will be delimited to the transformation of the operations of educational institutions as well as the consequences and apprehension to both those involved and affected.

In the preceding paragraphs, the reverberating definition of change, especially in education, has invariably involved transformative agency in the human quest for better or improved performance and organizational aspirations. As mentioned above, change in education is always preceded, triggered, and governed by educational policy change. This study, therefore, considers educational policy change as the basis and roadmap for the implementation process. Having defined policy, change, and educational policy, it becomes imperative in a similar fashion to reform and deliberate on educational policy change.

2.4 Educational policy change

A thorough discussion of educational policy change is unavoidable for this study, where the sole focus is on the experiences of primary school principals as chief implementation agents. Owing to their critical position in the vanguard of the implementation of educational policy reform, principals' interpretation and clarity of guidance make or break implementation (Appleton, 2017). Schwela (2018) defines educational policy change as institutionalising new rules or procedures, passing laws, ordinances, mandates, and

resolutions. Cerna (2018) concurs with Schwela (2018) that educational policy change refers to incremental shifts in existing structures or new and innovative policies. Porter (2017) adds another dimension of educational policy change and sees it as a major change in attitude or principle. There is congruence among these scholars that educational policy changes are changes that are brought into existing education laws through the creation of new rules in the education sector or an improvement of existing educational policies.

The United States of America (USA) has not been immune to educational policy changes. The USA has undergone educational policy changes influenced by the global community and the American culture (Edward, 2017). The global community experienced changes in the economy and politics, and changes influenced by educational research, and more. American culture contains three strongly held values that have significantly influenced educational policy changes: equality, efficiency, and liberty (Barnet, 2017). Appleton (2017) observes that various large-scale social movements have over time contributed to formal education's place among society's major institutions. For example, the 20th-century Protestant Reformation in the United States encouraged education as a means to facilitate individual interpretation of religious scriptures. Similarly, among 21st-century leaders of the new republic in the US, education was viewed as a means to enable one to participate as an equal in the affairs of government (Williams, 2018). Under these circumstances, education was important in ensuring political liberty. Therefore, some changes were incorporated into education. There is a significant connection between education and the political outcomes of a country. Educational changes or reforms often come as a result of or in a bid to achieve certain political objectives. I argue that the role of a principal in executing educational reform is as much political as it is professional.

Similarly, France has experienced educational policy changes. Middleton, Ziderman, and Adams (2015) in their study report that this country's structural reforms of the education system were part of a global process of the democratisation of education. This was launched after World War II. UNESCO (2014) states that France adopted a series of reforms inspired by the American school model that was adopted in different countries (Rajabu, 2015). The reformist network, in which scholars, experts, and policymakers participated, enhanced reforming the education system in the country (King & Martin, 2018). The reformist network included the inequality of opportunity, and disenchantment

from the education system. These networks significantly fostered transformations of the French education system. Notably, the study by Middleton, Ziderman, and Adams (2015) does not specifically focus on the experiences and roles of principals in the implementation of education reforms, which is a central point of the current study.

In the centralised education system of Germany, a sweeping series of education reforms within the education system has been adopted (Thurlow, 2016). These reforms include lengthening school programmes, expanding early childhood education, making early education and care an entitlement for all children aged one and older, reforming tracking at the secondary level, and creating national standards for student performance (Hogan, 2016). Importantly, the reforms in Germany have according to Hogan (2016) been changing over time. All these changes have had a bearing on the school principals as they are at the centre stage of education in the school. It remains significant in this study to establish how school principals have experienced these changes. It is imperative to acknowledge that public pressure in Germany was significant in the reforms because it provided latitude for the government to play a more active role in education.

The reforms cited above had an immediate impact on raising student performance, but the improvement of the education system as a whole was limited (Schleicher, 2016). Marsha (2017) intelligently observes that the timing of the implementation of reforms has been taken seriously in Germany. Unlike France and the US, which implemented reforms because of global pressure, Germany rolled out educational policy changes and implementations in a careful, deliberate manner. It gave schools and teacher-education institutions more time to adjust to the new expectations before putting in place new policies (Appleton, 2017). In the rollout process, Germany appeared to have been well strategised to achieve the desired results.

China, one of the most developed countries in the world, has witnessed a fundamental transformation in education. The transformation in this country has been manoeuvred with ambitious plans for national and regional changes (Li, 2017). The reforms range from compulsory education from primary level to higher education, from curricular reform to system innovations, and from quantitative growth in educational access to quality improvement aiming at a world-class status. Ruan and Jin (2018) explain that the basic education curriculum in China has experienced several waves of change since the

founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. These changes followed major political and social movements. The changes involved the development and implementation of new curriculum guidelines in the form of teaching syllabus or curriculum standards for all school subjects. The interconnection between education reforms and the achievement of political agendas by governments is significant, and it remains of interest how school principals have experienced these reforms.

In the SADC region and sub-Saharan Africa, change in education has always been a corollary to educational policy change or reform. It is important to acknowledge that change in education has had its inherent characteristics of transformation and intended improvement. For example, Tanzania, an East African member of the SADC bloc, has undertaken several educational policy reforms since its independence from Britain in 1961. The two most notable of these educational policy reforms, as stated by Mcmenamin (2018), were the 1967 Education for Self-Reliance Policy and the most recent 1995 Education and Training Policy. Education policy reform in Tanzania has always taken into account the need to adapt education in line with the nation's socio-economic development imperatives (Mosha, 2018).

Ghana, like the aforementioned countries, has also undergone significant changes in education since independence. Kuleape (2016) observes that these changes were geared towards making education in the country more relevant to both local and international contexts. Notably, there was a concurrence of changes in education and political regime change. A review of the current school system reveals the persistence of academic bias in secondary education, relegating technical and vocational education and training to the background (Williams, 2018). The current study thus sets the tone for a rigorous explication of the educational policy changes and the experiences of school principals in the implementation process.

Landlocked Malawi in the south-east of Africa has also not been immune from the reality of educational policy changes. The attainment of Malawi's independence has been one of the drivers of educational reform in the country (Sewula, 2014). For instance, the curriculum of missionary education was reading, writing, and arithmetic with a few missions emphasising technical skills. This curriculum reflected the missionary agenda. However, after independence in 1964, the curriculum was reformed and several policies

were put in place (Sewula, 2014). Current prominent policies include the National Education Policy introduced in 2013 and The National Sector Policy introduced in 2016. While undergoing educational policy change Malawi has grappled with several other changes requiring adequately trained teachers, finances, and teaching resources. The remaining of interest in this study is how school principals, who are the personnel at the centre stage of educational reform, have experienced these changes.

Similarly, in Kenya, as stated by Ochieng (2013) the provision of education has been a central policy issue since independence in 1963. The Government of Kenya (GOK) devoted a substantial portion of its resources to education. This in part meant putting several policies in place. For instance, the government appointed a commission of inquiry into the education system of Kenya in May 1998. The commission adopted a comprehensive "multi-strategic approach" to facilitate the participation of as many Kenyans as possible. The inquiry released its report in March 2000 (GOK, 2015). As a result of the report, subsequent dialogue, and a review of the education sector, the new government put several policies in place. Some of the introduced policies included the basic education policy, the KANU manifesto, and Sessional Paper no 10, among others. Anderson (2015) reports that the government embarked on a variety of policy reforms as reflected in its Education Sector Strategic Plan. The changes represent the response by the GOK to ensure that the education system addresses national concerns of quality, relevance, access, and enhanced service delivery (GOK, 2015). Notably, some of the proposed changes made by the government to the education policy are still in operation, while others have since been discontinued after failing to make the appropriate impact desired. It remains an area of interest as to how principals have experienced these changes.

Describing the Zimbabwean experience, Moyo and Modiba (2018) state that several educational policies have been put in place in the country. Kanyenze (2016) notes that there has been a massive expansion in education that took place in Zimbabwe and encompass several policies in the early 1980s. However, Shizha and Kariwo (2015) have argued that political, historical, sociological, and economic factors and forces of globalisation have made an education policy change in Zimbabwe very complex. In this respect, Kanyongo (2015) explains that over the first decade of independence the reforms focused on making education suitable for Zimbabwe in line with the principle of Education

for All (EFA) adopted at independence. Moyo and Modiba (2018) remark that in the year 2000, Zimbabwe entered a time of rapid change as the government implemented education reforms primarily aimed at achieving indigenisation agendas. On this subject, many strategic partnerships that were established to maintain international quality education were cancelled. Mpofu (2015) feels that too many changes were made to the country's education system. Services such as Ordinary and Advanced Level (AL) examinations were localised. During this period, many curriculum reforms were meant to make the curriculum more attuned to the Zimbabwean context and culture. Of interest to this study is how the school principals have experienced these changes.

In Eswatini for instance, since the introduction of the new constitution in 2005, the education system has changed tremendously. This change has been in response to international, national, and regulatory dynamics. Like in sub-Saharan Africa in general and Southern Africa in particular, an identical trend concerning educational policy reform can be observed in this country. One of the latest educational policy shifts in this country, as discussed in the foregoing section, is the FPE policy, where the emphasis was to complete the national project of universal access to basic education. The FPE policy was a direct offshoot of the constitution of 2005, which is equally reflective of previously expressed national aspirations and further reaffirmed education as the right of all citizens (Nsibande, 2016). Embedded in this constitutional directive is the nation's conviction that, like in the examples above, education is vital to socio-economic development. Importantly, successive post-independence governments of the Kingdom of Eswatini have instituted and witnessed various changes in education. Education as a social service has been viewed invariably in terms of "… an inalienable right of every child and every citizen, to receive to the limit of his/her capabilities…" Imbokodvo National Manifesto, 1972, cited in Discussion Papers (World Bank, 2015:15). Subsequent educational policy directives that have driven change in education in the country down the years have consistently adhered to this national sentiment and aspiration. When the current constitution took effect in earnest in 2006, following its enactment in 2005, it reaffirmed this:

> *"Every Swazi child shall within three years of the commencement of this constitution has the right to free education in public schools at least up to the end of primary school, beginning with the first grade".*

It is imperative to point out here that educational policy change has occurred globally with the African continent, witnessing an increased rate of educational policy changes (Williams, 2018). Several reforms have been accepted and ushered into practice by most African countries including inclusive education, assessment policies, and competency-based education, FPE, and others. Significantly, some of these reforms have been initiated and came into existence due to international agendas and education movements that occurred globally such as the Jomtien Conference, Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and the most recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (UNICEF, 2014).

Interestingly, the current study explored the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes that might in part reveal the actions taken by the Eswatini Government to ensure that policies are known and instilled into the implementers. Appleton (2017) cites the deliberate collaboration with teacher education institutions to ensure that training on reforms is formally and fully executed. In a developing country such as Eswatini, educational reforms are often hampered by the lack of training of implementers (Matsebula, 2015). This makes implementers inadequately prepared or incompetent to execute policy changes effectively (Ngwenya, 2015). Donohue and Bornman (2014) discovered that in other cases, the policy is not even understood and remains unclear to the implementers.

Of significance to this study is not only the passing of legislative laws and procedures. Rather, it is how educational policy changes have altered strategic and operational structures in the field of education in general and in schools in particular, and how school principals have experienced that. It is imperative to acknowledge that some developments have served as catalysts for educational policy changes. Changes in the world economy, dissatisfaction with the state of the economy, findings emerging from academic research, among many other phenomena, have contributed to the calls for educational policy change (Mcmenamin, 2018). Particularly while there is clear evidence that globally countries have been involved in extensive educational policy change, there is very little research around the experiences of principals in implementing educational reforms. It is therefore important to understand how school principals have experienced these changes in Eswatini.

2.5 Policy formulation and policy implementation

This section discusses the steps involved in policy formulation and policy implementation. The reason for this is to get the gist of the relationship between the policy implementation process and the experiences of school principals. In this section, I also highlight briefly the roles played by school principals in each step or cycle as they are crucial role players. The process is illustrated in diagram 2.1 below.

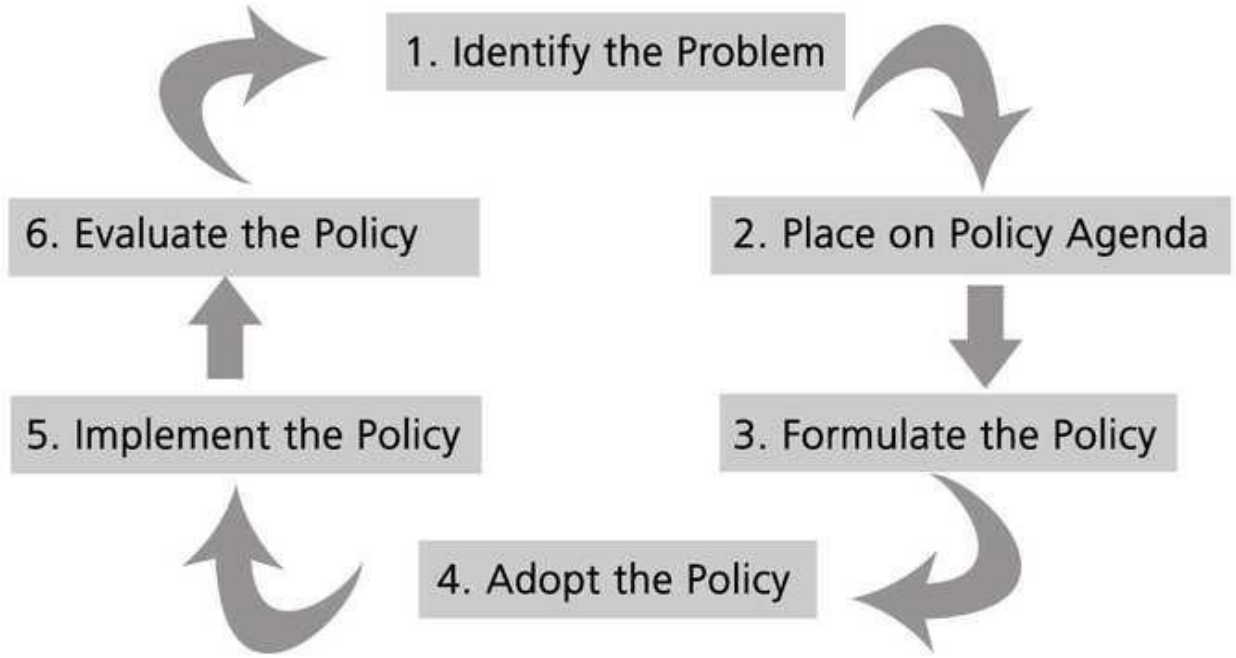

Figure 2.1: ***Steps in policy formulation and implementation (adapted from Hoopers 1996)***

2.5.1 The policy process

The policy process is normally cyclical, as shown above. Nilsen (2015) observes that the formulation of an effective policy involves understanding the cycle; in other words, those that are involved should be knowledgeable about all the processes and procedures. Barry (2017) further notes that the policy process continues beyond the adoption stage to involve implementation and evaluation. Policies are developed in anticipation of a need or in response to a need (Downey, 2019). The FPE policy that was used in this study was developed because member states of the United Nations (UN) felt there was a need to

ensure access to education for every learner. Principals play a crucial role throughout the policy process if involved. Curtain (2018) posits that good policy making requires consultation of the end-users of the policy that is being formulated. He emphasises that governments should seek wider stakeholder inputs during the policy formulation stage. Thus, if principals are consulted and involved, they can make a positive contribution especially in identifying the problem.

2.5.1.1 Problem identification

This is the stage where a common understanding of the problem is a necessity for united effective action within the education sector. A well-supported understanding of the role of schools in responding to the problem is necessary (Mueller, 2017). During the problem identification, schools can be represented by school principals, teachers by their unions, and parents by the school committee. Downey (2019) presents several questions that can be used at this stage, including: do the stakeholders understand the problem or the issue? How has the issue been handled in the past? Where does the issue fit within the educational goals? What are the priorities and the budget of the organisation and do stakeholders have a choice in the matter? Andrew (2016) notes that policymakers can extensively involve school principals in meetings and research interrogations. Other forms of involvement can include doing a needs assessment, assessing legislation, regulations, and the ministry's directions.

2.5.1.2 Policy agenda

The policy agenda consists of demands that policymakers decide to consider. Staw (2017) remarks that agenda-setting is an irrational process; it is a struggle to define the problem. In this struggle, all interests may not be equally represented. Some problems are likely to be part of the agenda while others may not be. For the policymaking system to take action on a problem; the problem must be accepted on the agenda (Mueller, 2017). An issue that is on the agenda cannot be displaced. Bell (2016) says issues get placed on the agenda through publications, and mass mobilisation, Staw (2017) remarks that a policy agenda can be achieved in three basic ways: a school trustee or committee of the school board takes interest, a group of teachers, parents, administrators or community representatives prepare proposals; or a status report of the issue is requested or prepared for the school board. This stage requires interrogation with questions such

as Is this issue covered by legislation, regulation, or collective agreement? Is the policy needed? Some of the strategies that can be put in place include seeking advice from affected stakeholders and discussing issues at the annual meetings.

2.5.1.3 Policy formulation

This stage is characterised by a broad cross-section of opinions involved early in the process; the problem identification. Freedman (2018) refers to the policy formulation stage as the consultation stage that allows for the involvement of stakeholders. Importantly school principals, teachers, learners, and parents are stakeholders when it comes to school issues. Luthan (2015) and Barry (2017) agree that the step of policy formulation is a critical stage in the whole process as it lays a foundation of activities that might feature later. Downey (2019) has rightly said that it is a consultation stage. Middleton, Ziderman and Adams (2018) emphasise that principals can be instrumental in this stage and provide information about existing policies and how best-desired policies can be formulated. The assertion made by the above scholars is a sharp contrast to the passive roles played by principals in other parts of the world, as described by Bradshaw and Buckner (2014). They argue that principals are never involved in the whole policy process, yet at the end of implementation they are found at the centre stage. Bell (2016) claims that the involvement of school principals at the early stages of policy formulation and subsequent implementation ensures an early buy-in to the objectives of the policy changes. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that school principals are largely policy consumers rather than policy formulators (Rue and Bryas, 2016; Brass, 2016, Khumalo, 2017). Fletcher (2014) state that in a highly centralised educational system such as Malta and Turkey, school principals are mainly passive bystanders during the design phase. Still, Williams (2014) comments that imposed changes push school principals into reluctant activeness to facilitate policy change.

2.5.1.4 Policy adoption

This is the phase in the policy process in which policies are adopted by the government and all concerned stakeholders for implementation (Anderson, 2015). It is a phase that comes into play when all proposals, compromises, and alternatives have been made. It is also a phase that occurs publicly. Hope (2018) observes that politicians may have a strong influence during the adoption stage as they can influence which policy can be

adopted and which policy cannot be implemented. The adoption phase is a step that ensures that implementers and their teams are aware of new policies and policy changes. Communication and training on the new policy can take place during this phase (Anderson, 2015). In light of this, Nilsen (2015) comments that by not training and empowering implementers, policymakers expose implementers to a risk of not achieving desired policy goals. Importantly, once relevant government bodies and stakeholders have adopted the policy, the policy can then move to the next phase, which is the implementation phase. Some of the crucial guiding questions at this stage include finding out if the policy is consistent with the desired goals of that particular education system and if the resources and personnel are available for adopting the policy. Principals cannot be left out of this phase as it sheds light on a newly adopted policy and what is expected of the different stakeholders.

2.5.1.5 Policy Implementation

This is the operational phase where the plans are realised. It is a multifaceted and complex process that involves many stakeholders, principals in particular. This phase being a complex one, I appreciate Edward's (2017) assertion that implementation is a process that can fail if not well handled by those in authority. Subroto (2018) and Downey (2019) present a range of reasons that can prevent an implementation from being effective. According to these scholars, the reasons can include a lack of focus on the implementation processes and a lack of recognition that the core of change processes requires engaging people in the case of this study being school principals. Subroto (2018) remarks that this is where policies often stall if the process is not well handled.

Implementation as a process needs to be revised to adapt to new complex governance systems (Viennet & Pont, 2017). It is, therefore, crucial to understand implementation as a process and clarify its determinants. Hope (2018) sees school principals as vital components of educational policy implementation. Principals are at the centre of every school activity. Their decisions literally reverberate throughout the community in which their schools are located. Hope (2018) points out that principals are critical to educational policy reforms because they play multiple roles that are essential for the successful implementation of policies. They can be initiators, innovators, motivators, advocators, and

communicators of the intended reforms. Principals are therefore indispensable to the effective implementation of educational policy change.

2.5.1.6 Policy evaluation

This is the last stage that should include a clear reporting procedure. Edward (2017) remarks that educational policy reports can be done on an annual basis. This can include formative feedback from stakeholders and external groups on the implementation of the policy. This stage allows for the review of the policy. Principals can provide information on whether the vision underlying the policy was communicated, whether implementation was coordinated effectively, whether there was sufficient monitoring, and whether procedures and regulations were followed (Mcmenamin, 2018). From a slightly different perspective, Subroto (2018) emphasises the complexities of policymaking, and how it is not a simple matter of following a policy cycle, as highlighted earlier, but encompasses many things, such as the failure to appreciate that it cannot follow a linear progression due to its complex nature. This is due to policymakers tending to overlook the role of stakeholders and even the stages of policy development. “It should therefore be noted that in the policy-making process a multitude of different processes occurs on different scales and at different speeds in a simultaneous pattern” (Subroto, 2018:3).

The above insights are of great significance because they pave the way to understanding the experiences of principals and processes that have been applied in the implementation of educational policy changes in different countries and Eswatini in particular. Principals are supposed to be the main contributors and participants in the different phases of policy development to ensure the success of the implementation process. At the heart of this study is an exploration of the experiences of principals in the implementation process.

2.5.2 Principals’ role in the implementation of educational policy changes

The literature (Dinc, 2016, Graven, 2017, Edward 2017) points to the principal as being an important part of implementing educational policy change. Oketch, Mutisya, Ngware, Ezeh, and Epari (2018) hold the same view and explain that principals are key actors in the implementation of educational policies and that a policy that is focusing on education should involve principals in all the phases. However, Bennell (2016) observes that principals continue to be excluded from the whole policy process. This hampers the

implementation process. Wiener (2019) remarks that the implementation of educational policies should entail the capacity and motivation of implementers. Thus, the extent to which the rules and regulations of implementation strategies are known by all actors and the actions taken in daily tasks done by different actors throughout the system becomes crucial in the implementation process (Darling-Hammond, 2018). I, therefore, argue that the clarity with which the principals will organise and implement any policy in the school is dependent on their experiences of the specific goals, objectives of the policy, and how well they have internalised the policy messages emanating from a policy initiative. Williams (2018) notes that many principals are not able to adapt policies to their local circumstances because they are normally not involved in the whole process.

Thomas and Knezek (2015) acknowledge that a principal needs to be smart in implementing educational policy changes. The principal must be able to orient the school as a community about the implementation process to take place. Yee (2020) adds that a school principal must be creative, be able to cultivate an environment and a culture that aligns with the policy to be implemented. Cheng's (2016) study highlights the importance of a principal knowing the policy to be implemented and trends of educational policy implementation.

Principals are also expected to provide direction during the implementation of educational policy changes. Sara (2016) observes that for a principal to provide direction on policy implementation, the ministry of education, together with policy designers, must provide the principal with a clear vision and an understanding of how the policy is to be implemented. Dexter (2017) in his study of curriculum implementation in high schools highlights the importance of school principals and designates them as strategic role players. Dexter's (2017) study not only discovered the importance of school principals but also confirmed the importance of engaging them in the entire process. He asserts that without a clear understanding of the policy to be implemented, implementation can result in complete failure. Banoglu's (2017) research, however, found that principals consistently rated themselves as incompetent in the area of educational policy implementation despite the numerous roles they executed. Arar, Brooks, and Bogotch (2019) remark that in centralised education environments, principals often take little or no part in policy formulation, yet they are expected to take the centre stage in the implementation process. Flora (2019) observes that this creates a collection of core

implementers of educational policy changes who are not convinced of the objectives of the desired change. They may therefore work in a regressive rather than a progressive manner to implement policy change.

Active participation cannot be overemphasized as a role of the school principal throughout the implementation process; principals are not supposed to be spectators. Bridges and Watts (2014) have views that are significant to this study, as they comment that most educational policy changes are largely political and imposed by governments. This often reduces the principal to a mere spectator who waits for instructions, which creates a lot of mistrust and discourages the principal from taking any advanced role in the process of implementing educational policy changes. Zayim (2015) contends that educational policy reforms that are top-down in their approach often fail despite significant investment of resources to boost the implementation of these policies. The reasons for such spectacular failures of centralised educational change proposals are wide and varied by the lack of involvement of primary implementers at the formulation stage of the policy.

Principals must be knowledgeable and be well prepared for the implementation of educational policy changes. Flanagan and Jacobsen (2015) argue that if school leaders are not prepared for their roles as experts, they may struggle to achieve desired implementation results. Research by Akbaba-Altun (2016) shows that most principals are aware of the importance of their roles in implementing educational policy change. Still, principals have expressed that they do not have the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective policy implementers and model the understanding of the changes to be put in place for their staff (Afshari, 2019; Anderson 2015; Cakir, 2014; Peck, 2018). Hughes (2017) found that the success or failure of implementing educational policy changes in a school could be related to the ideologies and behaviour of the leader. This is relevant to this study because it indicates that policy implementation requires the preparation of implementers. What remains of interest in this study is to explore how Eswatini school principals have experienced the implementation of educational policy changes.

In England, Gu, Sammons, and Chen (2018) investigated from the viewpoint of senior and middle education leaders how secondary principals lead their schools to achieve sustainable performance despite policy shifts or educational policy changes. The study revealed that implementing educational policy changes successfully relies on building

and consolidating the capacity of implementers. Central to the concept of the success of schools during policy shifts is the competence of school leaders in understanding and willingness to be part of the change being introduced (Bell, 2016). Shen (2018) comments that the involvement of school principals at the early stages of policy formulation and subsequent implementation ensures an early buy-in into the objectives of the policy changes.

In a Lesotho study, Mazibuko (2007) viewed the principals' role in educational policy implementation as that of being a translator of policy initiatives into schools and practice. He asserts that it is the principals' role to ensure that policies that have been put in place by the ministry of education are known by stakeholders and later implemented accordingly. This view is further supported by Medford 2019) who says principals play a mediatory role during policy change.

Another study by Msane (2009) in South Africa explored the principals' interpretation of their roles in implementing the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in KwaZulu-Natal province. The findings of the study revealed that principals were struggling with the interpretation of their roles in the implementation of the NCS in South African schools, partly due to the huge change and complexity of the NCS. They were not familiar with the roles of educators as specified by the policy and shifted their roles by blaming the Department of Education (DoE). Furthermore, principals complained that the DoE was more concerned about expanding access to education than the quality of education. They lamented that teachers had low self-esteem with the profession. Principals required detailed workshops on their roles in the implementation of the NCS, ongoing curriculum leadership training, and required resources. The studies reviewed so far have satisfactorily focused on the strategic views of principals regarding policy changes, most studies do not portray principals and teachers as victims and receivers of the policy and not influencers of the policy. The argument which I am developing is that educational policy change is more effective when all stakeholders, especially school leaders and implementers, are intensively involved in the total process of education policy change.

In Eswatini, Magagula (1990) examined the implementation of educational policies and found that there was a disconnect between policy and practice. Botha (2015) conducted an analysis of the Swaziland public education sector environment where he discovered

that policy developers were not working collaboratively with implementers. In addition, Dlamini (2017) investigated the implementation and sustainability of FPE in terms of the interplay between policy and practice. The study revealed a disconnection between policy and practice. Dlamini (2017) found that FPE implementers are not well versed in their roles and with the policies they were supposed to implement as they were not included in the policymaking process. In the case of this study, implementers are the school principals.

In the present study, I contend that the involvement of principals in the initiation of policy formulation, implementation, and review is essential to their ability to participate in meaningfully ineffective policy reforms. The principal is a central cog in the implementation of educational policy reforms such as FPE (Viennet and Pont, 2017). Therefore, the involvement of principals throughout the process enables them to understand their roles and actively participate in the policy process.

2.6 Principals' experiences and response to the implementation of educational policy changes

Principals play a crucial role in the implementation of educational policy change. Empirical evidence points out that there are diverse experiences encountered by school principals that relate to the implementation of educational policy change. Kitainge, Semple, and Nguthari (2016) state that the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy changes have many challenges. Freedman (2018) adds that in implementing educational policy changes, the school principal faces many challenges coupled with the growing demand for accountability. The challenges include resistance, inadequate training, lack of resources, lack of support, and contradictory demands. This section presents a discussion of the experiences of principals in this regard.

Richards (2017) conducted a study in Canada on universal FPE, a history of failure. It was conducted at the primary school level, aiming at exploring international attempts in the provision of universal primary education (UPE) and discovering the reasons for their failure. This study noted a lack of funding as a major problem experienced by the principals. It was discovered that UPE faces a serious shortage of resources; hence there is a constant dilemma for principals on how to distribute the limited available resources to best achieve the implementation of UPE. Most education budgets, as revealed by the

study, went to tertiary or secondary education and capital projects such as building schools. It is imperative to acknowledge that school finance poses challenges for education systems found among member countries of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and of the Commonwealth (Brubaker, 2016 & Rogers, 2017). Pakistan has experienced financial challenges in the implementation of educational policy changes. In a study conducted by Steyn (2013), it was found that principals, when there are educational reforms, have cited a lack of finances as a challenge. Some of the reforms may be curricular changes that always come with financial demands. Pakistan is a nation of 140 million with a gross enrolment rate of about 80% but has failed to have funding for the implementation of educational policies, particularly FPE (Rinne, 2015). Given the historical ties to modest public education spending, it has been difficult for the country's provinces to provide universal education, especially in rural areas. ADB has emphasized basic education as a means to get more students enrolled, especially the girls. ADB has provided loan assistance to Pakistan for educational development, but it seems the efforts are not yielding fruit. The interest of this study is to explore the experiences of the principals in the implementation of education policy change.

Within Qatar, Romanowski (2016) examined education reform in secondary schools paying attention to critical issues facing principals. The study found that principals lacked an understanding of how to work under newly formulated policies as they did not have a clear understanding of the original policies. The educational reforms forced changes in the principal's roles. These roles included an increase in the involvement of other stakeholders such as teachers and parents, as well as less micromanaging and more delegation. Nappi (2014) explains that all these changes often conflict with the role of principals in Qatar. It is vital to comprehend the dynamics behind imposed policies and scrutinize the reactions of policy implementers, including the principals. Thurlow (2016) remarks that schools and education systems frequently suffer from government-imposed directives and policies. In many cases, school principals do not play any role in the design phase of policy changes (Poulson, 2014). However, as school leaders, principals have to convince school stakeholders to collaborate in the implementation of these changes. Romanowski's (2016) study found that principals face resistance from teachers and parents during policy implementation. This resistance comes into play because teachers and parents have not been engaged in the initial stage as stakeholders.

Principals have experienced challenges due to inadequate training in the implementation of educational policy changes. Research (Andrew, 2016; Thomas and Kzenek, 2015; Ramatseba, 2016; Steiner & Hassel 2015) indicates that a lack of adequate training in handling complex environmental issues is a major challenge for school leadership in a constantly changing policy context. It is essential to indicate here that at the heart of education reform is competence which can only be achieved through training and adequate exposure. Schiller (2018) in an Australian study found that the level of training and leadership skills that the principals possess are central in assisting the principal to understand and handle educational reform. Flanagan and Jacobsen (2015) and Christie, Butler, and Potterton (2007) assert that inadequate development in leadership, lack of informed leadership, and pedagogical issues are strong barriers for school principals when they aim to integrate educational reform. Training school administrators and preparing them is identified by Thomas and Kzenek (2015) as the overwhelming need for making educational reform a reality in schools. In another Bangladesh study, Walles (2017) observed that principals did not have adequate training to enable them to handle the complex tasks of implementing educational policy change issues. The capacitation of school principals in Eswatini before the implementation of the new policies is an issue that is never taken into consideration (Nsibande, 2016). Principals in Eswatini are appointed based on holding a degree in education and having served as a deputy principal for at least five to seven years. The period of service before being a principal as well as the training might have not equipped principals with the skills of handling policy changes.

Paudel (2019) further observes that implementation of educational policy change comes with mixed feelings for implementers coupled with confusion and a loss of confidence. A key challenge, as noted by scholars (Norman, 2017, Shen, 2018), that comes with particular educational policy changes is resistance. Kipkoech (2012:86) acknowledges that “adopting new practices is difficult for all types of firms and organisations, even top-performing organisations struggle to embrace change”. Schools and their leadership are not immune from this. Resistance to change can be from the school community coupled with negative attitudes. The school community can include teachers, parents, learners, and other interested stakeholders (Dawson & Rakes, 2018; Barry, 2017). Starr (2016:84) points out that one of the reasons there is resistance is because “the professional wisdom

of practitioners is largely ignored", yet they have to "live with the effects of the change". This may shake the trust stakeholders have in the principal, which is a paramount factor in the relationship. Teachers may demonstrate some level of resistance to changes in their teaching environment, as the process of change requires them to modify what they have been doing for years. Goldring, Crowson, Laird, and Berk (2015) and Fullan (2009) emphasise that the school community and its constituents must be involved in the change process for sustainability over time, and change as a process has to be accepted by different stakeholders, including teachers and others, as they act as change agents in the school. Shen (2018) comments that despite resistance to change, principals should constantly create a conducive environment and search for improvement strategies.

Valiant (2015) and Elmore (2018) found that during educational reforms, principals often experience contradicting demands, ambiguity, and a lack of information. At times it remains unclear what is expected of school principals as agents of policy change. Change most often involves a need to clarify the sense of organisational direction; that is, to articulate where all is presumably headed. Shen (2018) however, laments that a new policy and its implementation usually offers direction that is often in the form of expectations and accountability, but specifics about where to take an organisation, or one component of it, are left relatively unspecified. Sometimes the changes that are sought are too complex for the environment in which the policy is being implemented. This often leaves the principal in a dilemma.

Nthontho and Nieuwenhuis (2016) investigated educational policy changes paying attention to how principals interpret policy and its implementation with a focus on religion policy. In their study conducted in South Africa, Nthontho and Nieuwenhuis (2016) discovered that school principals were not part of strategies to reform religion in schools and they did not receive adequate training in the implementation of the policy in schools. It further found that past experiences with religion in education, either as students or educators, had a significant impact on how principals perceive the role of religion in schools and how they dealt with it.

Lack of resources is seen as another major challenge for the school principals while implementing education policy change. Burt (2018) and Fleming and Marx (2016) acknowledge that policies are certainly not implemented in a blank environment. They

ought to compete for resources and attention among other national policies as well as school projects and priorities. Policy change can also draw upon several assets that already exist. Heller and Firestone (2015) report that the lack of facilities and human resources emerged as challenges for school leaders while implementing educational policy change. In a South African study by Lizer (2016), it was observed that in some cases educational policy change can be resource-intensive, creating a need for more resources, both material and human, which are often not available or put in place in schools for the policy changes. School principals in a South African study by Khumalo (2017) stated that the lack of resources in some schools contributed to them failing in executing their roles effectively in the implementation of educational policy change (Nerkar & Paruchiri, 2015). Ayo (2016) and Mulima (2018) have confirmed in their studies conducted in South Africa that the lack of resources results in many schools failing to implement changes accordingly, and consequently failing to achieve their goals. The lack of resources in the implementation of policies such as FPE has been identified in many studies as a serious challenge (Kulunda & Otanga, 2015, Hu 2017; Morejele, 2012, Sifuna, 2017). This is so because the implementation of policies such as FPE requires adequate resources, both material and human. Conversely, the experiences of the school principals in the implementation of education policy of change remain unexplored.

Similar to the Namibian experience discussed earlier, Eswatini's brave strides in addressing socio-economic challenges through progressive education policy reforms endured many constraints. The most noticeable ones revolve around tensions between policy imperatives and implementation at the school level. These implementation challenges date back to and can equally also be ascribed to the advent of FPE. It is imperative to highlight these challenges as they represent some of the niggling experiences of primary school principals in the implementation of education policy reforms. The experiences of school principals in implementing education policy change are the direct focus of this study and remain unexplored.

2.7 Gaps in the literature on experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy change

While there are both international research and Sub-Saharan studies on educational policy changes (Cerna, 2018; Wallace, 2016 & Morejele, 2012), a few studies have been conducted on the experiences of principals in implementing educational policy change within the Eswatini context. Although the foregoing studies have their relevance in Eswatini education, they still do not address or unveil the issues around the experiences of principals as they implement educational policy changes. The need to establish the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy changes in Eswatini primary schools cannot be overemphasized, as failure to do so might result in compromised educational policy implementation and success.

In addition, the reviewed literature suggests that most research on implementing educational policy change conducted in countries internationally and within the sub-Saharan region focussed on various aspects of educational policy implementation and policy reforms and not on the experiences of primary school principals. The literature also shows a few studies in Africa concerning principals' experiences in implementing educational policy change in primary schools. Most international countries seem to have been making deliberate efforts to develop and implement educational policy change and it remains unknown how principals have experienced the changes. Studies that have been conducted focus on other aspects of policy change such as the implementation of FPE, implementing educational reforms, and curriculum changes. Other studies (Cheng, 2016; Valiant 2015; Elmore, 2018, Williams, 2018) have focused on institutions of higher learning, such as high and secondary schools as opposed to primary education level. As a result of this, there is limited literature at the primary school level and the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy change. Educational policy change is significant as it provides purpose in education and offers specific direction to schools through the ministry of education on education matters. Checchi (2018) argue that countries implement educational policies to enhance the operations of schools. They, therefore, emphasise the need for scholars to research the procedures and methods of implementing educational policy changes. Hence, this study focused on the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy change.

Drawing from the literature reviewed in this chapter, it is perceived that some countries do not prepare principals for educational policy change. This scenario weakens the effective implementation that is supposed to be offered by the ministry of education in its effort to improve education in schools (McMenamin, 2018). Despite similar studies that have been carried out on policies, the aspect of the current study has not been exhaustively unveiled, as previous studies neither established the experiences of principals nor guided on the procedure to be followed in implementing educational policy change in schools (Mulima, 2018). Similar studies that have concentrated on primary education conclude in their findings and recommendations that they do not address nor offer a solution to the experiences of primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy change in Eswatini (Dlamini, 2017; Khumalo, 2017; Nsibande, 2016; Matsebula, 2015). Many scholars (Dlamini, 2017; Richards, 2017, Ratsogi & Mehta, 2015) that have researched education policy have focused mainly on policy change in education and not on the aspect of principals' experiences.

Regardless of the introduction of numerous policies in education in different countries, it is unclear what MOET has done in preparing principals for implementing educational policy change. Therefore, the foregoing raises the need to explore the existing experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy change in Eswatini primary schools. It would also be crucial to establish what roles are played by principals in the implementation process and how they are influenced in their thinking as they execute those roles.

Furthermore, several studies on policy implementation (Pepper and Thomas 2011, Wallace 2016, Mutambo, 2013) are based in developed countries like the United Kingdom (UK), China, and Australia. There is also a lack of research on the experiences of primary school principals, particularly in Eswatini, where several policies (Inclusive draft Policy 2009, FPE 2009, Sector Policy 2011, and Schools Accounting Regulations 2015, Schools Management Guide 2011, Education Sector Policy 2018) have been put in place. The context in which this study was undertaken was that of a developing economy. I have observed that there remains a gap between newly implemented policies and the experiences of the school principals and the issue is that very little has been written on this topic. Thus, there is a gap in the literature.

The significance of this study, therefore, lies in that it will focus on the Eswatini situation with its inherent challenges and assess the experiences of principals with the view to inform policymakers.

Importantly, this study has the potential of exposing the knowledge and understanding that the principals have of implementing educational policy changes and exposing areas of weakness in principals' coping mechanisms within a constantly changing policy context with particular reference to the FPE policy. The value of the study also lies in the fact that it has got the potential of providing an educational policy change implementation model that can be incorporated into structured principal training that can be adopted at the ministry level within the context of a developing country. The study may further contribute towards theorising the implementation of educational policy change, especially within the context of Eswatini.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a critical discussion of the implementation of educational policy change with a special focus on policy and educational policy, educational policy change, the process of policy formulation and implementation, and the roles and experiences of principals in the implementation process. The chapter ended with a concise discussion of gaps in the literature. The next chapter presents the changing policy landscape in Eswatini.

CHAPTER 3: THE CHANGING POLICY LANDSCAPE IN ESWATINI EDUCATION SYSTEM

3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2, I presented literature that is relevant to this study. In this chapter, I discuss the changing policy landscape in the education system of Eswatini. To do so, I have broken the chapter into four sections. In the first section, I discuss international policy documents that are in line with the FPE policy, and in the same manner as in section two, I discuss regional documents. In section three, I provide an overview of the education policy framework in Eswatini. More specifically, I provide a brief overview of the educational policies, conditions, and processes that led to the introduction of FPE since independence in 1968. In this regard, I review the relevant legislation (The 1999 Education Act, the constitution of the Kingdom of Eswatini 2005, the free primary education policy 2009, and the School Management Guide 2011), highlighting how they have influenced the introduction and implementation of FPE. I conclude this chapter by briefly discussing the trends in the implementation of FPE policy.

3.2 Definition of key concepts

It is important to define certain concepts that are critical to the understanding of principals' experiences in the implementation of educational policy changes and the changing policy landscape in Eswatini.

3.2.1 Free Primary Education

Free primary education is a term that is used synonymously with Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Education for All (EFA) that refers to the waiving of tuition fees (Darkwa and Mazubuko, 2007). A programme speaks of removing barriers to education access. One of the barriers to education is school fees (Dlamini, 2017), which in most instances and developing countries most households cannot afford. The Free Primary Education Policy of Eswatini (2000:2) designates FPE as "education for a Swazi child at public primary schoo without the parent child having to pay tuition fees". Throughout this study, the term free primary education (FPE) is used to refer to education where parents do not pay fees for their children.

3.2.2 Treaty

The term treaty refers to an internationally binding instrument that is concluded between states, which may include conventions, agreements, and contracts that establish obligations between the member states (Moloi, 2018). These instruments are usually governed by international law.

3.3 The rationale for policy change in education

This section provides a rationale for educational policy change in education. Barnet (2017) remarks that when speaking of educational reform, reference is often made to changes and transformations in the education system in relation to factors such as curriculum, educational philosophy, financing of education, student policy, pedagogy, organisational issues, management of schools, and other links of national development. These are some of the overarching reasons for educational policy changes that are discussed in detail in this section.

Melford (2019) has cited the fulfillment of worldwide commitments as one of the crucial objectives of educational reform. That is to say, educational policies change as a response to global obligations by member countries. Upholding the same view, Appleton (2017) remarks that educational policy change takes place to respond to a perceived or desired community. This community could be on a national or international level.

In addition, policies change with the sole purpose of safeguarding students' rights (Tumwine, 2020). In this century, the consensus and the prime purpose of education are to care for and improve holistic education, especially for the most vulnerable and underprivileged children. Thus, to guarantee access to free, compulsory, and high-quality education, policies are constantly developed and changed. All this is to ensure the aforementioned rights of learners.

Furthermore, Cerna (2018) remarks that the purpose of educational reforms at times may be to transform schools and to raise the quality of education in a particular country. If the quality of education is compromised and schools are underperforming, the department of education may be forced to improve, introduce or develop new policies.

Cantwell (2016) has also noted that policies may be put in place to meet the needs of particular groups or groups of nationals. A good example of such is the inclusive education policy that has been put in place by many countries to cater to learners with special needs.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the MOET in Eswatini is making a great effort to develop policies and legal frameworks to guide the education sector. Williams (2014) has acknowledged that policies serve as a roadmap in education; hence, reviewing them from time to time cannot be overlooked, while Wolinski (2010) observes that policy changes improve the quality of education. In an attempt to achieve this, an educational policy can prescribe changes in curriculum, expectations for students, and expectations from educators, educational content, class size, and academic schedules. Significantly, educational policies change for many reasons, but all the reasons revolve around offering quality education.

3.4 International policy documents that have a bearing on FPE

This section discusses some of the key international policy documents and commitments that have a bearing on the implementation of FPE. The international policy documents that I discuss here have a bearing on FPE and these are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the World Conference on Education for All.

3.4.1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Fletcher (2014) reports that this policy document declares that human rights are universal. Everyone should enjoy them. Henceforth, the UDHR includes civil and political rights. These rights encompass the right to life, the right to freedom of expression, the right to privacy, and the right to education. The right to education as enshrined in this document is crucial to this study because the educational policies that are discussed herein and the FPE policy that is a focal point to this study emanate from the UNDR. The UNDR views education as a crucial right for learners. Article 26 of the UNDR says, “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages”, thus countries have introduced EFA and FPE as a response to the declaration of human rights (UNICEF, 2014).

3.4.2 The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is an international legal framework that was adopted by world leaders in 1989 at the United Nations (UN) conference. This framework, as noted by Andrew (2016), entails the profound idea that children are not objects but human beings with rights. The treaty as indicated by UNICEF (2014) views childhood as lasting up to 18 years and is a special and protected time where children should be allowed to grow, learn, play, and flourish with dignity. The CRC has become one of the most ratified conventions in the world and has seen the world all over developing policies that embrace children's rights, including the Education for All framework. Importantly, the FPE policy, which is a focal point for this study, aligns with the EFA framework.

3.4.3 The World Conference on Education for All

This is an international initiative that was launched during the world conference on Education for All in Thailand in 1990 (Andrew, 2016). This initiative encompasses programmes and services aimed at meeting the basic needs of children, youth, and adults both within and outside school (Williams, 2016). The World Bank (2018) reports that participants of the conference identified six educational goals that were to be achieved by 2015. These goals are expanding and improving early childhood care and education. They also aim to ensure that by the year 2015 all children will have access to education, ensuring that the learning needs of both young and adults are met through equal access to education, achieving at least 50% adult literacy, eliminating gender disparities, thus achieving gender equality in education, and improving all aspects of quality education. The goal of ensuring the provision of access to education by children as indicated in the report aligns with the provision of FPE.

3.5 Regional policy documents related to FPE

This section provides a brief description of some key regional documents related to the development and introduction of FPE. These documents are The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training (1997), The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All, and the Social Policy Framework for Africa (2008).

3.5.1 The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990)

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child is a regional human rights treaty adopted by African member states in 1990 and came into force in 1999 (Young, 2016). It sets out rights and defines principles for the status of children. It defines the rights and responsibilities of a child and mandates the protection of girls from harmful cultural practices such as child marriage. Article 21 (2) explicitly states that "child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited", and that "effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be 18 years old." This policy insists that school-going-age learners must be in school, which in part is advocacy for free primary education.

3.5.2 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training (1997)

Nafula (2016) reports that the Protocol on Education and Training Development in SADC identifies different areas of cooperation for the SADC countries. The areas of cooperation for these countries include basic education, intermediate education, training, higher education, research, and development. This protocol further articulates life-long education, publishing, and library resources. Member states acknowledge that while each member state has its policies for education and training and while cooperation and mutual assistance in education are desirable, this can be facilitated more effectively by the development of harmonised and eventually standardised policies regarding education and training (UNESCO, 2014). The protocol further gives guidance on institutional arrangements for its implementation, including resources and scholarship fund assets. This instrument is relevant to the introduction of FPE as it places cooperation in the area of basic and intermediate education.

3.5.3 The Dakar Framework for Action (2000)

The Dakar Framework, as defined by Young (2016), is a collective commitment to action emanating from a meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000. In this meeting, participants of the World Education Forum, including the Kingdom of Eswatini, committed themselves to the achievement of Education for All goals and targets for every citizen and every society. Hill (2014) remarks that national governments have an obligation to ensure that EFA goals and targets are reached and sustained, a responsibility that can be met most

effectively through broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by cooperation with regional and international agencies and institutions. It was in line with this framework that ministers who attended the Jomtien conference in one voice said, “We reaffirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All that every child, youth, and adult has the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs including the full development of the human personality” (UNESCO, 2014). Importantly, Education for All is in line with FPE.

3.5.4 The Social Policy Framework for Africa (2008)

The Social Policy Framework for Africa came into force in 2008 and it emanates from a conference on African Union Labour and Social Affairs held in Mauritius in 2003 attended by ministers from African Union member countries (Holland, 2016). The primary reason behind the development of the framework was to complement and supplement ongoing national and regional programmes and policy initiatives. Such initiatives include the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The framework was also necessary to close the gap where it was deemed that the PRS and NEPAD did not adequately address social issues. In part, this framework sought to address the dire social developmental crisis facing the continent, among others, which is poor access to basic education. Therefore, it is one of those regional instruments that aligns itself with the development and implementation of FPE.

3.6 Policy documents related to free primary education in Eswatini

In this section, I discuss educational policies that are in line with the implementation of FPE in Eswatini. These policies include the 1999 Education Act, the constitution of the Kingdom of Eswatini 2005, the Free Primary Education Act 2009, The Inqaba Schools Programme 2011, and the Education Sector Policy 2011, reviewed in 2018.

The Kingdom of Eswatini in its commitment to contribute positively to the realisation of quality education in the country has through the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) clearly articulated its mission statement: “To provide relevant, quality, and affordable education and training opportunities for the entire populace of the Kingdom to develop all positive aspects of life and ensure self-reliance, social, and economic

development, and global competitiveness" (MOET, 2017:1). In an attempt to achieve this, several policies have been put in place.

3.6.1 The 1999 Education Act

The provision of education in Eswatini is currently guided by the 1999 National Policy Statement on education, in collaboration with the country's constitution. At independence, in the year1968 the concern of the government of Eswatini was to increase the availability of space in schools (MoET, 2017). Thus, immediately after independence, educational services were extensively expanded with the introduction of several educational policies being formulated and implemented. The ministry of education reports that in 1999 the government took a drastic move and introduced the 1999 Education Act. It is significant to note that the introduction of this act, the education system in Eswatini was characterised by unaffordability to a significant proportion of the nationals, coupled with the problem of the learning materials being inadequate. Furthermore, the system had not adequately adapted itself to the changing needs of the society; hence, it had not fully addressed the problems of relevance, quality, and accessibility.

3.6.2 The constitution of the Kingdom of Eswatini

The Kingdom of Eswatini is a signatory to many international instruments. It is for this reason that the government was compelled to review its constitution in the years 1997 to 2004**.** This was to ensure that the country aligns with international requirements. The country's constitution came into effect in 2005 after numerous consultations with the nation (Dlamini, 2017). It is important to note here that before the review of the constitution there was a World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000. It was at this forum that the Dakar Framework came into force. Provision of FPE was one of the goals adopted in this forum by member states to ensure that UPE goals were met by 2015. Sifuna (2017) observes that the fulfillment of the 2015 deadline was a mammoth task for developing countries. Nafula (2017), Mulunya (2015), and Abunya (2015) agree that the global pressure of achieving UPE goals was indeed a tall order for developing countries. Areba (2011) perceived the lack of funds as a major contributory factor in failing to meet the deadline, while Boysen's (2015) view is that transplanted policies are unfit for developing countries and are a hindrance in achieving the provision of FPE.

In trying to articulate the country's desire to ensure access to education an excerpt from the constitution reads as follows:

> *"Every Swazi child shall within three years of the commencement of this Constitution have the right to free education in public schools at least up to the end of primary school, beginning with the first grade".*

Article 29(6) is supported by section 3 (1) of the Free Primary Education Policy (2009), which states:

> *"Every Swazi child enrolled in a primary school is entitled to free education at that public primary school beginning with grade 1 up to and including Grade 7".*

It is important to mention that the country could not introduce FPE in 2008 as stated in the constitution. As a result, civil society and the Association of Ex-miners filed charges against the government of Eswatini. Even though reasons for failure to introduce FPE in the expected year remain unknown, Singiri (2013) observes that for a country to introduce a massive programme such as FPE it must have readily available resources such as infrastructure and human resources (Morejele, 2012). Nsibande (2016) reports that one of the challenges facing the country is slow economic growth coupled with high levels of unemployment, inequality, and poverty. The poverty level in Eswatini is exacerbated by among other factors the impact of HIV and AIDS, over-reliance on SACU revenues, and the global economic crisis.

Despite the provisions of Article 29(6) and Section 3(1), there are still children who pay fees in public schools in the country of Eswatini. Matsebula (2018) reports that some school principals, because of the limited fees paid by the government through the FPE programme, use the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) as a means of generating more funds for running the school. Weddle (2013) defines the PTA as an association of a local group of parents and teachers within a particular school that work for the development of the school and the benefit of the learners. The roles of PTA may include, among other responsibilities, the promotion of parent involvement as a means to enhance the educational outcomes and achievement of learners. Importantly, the country's constitution is the backbone of all other existing policies in the country.

3.6.3 The Free Primary Education Policy (2009)

In alignment with the Eswatini constitution (2005), the FPE policy compels parents to send their children to school for primary schooling at no cost. Primary schooling in Eswatini is a seven-year programme. Although the government had stated in the constitution that FPE would be introduced in the year 2007, it was not introduced until 2010, when the Association of Ex-miners forced it through a court order (Dlamini, 2017). In implementing the FPE programme, the government introduced it in grades 1 and 2 simultaneously and eventually rolled it out grade by grade until it reached grade 7 in 2015. The FPE programme is aimed at addressing human rights issues as enshrined in the bill of rights, specifically the rights of children.

The policy further articulates responsibilities for different stakeholders as a way to ensure the effective implementation of the FPE programme. The stakeholders include the government, parents, and learners. Finally, the policy prescribes fees to be paid by the government under the FPE programme, which is E560 per learner. However, Dlamini (2017) reports that there is a controversy around the amounts of fees as the government without consultation with has determined them school principals and school committees. School principals, as implementers of the FPE programme, did not receive this well and have raised their dissatisfaction with the government's failure to involve them in setting the amount of fees to be paid by learners.

It is important to highlight here that with the introduction of FPE in Eswatini, as noted by Matsebula (2015), MOET provides free stationery, free textbooks, workbooks, free exercise books, and food for the feeding programme. The provision of these grants meant the abolishment of any additional levies or school fees by parents. However, the sustainability of the programme has been threatened by the country's economic state and partly because the government introduced it under duress and ill preparedness (Dlamini, 2017). In progressively introducing FPE, there are a number of problems that occurred in schools, with numerous factors threatening to defeat the whole purpose of the programme (Matsebula, 2015). On several counts, school principals have reported a lack of funds and a lack of food.

Some of the problems experienced by the education system in Eswatini include the shortage of classrooms, lack of teachers' houses, and lack of appropriate infrastructure (Zwane, 2016). There has been a great deal of confusion in schools and the ministry of education is against the vision of the FPE policy. In some instances, principals were calling for top-up fees, with the ministry issuing circulars against that. However, with the government's determination, much has been put in place to ensure the survival of the FPE programme. Mncina (2017) reports that some of the efforts by the government include the supply of mobile teachers' houses and mobile classrooms as a way of addressing the problems. It seems, however, that the efforts have not been adequate, as some teachers continue to be destitute. Dlamini 2017) has bemoaned the situation and reports that chairpersons of school committees and principals at some point met and called for the removal of FPE making parents responsible for paying fees.

3.6.4 The Inqaba Schools Programme (2011)

In an attempt to ensure proper implementation of the FPE programme, MOET has put some policies and circulars in place. The Inqaba Schools Programme (2011) is one of the critical policies that guide the implementation of FPE (Mncina, 2017). One of the key guiding principles made by this policy, in line with the country's constitution, is the concept of 'Inqaba' which is translated to mean a fortress. Schools, according to this policy document, are seen as a fortress that should seek out learners, be concerned with the welfare of all children, and must be proactive in reaching out to them. An inqaba school should build very strong links with the surrounding community to make sure that no child is left out of school (Inqaba Schools Programme, 2011:7). This provision aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goal number two. This goal emphasises the need for free compulsory quality education for all primary school-age learners. Nafula (2017) comments that primary education, specifically the education of children between ages seven to 14 can be a powerful drive towards the social and economic development of any nation.

3.6.5 The Education Sector Policy (2018)

The Education Sector Policy (2018) is an educational policy in Eswatini that addresses education and training issues holistically (MOET, 2019). Since independence, the ministry of education has been using individual documents to provide guidance to the

education sector. This policy has been an improvement of the individual documents that were used by the ministry. Significantly, the education sector policy exists in the national, regional, and international sphere because Eswatini is a signatory to many international instruments. Regional and international instruments that reinforce or inform the existence of FPE policies to which Eswatini is a signatory include the following:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- The Declaration of the World Education Forum: the Dakar Framework 2000
- The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of a Child, 1990
- African Union Windhoek Declaration on Social Development
- SADC Charter of Fundamental Social Rights, 2003
- African Union Social Policy Framework

The Education Sector Policy was developed in 2011 and revised in 2018. It has been developed around the above mentioned instruments. In line with the country's constitution, it calls for access and equality to education and articulates that every Swazi citizen has a right to education. This policy further states that no Swazi citizen shall be excluded from age-appropriate and non-formal quality education and training because of its cost. This in part stipulates the importance of FPE.

3.7 Trends in free primary education discourse

This section discusses local and international trends in the implementation of FPE. Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that the need for FPE stems from the declaration of the World Education Forum: the Dakar Framework (2000). Mulunya (2015), Areba (2011), Abunya (2015), Peninah (2017), and Langat (2016) note that the introduction of FPE aims at providing more opportunities to disadvantaged school-age children. Numerous studies (Syomwene, 2013; Ivette, 2011; Lubisi, 2008) conducted on FPE seem to agree that the introduction of FPE in different countries, developed or underdeveloped, has followed the same trend. FPE has been provided in many countries, including Cuba, the United States of America (USA), Sri Lanka, and Australia.

The implementation of educational policy change, in particular FPE, seems to have been a tall order for any country, developing and developing. Chandra's study (2018) in Cuba

assessed how close the dream of FPE is to reality. The study revealed that achieving FPE is a serious challenge, as the country is still grappling with many challenges such as the shortage of teachers, lack of infrastructure, and overcrowded classrooms. Hope (2016), Kogan (2013), and Sabatier (2015) observe that FPE in the USA is not mentioned anywhere in the country's constitution but is merely practised and has encountered some challenges. However, De Silva (2014) in a study conducted in Sri Lanka reported that the country has made remarkable progress in terms of implementing the programme. The country has been able to train adequate teachers, develop infrastructure, and provide resources in schools.

Some of the trends in the introduction of FPE included a shortage of trained teachers, disciplinary problems, loss of morale among teachers, challenges with teaching and learning materials, overcrowding, lack of infrastructure, and administrative challenges. These trends are discussed in the following sections.

3.7.1 Shortage of trained teachers

The introduction of FPE meant more learners coming to school and the need for more teachers. Morejele (2012) observes that FPE is a reform that has been received with many challenges in most African countries. Shortages of trained teachers have been distinguished to be one problem faced by countries in the implementation of FPE. Morejele (2012) conducted a qualitative study in Lesotho on three co-educational rural primary schools, where he was investigating the implementation of FPE concentrating on issues and challenges. In his study, he found that the programme was implemented without a proper situational analysis to determine the infrastructural, material, and human resources required to support its implementation; hence there was a shortage of teachers. Morejele's (2012) findings were similar to that of Lipinge and Likando (2013), who conducted a study in Namibia where they were investigating trends and challenges of implementing FPE. These scholars' findings also identified the student-teacher ratio as a problem for many schools. Consequently, the relationship between academic excellence and the teacher-student ratio cannot be disputed. The more manageable the number of students, the more attention the teacher can provide.

Nungu (2012) makes the same observation as the one presented abve that with the introduction of FPE there was a shortage of teachers, hence the employment of untrained teachers. Otienoh (2013) reports that as a result of teacher shortages, teachers in Kenya had to teach multiple grades.

3.7.2 Overcrowded

To achieve the goals of teaching and learning, the student-teacher ratio should remain controlled. Overcrowding has been noted as one of the challenges in the implementation of FPE. Singiri (2013) details that the implementation of FPE in many countries resulted in an increased enrolment. Parents had to queue overnight at some public schools to secure admission for their children. The UNESCO report (2015) reveals that most of the teachers were facing problems in paying attention to each student in overcrowded classrooms in Tanzania, with the inception of FPE. Ligomeka's (2013) study in Kenya found that all schools studied were overcrowded with a population ranging from 70 to 90 students per class. Consequently, teachers were facing problems due to insufficient space between rows and no access to materials and services. Teachers, therefore, find it impossible to pay attention to all learners, especially the slow ones. Oketch and Somerset (2010) perceived that teachers were not able to give adequate assignments to pupils, as they could not cope with the marking and teaching workload. This is in line with the view held by Singiri (2013) who remarks that large class sizes pose significant teaching challenges, not only in the assessment of student learning but also in limiting the amount of feedback provided to students.

3.7.3 Loss of morale among teachers

Ligomeka (2013) states that through overcrowding, teachers felt discouraged, overwhelmed, and stressed. Williams (2014) supports the view that motivation tends to be lower among teachers with large classes and in schools that are poorly resourced or attended by disadvantaged pupils. This indicates that for teachers to happily handle their duties, they must deal with manageable numbers. Ligomeka's (2013) study concurs with a report presented by UNESCO (2017) on the challenges faced by Lesotho in the implementation of FPE, where it is stated that overcrowding discourages teachers. Willard (2014) affirms that crowded classroom conditions not only make it difficult for students to

concentrate on their lessons but inevitably limit the amount of time teachers can spend on innovative teaching methods such as cooperative learning and group work.

3.7.4 Discipline problems

Overcrowding also results in discipline problems for teachers, as noted by Mncina's (2012) study. It is an indisputable fact that with large classes when it comes to classroom management and discipline, it becomes difficult to structure the class in a way that prevents disruptive problems and avoids the need for punishment (Grover, 2012). In Malawi, UNESCO (2014) reports that it is difficult to discipline a class of 80 children and comments that the number of learners itself gives rise to rowdy behaviour.

3.7.5 Inadequate teaching-learning facilities

Teaching and learning materials have also been noted as a significant challenge facing the implementation of FPE. A growing body of research (Singiri, 2013; Morejele, 2012; Mncina, 2017) has found that school facilities can have a far-reaching impact on both teacher and student outcomes. School facilities affect teacher recruitment, retention, commitment, and effort. Students are also affected in terms of behaviour, engagement, learning, and growth in achievement. Thus, researchers (Morejele, 2012; Appleton, 2017; October, 2009) conclude that without suitable facilities and resources, it is extremely difficult to serve large numbers of learners, in particular those with complex needs. Morejele (2012) observes that of the many challenges brought by FPE is the shortage of textbooks. Shortage of textbooks hampers progress in the instructional process, as learners cannot be assigned homework, which deprives both learners and parents of an opportunity to work collaboratively at home and assist each other (Otienoh, 2013). Oketch and Somerset (2012) confirm that the objectives of FPE cannot be achieved without the provision of teaching and learning materials like textbooks, workbooks, exercise books, and stationery. Therefore, the availability of such resources influences the quality of education.

3.7.6 Lack of infrastructure

Morejele (2012) further notes that with the introduction of FPE there was also the issue of inadequate physical facilities. It appeared that most schools did not have suitable classrooms to accommodate the large number of pupils enrolled under the FPE

programmes in Lesotho. For instance, classrooms seemed to be generally overcrowded and there was hardly any space for free movement during lessons. In addition to that, some classroom conditions were poor, without lights. Nafula (2012) observes that in some schools in Kenya, administrators had to introduce mats for children to sit on since there were not enough desks. These sentiments align well with a study of teaching-learning conditions in urban schools conducted by Weilsh (2013) in Australia, which concluded that physical conditions have direct positive and negative effects on feelings of effectiveness in the classroom and on the general learning environment.

3.7.7 Administrative challenges

Opul and Enose's (2012) study showed that principals had many challenges in the implementation of FPE, including admission of learners, as there was competition for available spaces. Principals were also challenged with staffing, as the available human resources were not adequate. Opul and Enose (2012) concluded in their study that the quality of leadership demonstrated that to lead educational change is demanding. Mncina (2012) further noted that managing the merge funds also appeared to be a serious challenge for school principals. This scholar observes that principals could not provide teachers with the necessary resources, while at the same time they failed to service school debts.

3.7.8 Learning versus attending school

Many studies have noted that public schools' performance deteriorated after the introduction of FPE due to the increased student-teacher ratio. Opul and Enose (2010) and Sifuna (2017) observe that after the introduction of FPE, schools became dysfunctional as students were attending school and not learning. Woods (2016) comments that there is a great difference between attending school and learning. In learning, there is active engagement taking place and adequate assessment with continuous feedback. Merely attending school may be the direct opposite of this. Several studies (Kess 2015; Morejele, 2012; Sifuna, 2017) that have been conducted reveal a sad story of public schools that became dysfunctional due to the introduction and implementation of FPE. Uwezo (2011) and Mutambo's (2013) findings in a study in Namibia on the provisions of FPE explicitly disclose that with the introduction of the programme, education standards deteriorated as only three out of ten children in grade 3

could read a grade 2 story (in English), while more than half of the class could read a paragraph. Four out of 100 children in grade 8 could not read a grade 2 story. Riddell (2013:16) laments the situation and comments, “although many policymakers may not want to admit it, the truth is that many public schools are literally in a comatose condition”. It remains of interest why the government would be investing large amounts in education and yet not focus on what is happening in the schools.

Riddell (2013) further perceives that children from poor families who attend these schools whose parents could not afford private schools were being cheated by the system. The quality of education and attention they received from their teachers was not sufficient. Morejele (2012) contends that education may be free, but very little value is added in many of those schools. Significantly, very few studies even in the FPE discourse address the experiences of the principals in the implementation of policy change. In this study, therefore, I concentrate on the experiences of Eswatini principals in implementing policy change, paying particular attention to FPE policy, as there remains a gap in this area.

3.8 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented the changing policy landscape in Eswatini. To do so, the chapter presented international, regional, and Eswatini policy documents that are in line with the introduction of FPE. The rationale of policy change in education and trends in FPE have been presented. This information enabled me to understand the experiences of school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes: whether they encounter challenges as they implement policy changes and whether they can adapt to the implementation of educational policy changes.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. In the previous chapter, I presented the changing policy landscape in Eswatini and discussed in particular the policies that are in line with the implementation of FPE. In this chapter, I present the framework that underpins this study. I adopted Viennet and Pont's theoretical framework as a framework that was appropriate for this study. In this regard, in this chapter, I provide an analysis of the core components of Viennet and Pont's theory, their interplay and interdependence. I have therefore divided this chapter into three sections. In section one; I discuss Viennet and Pont's theory in detail. Section 2 provides details on how the theory informed the current study, while section three outlines the application of this theory to this study and the implications.

4.2 An overview of Viennet and Pont's (2017) theory

I begin the chapter by reflecting on the study's adopted framework, Viennet and Pont's (2017) theoretical framework. Viennet and Pont developed Viennet and Pont's framework in 2017. It is a theory that intends to shed light on how educational policies can be formulated and implemented. Viennet and Pont's framework has been used across all education systems in both developing and underdeveloped countries (Drucker, 2020). Significantly, the context in which this study was undertaken is that of a developing country: Eswatini. This framework views educational policy implementation as a multidirectional process that requires continuous interactions between policymakers, the public, and implementers. Implementers in the case of this study are school principals. The process of educational policy formulation and implementation as articulated by Viennet and Pont is illustrated in figure 4.1 below.

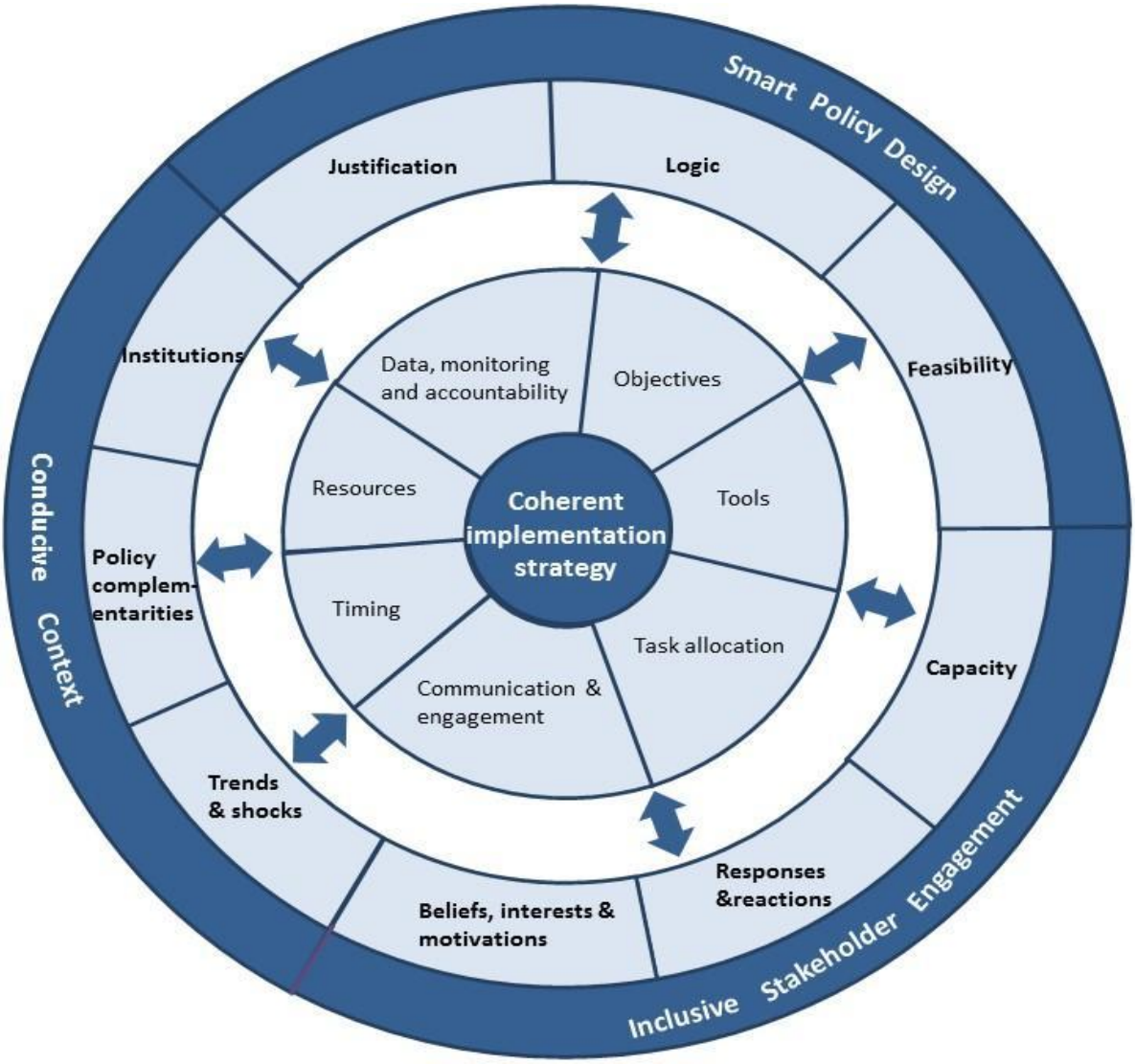

Figure 4:1: Education policy implementation: A visual framework

Adopted from Viennet and Pont (2017)

At the core of this framework is the concept of a coherent implementation strategy. Viennet and Pont articulate that for educational policy implementation to be successful, the policy must be well formulated; therefore, the coherent implementation strategy is at the centre of the framework (Drucker, 2020). The whole policy process must be clear, taking into consideration the involvement of end users. Viennet and Pont's perspective claims that within the policy process, there must be objectives, tools, task allocation, communication, engagement of stakeholders, resources, monitoring, accountability, timing and initiation of changes. Walonick (2013) supports Viennet and Pont's (2017) assertion and argues that successful policy implementation hinges on many factors,

including clear communication, a commitment of stakeholders, and availability of resources. Viennet and Pont maintain that for any policy to be productively implemented, there are certain determinants to be taken into consideration. These determinants should be well aligned throughout the policy process. The determinants as presented by Viennet and Pont are discussed in detail in the next section.

4.3 Viennet and Pont's determinants of educational policy implementation

According to Viennet and Pont, the determinants of the educational policy implementation process entail a coherent implementation strategy to reach schools, smart policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement and a conducive context. Robert (2019) is of the view that Viennet and Pont's perspective provides policymakers with a springboard from which to develop a policy and further open theoretical debates.

4.3.1 Implementation strategy of educational policy

Viennet and Pont's strategy frames concrete procedures that bring determinants of educational policy implementation together in a comprehensible manner to make the policy operative at the school level. The coherent implementation strategy as shown in Figure 4.1 above is at the centre, surrounded by the determinants that influence and shape the whole policy process. The strategy is a central tool to enable the implementation process; it is an operational plan that guides the process to make the policy happen (Hill & Hope, 2002). However, Drucker (2020) argues that a well-designed strategy alone is not sufficient to guarantee effective implementation. Thus, Viennet and Pont remark that the strategy is crucial because it involves planning and decision-making. Through the strategy, policymakers can come up with a roadmap for the whole process. In the same vein, Ashwin (2019) acknowledges that strategy is essential because it defines and drives the whole implementation process. At the core of this study are the experiences of principals, who by virtue of their roles are key role players in the implementation process.

4.3.2 Smart policy design

In their theoretical proposition, Viennet and Pont argue that for effective policy implementation there must be a smart design of the policy. Moreno (2019), Dinc (2016) and Graven (2017) agree that the first step in the policy process is to identify the policy

problem. While this may occur in different ways, Viennet and Pont's perspective asserts that a successful model brings stakeholders and researchers together to combine information on policy priorities and opportunities with economic insights. The stakeholders can further deliberate how the whole process can be feasibly approached (Drucker, 2020). Therefore, smart policy design in line with Viennet and Pont's perspective speaks to a programme that addresses both economic and social problems in the process of developing the policy. Issues of policy design cannot be separated from the implementation process.

Viennet and Pont (2017) explain that a policy that is well aligned and justified offers a feasible and logical solution to the policy problem. It determines largely how the policy can be implemented. In other words, the policy process should take into consideration the available resources, personnel and other issues related to the implementation process. Shedding light on the issue of resources and personnel, Heller and Firestone (2015) offer an example and say if there is a new curriculum, for instance, that requires the use of technological equipment that schools cannot afford, the policy may not be implemented unless a budget is available. Therefore, Viennet and Pont's perspective argues for a policy that is well defined, unambiguous and takes into consideration the available resources.

4.3.3 Inclusive stakeholder engagement

It is fundamentally important to highlight that people implement educational policies and this makes them central to the whole policy process. Viennet and Pont argue that for effective policy implementation, there must be extensive engagement of stakeholders. Hart (2018) has described stakeholders as individuals or collective entities that have a concern in a particular organisation. Drucker (2020) identifies principals, teachers, learners, parents, school boards, elected officials and community members as key stakeholders in education, particularly in the implementation of educational policies. Comfort (2016) concurs with Drucker (2020) and comments that it is crucial to recognise and include key stakeholders in the policy process to ensure effective implementation of the policy. Viennet and Pont's framework claims that engaging teacher unions through consultations in the early stages of the policy process is likely to have long-term benefits. Koh (2018) is of the view that key actors in implementation may vary depending on the

policy at stake, even within the same education system, and he views school principals as key stakeholders. This view is embraced in Viennet and Pont's framework, which sees principals as the hub of policy implementation in any education system. It is with this understanding that principals cannot be excluded in the policy implementation process.

4.3.3.1 A conducive context

It must be noted that educational policy implementation always needs to be contextualised. Viennet and Pont's perspective takes into consideration the concept of a conducive context. In their theoretical proposition, Viennet and Pont argue that for an effective policy implementation process, there must be a recognition of the influence of the existing policy environment, the educational governance, institutional settings, and the external context. However, it is important to note that when formulating a policy, policy developers face several constraints that may encourage them to focus more on what is doable politically than on the practicality of the policy (Fullan, 2015). Several concerns raised by policy implementers are that resources, both human and material, that are needed to make the policy work may not be readily available (Viennet & Pont, 2017). A lack of practicality creates situations in which policy planners and implementing agents are asked to put a policy into action in ways that may not be possible (Comfort, 2016). Importantly, at the core of this study was an interest to establish how Eswatini school principals have experienced the implementation of educational policy changes, and how practical it has been for them to implement the FPE policy. Koh (2018) observes that several elements of a policy originally developed by decision makers regulate the implementation process to some extent. In support of Fullan's (2015) view, Comfort (2016) adds that the origin and rationale of a policy and the extent to which decision makers consider the practicalities of implementation affect how a policy is implemented.

Henceforth, Viennet and Pont's theoretical position says implementation is more likely to take effect and be successful when the context is recognised. Many scholars (Fullan, 2007; Botha, 2016; Marsha, 2017, and Schleicher, 2016) have supported the fact that educational policy implementation must be contextualised. It remains of interest in this study whether Eswatini educational policies are contextualised or implemented without contextualisation. Booysen (2015) has lamented the transplantation of policies, which leads to policy failure as the environment into which the policy is transplanted may be

entirely different from where policy is coming from. Viennet and Pont's perspective maintains that policymakers must consider the context or environment into which a policy is to be implemented during the formulation process, as this enables ease of implementation and sustainability. This is important because education systems are not all the same; they vary in terms of the actors involved and specific educational policies. Andrew (2016) emphasises that the central role of context shows that "there is no one-size-fits-all model" for implementing educational policy. Attention must therefore be paid to the specificity of the policy, stakeholders and local context to analyse or make recommendations about the whole implementation process.

4.4 Education policy implementation; Viennet and Pont's perspective

This section provides a description of educational policy implementation as viewed by Viennet and Pont's framework and its relevance to the current study. Blending Viennet and Pont's perspective with educational policy implementation owes much to the fact that this is an implementation study focusing on the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. It is important to highlight at this point that at the core of Viennet and Pont's framework is the concept of educational policy implementation, which is a thrust for this study. Following an analysis of a range of definitions and frameworks on the topic of implementation, Viennet and Pont (2017) perceive policy implementation in this way:

- Policy implementation is purposeful, and the process is supposed to change education according to some policy objectives. It is a process with a definite aim and clear-cut activities to achieve the aim.
- Policy implementation is a multidirectional process because many actors at various points of the education system can influence it.
- Policy implementation is contextualised in that institutions and societal trends such as culture, demography, politics and economy affect the education system and how a policy is shaped and translates into the education sector.

In their theoretical proposition, Viennet and Pont argue that the main concern in implementing policies lies in how the policies are developed and adjusted to the available resources. In addition to aligning implementation procedures with resources, the implementation of good governance is necessary. That is to say, the implementation of

policies must entail transparency, accountability, fairness, and responsiveness. Barnet (2016) and Hill and Hope (2002) agree with Viennet and Pont's perspective and argue that the implementation of policies, particularly educational policies, is an effort to implement a policy goal that has been decided by policymakers in an education policy. In other words, policy implementation is essentially a way for a policy to achieve its objectives.

For Viennet and Pont, educational policy implementation is not an overnight development; it is supposed to be a well thought out process with objectives to be achieved. In the same view, Fullan (2015) has rightly put it to say policy implementation should not happen unsystematically but should be well coordinated. Viennet and Pont's perspective designates the principal as the epicentre of educational policy implementation, working with a multiplicity of stakeholders. In their theoretical proposition, they argue that there must be an interplay of three variables to produce a logical policy implementation process. These variables are a smart policy design, a conducive context, and an inclusive stakeholder engagement. Additionally, these variables can entail clear objectives, resources, task allocation and communication between all role players. Significantly, most educational policy implementation perspectives (top-down and bottom-up approaches) cite these elements (objectives, resources, task allocation and communication) as crucial components of the educational policy implementation process (Hart, 2018). Importantly, the crux of this study was to explore the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy changes and establish if these elements have been considered and how principals have grappled with the whole process.

As mentioned earlier, educational policy implementation is a complex, evolving process. In their theoretical proposition, Viennet and Pont (2017) hold the view that this complex process can fail if not handled well. Their framework suggests a range of reasons that can prevent implementation from being effective. Some of the reasons, according to Drucker (2020), include a lack of focus on the whole process of implementation, especially when defining policies at the system level; a lack of recognition that the core of the change process requires engaging people; and the fact that the implementation process needs to be revised to adapt to new complex governance systems. Therefore, Viennet and Pont argue that it is crucial to understand implementation as a process,

clarify its determinants and explore ways in which the process can be more effective and transparent. It remains of interest in this study to establish whether principals have been engaged in the policy process and how they have experienced the process.

Additionally, Viennet and Pont assert that implementing educational policies not only refers to the strict implementation process of presenting a programme to stakeholders, but rather to a well thought out process. This well thought out process must be seen in its broader context of extensively planned activities, providing all details, taking into consideration different phases, assessing resources that may be needed and considering the context.

4.5 Application of Viennet and Pont's theory of practice

As mentioned above, the study adopted Viennet and Pont's theoretical analysis for educational policy implementation, as this framework has a particular focus on educational policy implementation. Therefore, it is important that the study at this stage locates educational policy implementation within Viennet and Pont's analysis. Grounded in the understanding that educational policy implementation is one of the key roles of the school principal, Viennet and Pont's (2017) theory of practice is most relevant for this study as the study explores the experiences of principals in the implementation of education policy changes. This is so because the perspective is inclined towards how educational policies can be developed and implemented, which was the crux of this study. Additionally, Viennet and Pont's theory is largely aimed at educational policy implementation and addresses issues that are meant to ensure the success and survival of policies. Viennet and Pont's perspective further takes into consideration key components of the educational policy process. Among those key components is an integrated strategy: a strategy on how the policy can reach schools and how involved stakeholders can achieve the implementation of educational policy changes.

According to Tovey (2018), Viennet and Pont's framework offers a fertile ground for comprehending educational policy implementation, which certainly helps in understanding the policy cycle and in part provides an understanding of the experiences of school principals as they are engaged in the implementation of educational policy changes. In their framework, Viennet and Pont highlight an implementation strategy that frames concrete procedures that bring determinants of educational policy implementation

together in a coherent manner to make the policy operational at the school level. Applied in this study, this element of Viennet and Pont's theory was used to investigate the knowledge and understanding that principals have of educational policy change.

The Viennet and Pont perspective articulates that educational policy implementation is about involving stakeholders, a sentiment echoed by Williams (2018). Williams (2018) argues that despite several policies being put in place, principals continue to be excluded in many parts of the world. Williams's (2018) statement is true of the Eswatini context, where the study was undertaken and where principals are normally not part of the policy process (Dlamini, 2017), particularly the formulation phase. In their theoretical proposition, Viennet and Pont assert that principals are the hub of implementing educational policies in any education system. Their theoretical proposition, therefore, emphasises inclusive stakeholder engagement as one of the key determinants. Viennet and Pont maintain that extensive engagement of stakeholders is crucial in the policy process.

Wood (2016) holds the view that educational policy implementation shares similarity with Viennet and Pont's perspective with respect to the common focus of the implementation process. Cornwall (2014) adds that Viennet and Pont have "shared epistemological and ethical concerns" that contribute to these broader points of policy implementation taking into consideration inclusive stakeholder engagement and a conducive context". According to Glassman and Erdem (2016), the involvement of stakeholders offers critical perspectives and implications for ensuring ownership and survival of a policy, while Drucker (2018) acknowledges that without stakeholders, policy implementation is likely to fail. Therefore, understanding Viennet and Pont's theory of practice means both a way of understanding how educational policies are developed through engaging stakeholders as well as how policies are implemented. Applied in this study, the element of stakeholder involvement as articulated in Viennet and Pont's theoretical proposition was used to understand principals' roles in the formulation and implementation of education policy changes.

Viennet and Pont further claim that policy implementation is a contextualised process that should take into consideration many factors such as legislation, culture and economy. These variables should be considered considering how they shape the education system. Applied in this study, the element of contextualisation was used to understand how principals implement policy changes and the reasons for implementing policy changes in the manner in which they implement them.

Guided by the understanding that the policy process must not be haphazard, Viennet and Pont's theory is most relevant for this study as it presents a coherent implementation strategy in the policy process: a strategy that should reach schools. Therefore, conceptualising this theory as a theory of educational policy implementation makes it possible, as Berg (2016) suggests, to explore the experiences of school principals in the implementation of educational policy change as it unveils how the policy should be developed and be implemented. The framework further describes the environment under which the policy must later be implemented. Such a consideration becomes fundamentally important in constructing a comprehensive analysis and an understanding of pertinent issues in the implementation of educational policy changes in Eswatini schools as school principals experience them.

4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I dealt with the study's theoretical framework, namely that of Viennet and Pont. Adopting Viennet and Pont's analysis owed to the fact that this was an implementation study, focusing on the experiences of school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. In line with Viennet and Pont's perspectives, principals are at the epicentre of educational policy implementation. The next chapter, chapter 5 deals with the study's research methodology. The chapter details what I did and how I did it during the data collection or the fieldwork phase of the research as I tried to find empirical answers to the research questions stated in chapter 1 above.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework that underpins the study. In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology that I employed to generate and analyse data on the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. I first start by identifying the research paradigm and its applicability for this study. The qualitative case study design in which this study is embedded is then discussed in detail. The sampling procedures that I used in selecting participants of the study are presented. In addition, the research instruments, data generation procedures as well as data analysis are discussed. The ethical considerations that I followed in undertaking this study are also presented. Measures that were put in place to ensure the trustworthiness of the study comprise the last part of this chapter.

5.2 The interpretative paradigm

I used the interpretive research paradigm to frame this study. Within this paradigm, research is foregrounded by the belief that reality is a subjective phenomenon and is individually constructed (Scotland, 2017; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This paradigm seeks to understand the in-depth meanings that participants ascribe to a specific social phenomenon (Henning et al. 2013). The assumption behind this insight is that individuals make an informed decision by being involved in social activities (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2016). In this paradigm, participants are in a better position to explain their behaviour and activities as they have a better interpretation of their situations.

In employing this paradigm, I aimed to understand the individual cases of some principals, not universal laws (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2016). Significantly, Eswatini primary school principals encounter unique experiences as they implement educational policy changes. Each situation within each school context is regarded as unique and it is better to understand the experiences of individuals by getting interpretations of their particular contexts (Maree, 2020). I thus argue that the principals are best suited to provide insight on their experiences of implementing educational policy changes; the challenges they encounter and how they respond to them. Tichapondwa (2015) observes that within the interpretative paradigm, I could interrogate my conclusions based on the opinions,

viewpoints, and feelings of the school principals. In this paradigm, the participants are key. Woods (2016) and Creswell (2017) comment that the interpretive paradigm enables participants to explain their interpretations of particular issues. As a result, I was able to draw meanings and analysis based on the views of the principals (Mushoriwa, 2018) as key role players in implementing educational policy changes.

Although the interpretative paradigm is highly valued by its proponents, human error and flaws exist when it is used in conducting a study. Elaborating on this assertion, Creswell (2017) remark that the main disadvantage associated with this paradigm relates to its subjective nature. A paradigm leaves great room for bias on the part of the researcher. To overcome this limitation, I have personally declared my position as a former school principal in this study and how I perceived it could influence the data generation process, analysis, and findings. Moreover, primary data generated in interpretivist studies cannot be generalised since data is heavily influenced by personal values and viewpoints (Mushoriwa, 2018). Thus, the representativeness of data and reliability is undermined to a certain extent. In this regard, I provided a thick description of the research sites and participants to increase the reliability of the data (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2016; Shenton, 2004). It is imperative to acknowledge here that the findings of this study apply to the principals who participated in the study and that it is not my intention to generalise the findings in this study.

5.3 Research approach

Guided by the interpretive paradigm and the desire to generate in-depth subjective views of principals, I employed a qualitative approach to frame this study. According to Fouche and Schurink (2016), a qualitative approach is an approach that is geared towards exploring an issue or a case in detail. It uncovers the quality of what is being researched. Similarly, Henning et al. (2013) define qualitative studies as studies that aim for depth rather than quantity of understanding. This is in line with the purpose of my study: exploring the experiences of principals in implementing educational policy changes.

Creswell (2017) comments that the qualitative approach to research focuses on human relations, perspectives, perceptions, emotions, and experiences. Qualitative researchers become key research instruments, generating data themselves through various ways, including examining documents, observing behaviours, and interviewing participants. Hence, in this study, I interviewed my participants and analysed documents.

Furthermore, Maree (2020) contends that qualitative research is characterised by being context bound. This means the researcher must be context sensitive. During data collection, the researcher must immerse themselves in the natural setting of the participants where they will be exploring the thoughts and feelings of the participants. Significantly, the relationship between the researcher and the researched is close and is based on a position of equality as human beings. Mcmillan and Schumacher (2016) echo the same sentiments and suggest that for qualitative researchers to study a human problem, the generation of data should occur in the natural setting where the participants experience the issue or problem under study. Thus, I carried out this study in schools where principals execute their roles.

Merriam (2009); Fouche and Schurink (2016) theorise that qualitative researchers are mostly interested in the meaning participants give to their life experiences and are mainly concerned with how participants create their worlds. They are also interested in what significance participants attribute to their experiences, thus befitting the purpose of this study. Maree (2020) comments that qualitative studies use thick rich descriptions; they describe, analyse, and interpret data. My intention in this study was to analyse, interpret, and describe the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in implementing educational policy changes. Therefore, qualitative research was more appropriate for this study, as the purpose was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of principals as they implement educational policy changes. Merriam (2009) remarks that qualitative researchers believe that the world is made up of people with intentions, assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, and values. The way of knowing reality, therefore, is by exploring the experiences, knowledge and understanding of others regarding a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2017), which makes this approach more relevant for my study.

Finally, qualitative researchers acknowledge an interactive relationship between the researcher and participants; participants and their experiences; and how participants create a reality based on these experiences. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2019) argue that the qualitative approach typically favours interviews, document analysis, and case study research. This is so because a lot of text and data tends to be generated in the form of words rather than numbers. In addition, Creswell (2017) states that qualitative research involves closer attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry by positioning the study within the political, social, and cultural context of the researchers, the participants, and the readers of the study.

It is important to note that the qualitative approach, despite its wide use in research, has its limitations. Henning et al. (2013) note that the main disadvantage of the qualitative approach is that findings cannot be applied to wider populations with confidence. This is because the findings of the research are not tested to determine whether they are due to chance or statistically significant (Teherani, 2016; Hughes, 2017). In this study, I provided a thick description of the research sites and the research participants. Likewise, Maree (2020) remarks that the presence of the researcher has a profound effect on the participants, who may not be honest in the presentation of information. To cater for this limitation, I described the purpose of the study to the participants and how the study would benefit the research community. I further encouraged the participants of the study to be as honest as possible when giving their responses. Stanley (2018) and Punch (2017) further observe that another limitation of the qualitative approach is that issues of anonymity and confidentiality present problems when presenting findings. To curb this limitation, I assigned participants pseudonyms in the beginning. More so, qualitative studies are time-consuming; they require a lot of time for the whole process: data collection, data interpretation, and analysis. Nonetheless, this approach was appropriate for conducting this study as it enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the principals' experiences in implementing educational policy changes through close involvement during the data generation process. Moreover, the qualitative approach was appropriate for my study because it aligns with the interpretative paradigm in which this study is embedded (Maree, 2020).

5.4 Case study design

In this study, I used a case study design. A case study design is about understanding the phenomenon within its context (Henning et al. 2013, Mushoriwa, 2018; Maree, 2020). Meriam (2009) views a case study as a design that is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation, including meaning for those involved. The concerns can be for a single or a few cases, which are of similar units of interest. Henning et al. (2013) share the same sentiments as Merriam (2009) by stating that a case study is an intense description and analysis of a bound system. As described by Hughes (2017), a case study is an ideal design when a holistic and in-depth investigation is carried out. In their definition of a case study, Cohen et al (2019:13) say it is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident…" This is further highlighted by Robson (2018:62), who states that a case study involves "empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence". According to Mushoriwa (2018) and Creswell (2017), the case study research is qualitative and is used when the "how" or "why" questions are being asked. Significantly, this study asks these questions.

This design was relevant for my study because I wanted to understand the experiences of principals in the implementation of education policy change within the context of their schools. I was aware that their experiences as far as this study was concerned could only be understood within their contexts and cannot be generalised to all principals. Furthermore, Mushoriwa (2018) remarks that a case study enables researchers to immerse themselves in the activities of a single person or phenomenon to obtain an intimate familiarity with their social worlds. Thus, using the case study enabled me to look at patterns in the research participants' lives, words, and actions in the context of educational policy implementation.

I used the case study because the research questions for this study captured the essence of a case study, which is to "illuminate a decision or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what result" (Maree 2020:61). The research questions focused on the specific leadership experiences in the context of educational policy changes. Additionally, I chose the case study design because I was interested in

"insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing" (Merriam, 2009:42). The case study allowed me an opportunity to closely examine and gain deeper insight into the principals' experiences of implementing educational policy changes.

Moreover, I adopted a case study to meet the research objectives of my study. Mushoriwa (2018) comments that a case study is an intensive study of a specific phenomenon, which is known for simplifying/understanding complex issues and adding strength to what already exists in previous research. The case study research design has been used successfully for many years across different disciplines, including education, to examine contemporary real-life situations (Creswell, 2017). Robinson (2018:29) notes that the case study strategy has a distinct advantage when the question is being asked about "a contemporary set of events, over which the researcher has little or no control". In other words, case studies are used in examining real-life situations. Significantly, in this study, I was exploring the experiences of school principals, which are real-life situations. Creswell (2017) explains that there is no single way of conducting a case study, but a combination of different methods such as unstructured interviews, document analysis and direct observation can be used. The above explanation highlights the interest of the case study design for a qualitative approach. It confirms that a case study design was the most appropriate strategy for this study as it is also qualitative.

Although I chose the case study design for this research, it is essential to highlight the limitations of this design. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2017) and Merriam (2009) have identified several disadvantages of a case study. Firstly, these scholars note that with the case study there is a lot of data for analysis, which may be difficult to present. Henceforth, it is time-consuming and expensive to generate data, and it is often impossible to generalise the results. Guided by Mcmillan and Schumacher (2016) and Henning et al. (2013), I used a small sample that is knowledgeable of the implementation of educational policy changes. Teherani (2015: 48) also argues that when using a case study, "it is difficult for researchers to cross check-information". The reason is that a case study is normally based on using a single or a few cases, as opposed to a large group of a sample. In this study, I guaranteed that the data I collected had important features so that the results are reliable (Robinson, 2018). Finally, Creswell (2017) and Maree (2020) criticise the objectivity of the results collected through a case study. These scholars state that the results of a case study are stronger if the researcher's expertise and intuition are

maximised, though the objectivity remains questionable. Therefore, guided by Mcmillan and Schumacher (2016), it was important that during this research I tried to keep an objective view of the data generated and results obtained.

5.5 Research methods

This section discusses the research methods that I used in the study. It presents the criteria for selecting research participants and describes the sites where data was generated. The section further discusses instruments that were used for the generation of data.

5.5.1 Sampling and sampling strategy

Sampling is defined as a process of selecting people from a particular population that is of interest to the researcher. It is assumed that through studying the sample, the results can be generalised to the population where the sample was chosen (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2016). Similarly, Maree (2020) defines sampling as an act, a process, or a technique of selecting suitable participants or a representative part of a population to determine the characteristics of the entire population. Sampling was necessary for this research as I could not study the entire population. Merriam (2009) remarks that sampling is economical in terms of time, money, and other resources that may be needed during the study. Sampling provides the researcher with the needed information within a short period. Robinson (2018), who emphasises that it is cheaper to handle a part than a whole, supports this argument.

Based on the purpose of the study, exploring the experiences of principals in the implementation of education policy changes, I employed purposive sampling in selecting the participants. Teherani (2015), Maree (2020), and Creswell (2017), who observe that sampling methods must be consistent with the aims of the study as a way of maximising validity and efficiency, support this choice. As the name purposive suggests, Cohen et al (2019: 116) see a purposive sample as that which is “chosen for a specific purpose”. In this study, the purpose was to explore the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in implementing educational policy changes. Significantly, purposive sampling enabled me to select “information-rich cases” that yielded significant insight around the topic under investigation (Brown & Dowling, 2018; Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2016).

Teherani (2018) echo the same sentiments and comments that by employing purposive sampling in this study, I have been able to identify and select individuals that are knowledgeable and well experienced with my phenomenon of interest: the experiences of principals in the implementation of policy changes.

Sofaer (2019) comments that in addition to being knowledgeable and experienced, the participants identified through purposive sampling are usually available and willing to participate in studies. According to Patton (2017), purposive sampling allowed me to increasingly utilise the information I obtained from the participants in this study. Raymond (2017) adds that it is also important to consider one's ability to communicate experiences, opinions, and views in a clear, articulate, and thoughtful manner. Hence, principals, by virtue of their positions, were in an advantageous situation to articulate clearly their experiences of implementing education policy changes.

Even though purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative studies, it has several limitations. Many scholars (Drew, 2016; Raymond, 2017; Mushoriwa, 2018; Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2016) agree that purposive sampling is highly prone to researcher bias despite the type of method used to generate data. The fact that the sample is created relying on the judgment and personal interpretation of the researcher is a loophole. Judgments may be poorly considered or ill conceived by researchers. Guided by Henning et al. (2013), I prepared reflexive notes and ensured that I went to the field with an open mind.

Creswell (2017) observes that there is no proper way of evaluating the reliability of experts or authority in purposive sampling. Therefore, a sampling procedure can produce or result in inaccurate assumptions. Henceforth, I made sure for selecting participants I selected participants that have been principals for ten years and above who were well in line with the purpose of the study (Henning et al., 2013). Another significant limitation of this type of sampling is that it relies heavily on the presence or availability of relevant individuals in a population to provide meaningful data (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2016). If a researcher is unable to find enough participants that meet the preset criteria, the whole process becomes meaningless. To curb this limitation, I ensured that the established criterion for the selection of participants was not stringent (Mcmillan & Schumacher, 2016) to enable more participants to be part of the study.

5.5.2 Description of research sites

Twelve primary schools from the Hhohho and Manzini region, both rural and urban, were selected to participate in the study. Significantly, there are four regions in the country and two regions were selected because of their accessibility to me as a researcher. I selected primary schools because this is where the FPE policy, which was the focal point of this study, is implemented. Within the context of this study, rural schools are those schools that are in the countryside and are at least 15 km outside town. Access to them is not easy in terms of roads and they do not have services such as electricity, and Eswatini Water Services Co-operation (EWSC) does not supply water. Urban schools are those schools that are within two kilometres from town. They are easily accessible with proper road infrastructure and have utilities such as water and electricity.

These schools have at least between 300 and 900 learners. These are all non-fee schools. These schools have at the most 10 to 30 teachers, including the principal and the deputy principal. All the teachers are paid directly by the government. The schools also have support staff employed and draw their salaries directly from the school funds. The support staff includes one cook, a secretary, a night watchman, and a groundsman.

5.5.3 Study participants

The participants of this study were Eswatini school principals. I made sure I included principals from different backgrounds and different schools to ensure that the information that was gathered was not biased. Therefore, included in this study were principals who have served for at least ten years. Principals who have served for this period were in a better position to provide information on the experiences of being a principal in the context of implementing education policy changes. Twelve principals participated in the study. I chose 12 principals as participants in the study based on Cohen et al (2019:101), who argue that “there is no clear-cut answer for the correct sample size”. Each researcher, therefore, chooses the sample size based on the aims of the research and the nature of the study. I understand that this number of participants does not represent all the principals of Eswatini. Thus, the results may not be generalised, but the focus is on the in-depth information/data that was provided by the participants.

5.6 Data generation methods

To generate data, individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used. Below I discuss these data generation methods in detail as well as how I utilised them in this study.

5.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

I chose semi-structured interviews as the primary data generation method for this study. The use of semi-structured interviews relates to the interpretive stance, which I took in this research, whereby people are the actors in their social world (Creswell, 2017). Therefore, it was essential to see the social world through the participants' eyes and to understand the meanings participants attach to the world and their experiences. Using semi-structured interviews also relates to acquiring information concerning participants' beliefs, opinions and insights about their experiences in implementing educational policy changes. This would be difficult to achieve through structured interviews, where rigid questioning may prevent opportunities for probing or allowing the participants to elaborate on any aspect of their practice (Creswell, 2017; Mushoriwa, 2018).

The use of semi-structured interviews enabled me to prepare interview questions well in advance. They also allowed the interviewees the freedom to express their opinions. Semi-structured interviews as a data generation tool provide reliable and comparable data. McMillan and Schumacher (2016) see the value of semi-structured interviews as being able to "generate data from participants' meanings; how individuals conceive their world and how they explain or make sense of the important events in their lives". These scholars add that "semi-structured interviews are renowned for their probes"; that is, they allow for obtaining detailed information through probing. Neuman (2015) echoes the same sentiments and points out that while "face-to-face interviews are costly, and the potential for bias is high, they also have a high considered rate of response, and they allow for flexible probing". In this study, I conducted individual interviews with school principals. Additionally, semi-structured interviews enabled me to make clearer the meanings principals attribute to their given situations (Morrison, 2016).

Even though semi-structured interviews allowed for in-depth information, they are time-consuming and labour intensive (Raymond, 2017). The process of preparing for interviews, coordinating, setting up, conducting, and analysing interviews is cumbersome. It required adequate time, effort, energy, and focus. Additionally, interviews require interviewer sophistication, that is, cleverness. Drew (2016) emphasises that interviewers need to be smart, poised, sensitive, nimble, and knowledgeable about relevant substantive issues. All these are skills that most researchers may not easily possess as some of them can only be acquired through experience and exposure. However, Henning et al. (2013), De Vos et al. (2015), Creswell (2017), and McMillan and Schumacher (2016) agree that interviews offer extraordinary benefits in terms of information that may be obtained from the participants.

Guided by the above scholars, I used semi-structured interviews in this study, and they enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of the principals' experiences in the context of implementing educational policy changes.

5.6.2 Document analysis

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, I employed document analysis as a data generation method. Bush (2016:63) sees documentary analysis as "an indispensable element" of case studies. Documents are an effective and efficient method of generating data since they are manageable and practical resources. Documents are easily accessible and a reliable source of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2016). Documents are formal tools for any organisation. For that reason, documents are normally available to the public. They can be available within that particular institution or online subject to the nature of the information, they contain (Bowen, 2009). Further, Wesley (2010) remarks that documents are stable as one can read and review them many times. Their stability is also encompassed in the fact that they remain unchanged by the research process or the researchers' influence. This is one key characteristic that makes them a valuable source of data generation.

In this study, I analysed each individual's school's FPE policy. These documents were analysed because they have a bearing on the implementation of FPE in schools. Documents were requested from the school principals. In analysing these policies, I looked for issues like who crafted the policy, what was the purpose of the policy, who are the role players in the policy implementation, and what are their roles.

Additionally, I investigated implementation strategies that the policy provides to the parties involved, and proactive and reactive strategies the policy provides in dealing with contesting views of the parties involved. Other issues that I considered were whether the policy is binding or not and measures that are put in place for schools that do not abide by the policy. Finally, I investigated indicators of whether the policy fulfils what it is meant for and after how many years the policy qualifies for review and by whom.

Some researchers have noted potential problems with documents as sources of evidence. Cohen et al (2019:113) question "the reliability of documentary evidence". This is because some documents may be incomplete, inconsistent, or inaccurate. Importantly does Creswell (2017) that documents are not created with data research agendas make an assertion? Hence, at times, they may not contain the information required for research purposes. Moreover, Drew (2016) observes that some documents may not be easily accessible or available, creating challenges and delays for the researcher. To overcome this limitation, I employed Teherani (2015) criteria, which include authenticity, credibility, and representativeness. Additionally, I considered the establishment of the meaning of the document and its contribution to the issues researchers are hoping to find out. I further explained the purpose of this study to the participants to ensure that I was provided with the documents that I needed for the study.

5.7 Data analysis

In this study, I analysed data qualitatively. Merriam (2009) defines qualitative data analysis as the organisation of data into manageable units to enable the researcher to synthesise it by searching for important patterns. This is essential because qualitative data tends to be bulky and unmanageable. According to Drew (2016), data analysis in research involves "summarising the mass of data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most important features". Specifically, I analysed the data using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a process of identifying themes or patterns

within qualitative data. I used this method of data analysis because it is suitable for qualitative studies Raymond, 2017). Johnstone (2009), who stipulates that accumulating raw qualitative data can result in the researcher being buried by data and being unable to analyse it, thus the thematic approach tends to be effective for analysing qualitative data, supports this approach to data analysis. Creswell (2017) emphasises that data analysis should take place immediately after collection. This phase of data analysis is referred to as primary analysis and is followed by categorisation and concept formation.

I used open coding, which is the identification of themes from raw data (Henning et al, 2013). I further coded and reduced data into categories and finally merged similar categories that formed the themes that are the basis of the discussion in this study. The information drawn from this process was incorporated into the remainder of the research questions and the theoretical framework based on the use of similar words, phrases, and categories. Raymond (2017) states that "theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks in qualitative research". In the final written report as suggested by Creswell (2017), when presenting and analysing data, I used the voices of participants to strengthen the findings that emerged from the data. I also ensured a comprehensive description and interpretation of the problem as it extends to the literature or signals a call to action.

5.8 Trustworthiness

Cohen et al (2019) remark that trustworthiness is significant in qualitative research and should always be considered by qualitative researchers. In quantitative research, the terms reliability and validity are used and they imply checking the precision of the findings, including the consistency of approaches that have been employed in the study (Drew, 2015). The same authors explain that in qualitative research, the term trustworthiness is used to determine the truthfulness of the study findings from the standpoint of the participants, the researcher, or readers. In this study, the strategies I used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study included transferability, credibility, dependability, and conformability. Below I provide a detailed description of these strategies.

5.8.1 Credibility

According to Henning et al. (2013), credibility is the extent to which readers can have confidence in the findings of a particular study. McMillan and Schumacher (2016) defines credibility as when the realities that exist within the minds of participants are compatible with the realities attributed to them by the researcher. Guided by the scholars above, I made sure that the research findings of the study would be as convincing as possible to the reader. Besides ensuring compatibility of the findings, I also employed triangulation to ensure the credibility of the research findings. In triangulation as suggested by Merriam (2009), data is obtained from different sources using multiple methods to gain different perspectives from different participants. In using triangulation, I was able to check for accuracy of findings from different sources. (Shenton, 2004). Interviews were therefore carried out together with an analysis of the relevant documents.

5.8.2 Transferability

Mushoriwa (2016) describes transferability in research and Henning et al. (2013) as the extent to which findings of a study can be applied to similar contexts or with participants in a similar context. The same authors further elaborate and say that transferability ensures that the findings of a study can be generalised from the sample to its target population. However, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) argue that qualitative research is generally not genereralisable. Similarly, Shenton (2004) contends that the use of a limited number of participants in a small environment makes findings of a qualitative study non-transferable. He further suggests that measures can be taken to enable the reader to look at the similarity of certain situations and the applicability of the findings to similar situations. Guided by Shenton (2004) and Lincoln and Guba's, (1985) description that these research findings cannot be generalised I compiled a thick and detailed description of the experiences of principals in the context of implementing educational policy changes. This would enable the readers to apply the findings of this study in other contexts.

5.8.3 Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the steps taken during the study by the researcher to ensure that the research findings express the views and experiences of the participants and not that of the researcher by reducing the researcher's bias (Shenton, 2004). This means the

research findings should be an accurate reflection of the participants' views, experiences and feelings (Henning et al 2013). To ensure confirmability in this study I did a self-reflection by identifying my own bias and further finding ways to reduce them (Creswell, 2017). Thus, I went to the field to generate data with an open mind and generated as much information as possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Henning et al, 2013). Before generating data, I developed reflection notes, and after the interviews, I transcribed the recordings immediately. I further asked my research colleagues to critique the research manuscripts; checking for any bias that I might have overlooked (Shenton, 2004).

5.8.4 Dependability

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2016), for any inquiry to be dependable, it must provide evidence that if it was repeated to similar participants in the same context, it would provide similar findings. The researcher must verify data to check whether it agrees with emerging themes from the participants' information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this reason, I asked experts in the field of research to audit my data and peers to examine the findings of my study (Raymond, 2017). I further crosschecked my data with participants to be sure if it conveyed the meanings they provided.

5.9 Ethical considerations

Mcmillan and Schumacher (2016) explain that qualitative research is often personally intrusive. This makes it necessary for ethical considerations to be taken into account. In this section, I discuss in detail the ethical considerations I took into account in the process of conducting the study.

5.9.1 Confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity

To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, I kept the names of the principals and that of the school and contribution to the study private except if it was their wish to be named.

5.9.2 Right to participation

Mushoriwa (2016) remarks that participants have a right to participate in a study or not. Therefore, I requested participants to participate voluntarily in the study. I asked them to sign consent forms. As explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2016) the contents of

the consent forms included the purpose of the study, a confidentiality statement, benefits of the study, a statement of voluntary participation, or a refusal to participate in the study. Participants signed the consent forms before engaging in the study, indicating dates of signing, after which I safely filed them. However, before signing the forms I engaged participants in an open discussion where the purpose of the study and the procedures to be followed in the study were discussed.

5.9.3 Access and acceptance

To get access to the field, I sought permission from different stakeholders. These stakeholders included the University of Pretoria, which is the institution that was guiding the study. Access was also sought from the MOET in ESwatini where schools are governed. School principals as participants in the study were also requested to participate in the study.

5.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I clarified the position of the study as being interpretive based on the researcher's worldview. I further described the research approach of the study, the qualitative case study. The sample population and the sampling techniques that were used have been described, as well as the data generation methods. Finally, I discussed how I established trustworthiness in the study and how data analysis was carried out. In the next chapter, I will present and analyse the data.

CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented the research design and methodology I employed in this study. In the current chapter, I present and analyse the data collected from the school principals on their experiences of implementing educational policy changes in their schools. Twelve principals from 12 primary schools with at least 10 years of leadership experience participated in this study. In analysing the data, my goal was to summarise what I had seen and heard in the field, in terms of frequent expressions, ideas, words, or themes that would assist me to make sense of the data as they emerged, for ease of interpretation. I did this within the boundary of my research aim and objectives (Maree, 2020:110). Before I give the profiles of the participants in this study, it would be imperative to provide my personal declaration as the principal investigator.

6.2 Personal declaration

As a researcher, I have previously served as a teacher and a principal in Eswatini schools. I know several Eswatini school principals; I studied with some of them and I worked with some of them in the Hhohho region while serving as a principal. I have also been a part-time lecturer in one of the institutions of higher learning in the country where I taught some school principals who were undertaking their professional development studies. However, at the time of data collection, I had changed jobs: I was a full-time lecturer at the University of Eswatini, Faculty of Education, and Department of Inservice. With my position as a lecturer at the university, there was no way my position could interfere with the data collection from school principals. To safeguard against bias, I ensured from the sampling process that I sampled participants who were not my close counterparts in any way so that they could honestly participate in the study. Therefore, I used purposive sampling and made sure, while the participants were sampled purposively and conveniently, none of those that I had worked closely with were selected to participate in the study.

In addition, I clearly explained the purpose of the study to participants and that they were not obliged to participate in the study. After getting all information about the study and being convinced about its purpose, they volunteered to participate. In preparing to go to the field to collect data I tried to go into the field with an open mind to further guard against bias.

6.3 The schools and the contexts in which the participants function

In the Eswatini education context, schools are not categorised according to socioeconomic conditions in terms of school fees payment. Unlike our neighbouring country, South Africa, where there would be quintile 1, 2, 3, and so forth, which describes the socioeconomic conditions of the schools; this is not the case with Eswatini. Schools in Eswatini are regarded to be the same regardless of the socioeconomic conditions in their surrounding community. According to MOET (2009), all public primary schools in Eswatini are no-fee schools. That is, they may not levy any fees from parents as a way of augmenting the school's income. However, it is true that well-resourced schools in Eswatini are those in urban areas and are generally bigger in learner enrolments. I, therefore, present brief profiles of the schools and those of school principals below.

6.4 Description of participants and the research sites

To guarantee the confidentiality of the schools and principals participating in this study, their identities were anonymised by giving them codes in the place of the real names. For example, they were named School A (SA), School B (SB), Principal 1 (P1), Principal 2 (P2), and Principal 3 (P3), respectively.

School A (SA)

School A is a primary school located in the urban area of the Manzini region and missionaries established it in 1944. It was initially established as a practicing school for a teacher training college located next to the school, which has been recently upgraded to a university. It was a government mission primary school affiliated with the Church of the Nazarene. The school greatly relies on funds generated by parents through the Parents Teachers Association (PTA), and it is a "no fee" school. It had a total enrolment of 688 learners, with 19 educators, excluding the principal. Classes ranged from grade 1 to grade

7. Based on the physical appearance of its infrastructure, it appeared to be a well-resourced school.

Principal 1 (P1)

Principal one is a male principal between 51 and 60 years old. He had served as an educator in both rural and urban schools for 26 years. He has an honours degree in education, had been in School A for seven years, and has been a principal for 12 years. He served as a principal for five years in a rural school and seven years in an urban school when we met for this study.

School B (SB)

This school is located in the rural areas of the Hhohho region. It is a non- fee-paying community school. At the time of the study, some of the buildings had no windowpanes for door handles. The classrooms were sparsely equipped, with broken chalkboards and a few double desks. It had a total enrolment of 360 learners with nine educators, excluding the principal. Classes ranged from grade 1 to grade 7.

Principal 2 (P2)

Principal two (P2) was a male between the ages of 55 and 60 years old. He possessed an honours degree and has been in this school for seven years as a principal. He has served for six years in another school in the rural areas before coming here. He has taught in both rural and urban schools. In all, he has been a principal for 13 years.

School C (SC)

School C (SC) is located in the urban areas of the Lubombo region and is a primary government mission school. It is a non- fee-paying school with a total enrolment of 621 learners and 16 educators including the principal. Classes within this school range from grade 1 to grade 7. The school does not have a science lab or school hall, but has a secretary, a caretaker, a cook, and a security guard.

Principal 3 (P3)

Principal three is a female principal between 55 and 60 years old. She has a master's degree and had been in this school for 11 years. She had been a principal for 13 years. She had served as a principal in two different schools including School C. She had taught all her teaching career as an educator in rural schools.

School D (SD)

School D is located in the urban area of the Manzini region. It is a primary government mission school and non-fee-paying school. It has a total enrollment of 350 learners with 10 educators including the principal. Classes ranged from grade 1 to grade 7. As a school in an urban area, it looks well resourced: the walls are neatly painted and fenced.

Principal 4 (P4)

Principal four (P4) is a man between 55 and 60 years old. He has a certificate in education. During the undertaking of this study, he was left with two weeks in office before he could retire. He had been in this school for 17 years and had been the principal for a period of 15 years.

School E (SE)

School E is located in the rural area of the Hhohho region. It is a non-fee-paying community government primary school. It had a total enrolment of 520 learners with 16 educators including the principal. The buildings had broken windowpanes and doors. Some classrooms were sparsely furnished with broken chalkboards and few double desks. Classes range from grade 1 to grade 7.

Principal 5 (P5)

Principal five is a female principal between the ages of 55 and 60 years old. She has a certificate in education. She had been in the school for 21 years. Principal 6 had been a principal for a period of 15 years. At the time of the study, she was two months away from retirement.

School F (SF)

School F (SF) is located in the urban area of the Manzini region. It is a primary government school and a non- fee-paying school. At the time of the study, it had a total enrolment of 966 learners, with 23 educators excluding the principal. Classes range from grade 1 to grade 7. The infrastructure of the school looks good from outside and is finely painted.

Principal 6 (P6)

Principal six is a male principal between 51 and 60 years old. He has a master's degree and had been in this school for 17 years. He had been the principal for a period of 12 years. He had taught mostly in urban and semi-urban schools.

School G (SG)

School G is located in the semi-urban area of the Manzini region. It is a primary government national school and non- fee-paying school. It had a total enrolment of 740 learners, with 19 educators and the principal. Classes range from grade 1 to grade 7. The school looks well resourced in terms of infrastructure. It was neatly fenced and well painted.

Principal 7 (P7)

Principal seven is a male principal between 50 and 60 years old. He has a bachelor's degree, had been in this school for seven years, and had been the principal for a period of 12 years. He had been the principal in a national school before coming to school G.

School H (SH)

School H is located in the urban area of the Hhohho region. It is a primary government mission school and non- fee-paying school. It had a total enrolment of 900 learners with 21 educators and the principal. Classes range from grade 1 to grade 7.

Principal 8 (P8)

Principal eight is a male principal between 51 and 60 years old. He has a master's degree and has been in this school for 17 years. He had been the principal for a period of 14 years.

School I (SI)

School I is located in the rural area of the Hhohho region. It is a primary government mission school and a no fee-paying school. It has a total enrollment of 502 learners with 18 educators and the principal. Classes range from grade1 to grade 7.

Principal 9 (P9)

Principal nine is a female principal between 51 and 60 years old. She has an honours degree, had been in this school for seven years, and had been the principal for a period of 12 years. She previously served as the principal in a community school.

School J (SJ)

This school is located in the rural area of the Lubombo region. It is a primary government community school and non- fee-paying school. It had a total enrolment of 716 learners with 19 educators including the principal. Classes range from grade 1 to grade 7. The school was established many years ago, though the exact year could not be established. School J is among the top-performing schools in the district. The school is under-resourced; it has a non-functional computer lab and does not have a library or a school hall.

Principal 10 (P10)

Principal ten (P10) is a female principal between 55 and 60 years old. She has a diploma and has been in this school for 17 years. She had been a principal for a period of 12 years and had taught both in rural and urban schools.

School K (SK)

School K is located in the urban area of the Manzini region. It is a non- fee-paying primary government school. It had a total enrolment of 457 learners, 15 educators and the principal serviced the school. Classes range from grade 1 to grade 7.

Principal 11 (P11)

Principal eleven is a male principal between 51 and 60 years old. He has an honours degree, had been in this school for seven years, and had been the principal for a period of 12 years.

School L (SL)

School L is located in the urban area of the Manzini region. It is a non- fee-paying primary government mission school. It had a total enrollment of 324 learners with 15 educators and the principal. Classes range from grade 1 to grade 7. Physically, the fencing was poorly constructed and the walls needed painting.

Principal 12 (P12)

Principal twelve is a male principal between 51 and 60 years old. He has an honours degree and had been in this school for seven years as a principal for a period of 12 years.

6.5 Profiling of the research participants

Table 6.1 below indicates the profiles of the research participants of the study. The 12 schools that participated in the study differed according to their physical locations as indicated.

Table 6.1: Profiles of research participants and research sites

Participant Name	Age	Region	School location	School name	Years of experience	Gender	Educational level
P1	51	Manzini	Urban	SA	12	M	Honours
P2	57	Hhohho	Rural	SB	10	M	Degree
P3	59	Manzini	Rural	SC	13	M	Certificate
P4	57	Manzini	Urban	SD	17	F	Degree
P5	58	Hhohho	Urban	SE	11	F	Certificate
P6	55	Manzini	Rural	SF	14	M	Master's Degree
P7	55	Manzini	Rural	SG	12	F	Degree
P8	58	Hhohho	Urban	SH	11	M	Degree
P9	59	Hhohho	Rural	SI	10	M	Diploma
P10	57	Hhohho	Rural	SJ	14	M	Diploma
P11	56	Manzini	Rural	SK	13	F	Honours Degree
P12	50	Hhohho	Urban	SL	12	M	Honours Degree

6.6 Data collection strategy and procedure

The data were gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews as well as document analysis. In all 12 schools, the principals were interviewed on a one-on-one basis. The interviews were conducted in English. Participants were allowed to respond in English or Swazi. The interviews took place in participants' respective schools and were planned according to the times preferred by each principal. I also analysed documents: each school's FPE policy.

The principals who participated in this study were from both rural and urban schools. The reason for selecting principals from different socioeconomic backgrounds was to establish whether principals in these schools had similar or different experiences in implementing educational policy changes. Each semi-structured interview session lasted for about 45 to 60 minutes.

6.7 The data presentation as collected from the participants

The study was guided by one main research question and four sub-questions. The primary research question was:

“What are the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in the implementation of policy changes?”

To respond to the above question, the following questions came to play:

- What are the principals’ knowledge and understanding of educational policy changes?
- What are principals’ roles in the formulation and implementation of educational policy changes?
- Why do school principals in Eswatini primary schools implement educational policy changes in the way that they do?
- How may the pragmatic narratives of schools’ principals inform a working framework to provide a guide on how to adopt and implement education policy change in schools?

In conducting my analysis, I organised data into manageable units to enable me to synthesise it by searching for important patterns. I analysed data using thematic analysis and used open coding where I identified themes from raw data. I further coded and reduced data into categories and finally merged similar categories, which formed the themes that are the basis of discussion in this study. Below I present the responses of the participants to the above questions.

6.7.1 Knowledge and understanding of educational policy change

It was required that the research process firstly focus on the principals' understanding of educational policy change. This was necessary for the purpose of establishing a connection with what participants already knew, and the relationship of this knowledge to what I intended to ask in later questions. Below I present their responses.

P1-SA described policy change thus*, "In my opinion policy change in education refers to reforms or innovations. It is the changes that are deemed fit by the ministry for the smooth running of schools. These changes are documented after consultation with stakeholders and later made known to schools for implementation*". Contrary, P4-SD pointed out that, "*It is changes brought by those in authority to guide the operations of schools or to guide the way we do things as desired by the ministry of education".* P6-SF was of the similar view that *"educational policy change entails changes that relate to educational operations or laws that narrates how schools should* operate *".* While reiterating the above views, P7-SG expressed *"it is changes that are law regulated and developed by the ministry of education. These changes should help schools to operate easily and in a similar way because they act as a guide in all* schools*"*. In his opinion, P8-SH voiced out, "*It is the constant changes of laws that those in the leadership of the day bring in place whenever they feel like. Iyavuka nje indvodza ive kutsi ikhanukani ivele isho kutsi namhla sekutawusetjentwa kanje".* Translated, *"whenever* whoever *is in leadership feels like today, we should take this direction he does that".*

While sharing her understanding of educational policy changes P9-SI indicated that it is *"the improvement to existing operations, existing procedures which may be for better or worse depending on how they have been handled by the two parties involved being us principals and the ministry of education*". P10-SJ added that educational policy change "*is what brings change to how educational institutions or schools work. It* is a change *that is documented which must be implemented in schools and it ensures uniformity. In other words, these changes allow schools to operate in more or less the same way".* In agreement with what most of the participants said, P11-SK had the following to say, "Educational *policy change is changes meant to improve existing educational operations; it can also mean methods used by those in power in an attempt to outline how changes can be effected in schools".*

On the other hand, principals 2, 3, and 5 viewed educational policy change differently. According to P2-SB, policy change in education means "*laws that schools or countries must follow and they are critical for the continuation of the education agenda*". Similarly, P3-SC said, "*I think it is basically rules that govern operations of schools of which probably failure to abide by them can lead to one being charged"*. P5-SE echoed them by describing it as "*guidelines and regulations that govern the operations of schools. These guidelines or laws may change from time to time depending on the ministry and the state of affairs in the country*", he emphasised.

From the narratives above, it is indicative that participants in this study attached similar meanings to the concept of educational policy change. Their understanding however manifested in different levels. The first level is the existence of educational *policies as regulators* of the day-to-day operations in the school. Some of them even used the term *"laws".* This then indicates that participants in this study understand that *policies are binding*, meaning that they need to be followed. They also understand that there must be closer monitoring and evaluation as the policies are implemented. According to them, this is to observe what works and what does not work and needs to be changed. In other words, *policies must be flexible and adaptable*. In this way, they enable improvement. The third level is that of policy review. Participants in this study viewed this level as a *collaborative effort* where all stakeholders must have a voice in policy development and review – policy development as a collaborative effort.

Although terms such as "*laws*" and "*rules"* often came up from their narratives, it remained unclear whether participants in this study understood that:

- It is their right as citizens of Eswatini to express freely their opinions and views on issues that affect them and educational policies in particular. That is, they have a democratic right to have a voice when educational policies are developed or reviewed.
- All policies must be in line with the Eswatini constitution (2005). In other words, only the policies that are in line with the constitution are binding/enforceable.

In other words, none of the participants expressed the need for their right to freedom of expression to be respected when policies are developed. *Ignorance about human rights in education remains a challenge.*

It was also necessary for this study to establish the principals' roles in the early stages of the policy, that is, the formulation up to the implementation stage. The next section discusses principals' roles in the formulation and implementation of educational policy change.

6.7.2 Principals' roles in the formulation and implementation of educational policy change

The principals' awareness of the FPE policy, their involvement in the policy process, and their roles in the formulation and implementation of the policy are necessary for the success of the implementation process. Without their awareness, involvement, and understanding of the policy, they may not be able to fulfil their roles in the implementation process. It was, therefore, necessary to establish participants' awareness of the policy.

Indicating his awareness of the policy, P6-SF said, *"I am aware of the policy. In fact, all public primary school principals in the country are aware of it and we are using it in the management of schools."* In the same manner, P3-SC narrated his side of the story and said, "*we are aware of this* policy and we use *it in the running of our primary schools in the country. It has been in existence for years"*. Sharing similar views with the above participants P9-SI added, *"Yes as principals we know the FPE policy, it is currently governing the operations of public primary schools in the country."* In addition, principal P8-SH affirmed, "*I know the policy, when it came to effect we stopped charging fees to parents".* In agreement with P6-SF and P3-SC, P10-SJ acknowledged that they were aware of the FPE policy.

However, P4-SD, providing his side of his awareness of the policy responded, "*I know about the policy. We are currently using it to run schools but handling it physically, no. I have never laid my hands on it. As principals, we were told about it, and we had meetings when it was introduced. We were informed in the meetings that we were no longer expected to charge fees to parents but the policy itself was not given to us. There were no preparations for us on how to implement it".* The views uttered by P4-SD were

supported by P11-SK who expressed: "*I know about the policy, but you will be surprised that I have never seen that document. I have been to several meetings where free primary education issues were discussed but the policy has never been distributed*."

Principals were therefore generally aware of the policy, but in terms of its contents, most of them could not indicate whether they were aware of what the policy entailed or not. Their awareness sounded more of shallow knowledge or hearsay about the policy. Significantly, some of the participants came out clear that they had never seen the policy. However, such utterances left a great deal of doubt about whether the principals were really implementing the policy. One of the recurring questions was how they could implement a policy that they had never seen. The policy was their operational tool and how could they not be in possession of it. The fact that they had never seen the policy would have an impact on the quality of implementation. Their knowledge, therefore, was a top-down knowledge from the authoritative body. The awareness therefore from the statements seem to be lacking and in doubt in terms of the contents of the policy. In conclusion, the finding in this section is that principals are aware of the policy they are implementing, but their awareness is abstract.

Having explored the awareness of policy by participants, it was then necessary to establish their involvement in the policy process, especially in the early stages of the policy: the formulation stage. It was further necessary to find out if principals were prepared for the implementation process. The utterances below are informative in this regard.

P5-SE mentioned, *"As far as I can remember principals were not involved, consulted, or represented when the FPE policy was developed. I first heard about the introduction of FPE through the media and later through MOET meetings. So principals never participated in this policy especially at its developmental* stages". Similarly, P1-SA described his involvement in this way: "*I was not involved, I do not remember a workshop that was meant for the orientation of principals about this policy, but we were invited into a meeting where we were told the policy will come into effect. It is a policy that came as lightning; nothing was prepared by schools for it even in the previous year of its introduction. We were not prepared to implement this policy*". Sharing the same sentiments P9-SI said, "*Principals were not involved when the policy was formulated. The*

ministry informed us that there was a new policy coming and we had to introduce it at the same time of getting to know about it". These excerpts from the participants indicate that they were not engaged, which deprived principals of meaningful understanding of the policy and ownership.

In addition, P6-SF elaborated on the issue of involvement and said, "*I hope you might be well aware that we have not been involved in its development; we do not know how it was developed but we were told there was a new policy that should be implemented by us in schools with immediate effect. Yes, there were court issues around the implementation of the policy but we were not consulted as principals"* The disheartened P2-SB in describing his non-involvement in the policy process echoed what was said by P6-SF and said, "*When the policy was introduced it was ready to be effected; there were no contributions from us as schools; teachers and principals. This is partly because the government was taken to court by the Association of Ex-miners to force him to introduce FPE in the country. This was because the country had indicated in the review of the country's constitution (2005) that after the constitution is in place that is the year 2006 FPE will be introduced. The government failed to introduce FPE in the years 2006-2009. The Association of Ex-miners took the government to court at the end of 2009 where he was forced to introduce FPE. The rushing of the implementation was for that reason, and it was a dire decision. Of course, there were meetings organised by MOET in all the regions on the FPE policy and what was expected of us as principals, but in terms of training and preparation for the whole implementation process, there was nothing to that effect. We were told a week or so before the policy started rolling in schools through meetings that we were to implement it"*. P3-SC, who seemed frustrated when expressing his views about his non-involvement in the policy said, "*No, there were no trainings to prepare us for the implementation exercise. … Oh no… as principals we were not involved in the development of the policy and as a result, there are so many contextual factors that were ignored which maybe if we were involved, we could have suggested to the ministry to take note of them. I must say through this policy schools will not be able to achieve quality education thus it needs to be reviewed"*. Interestingly, the tone and the volume of the "no" from PC-S3 were loud and clear. Correspondingly, P10-SJ added, "*Principals were not part of the developmental process of the policy; we were not involved. It was just a top-down document from the government which is a norm here in Eswatini".*

In similar utterances P12-SL, P4-SD, and P7-SG conceded with the previous participants and commented that they know the policy but were not consulted in its development nor prepared to implement it. Summarising what has been said by most of the participants, P8-SH said: "*We were left out in the development of the policy; we only became aware of it in principals' meetings at the beginning of the year when it was ready for implementation".*

The above pronouncements are a clear indication that participants were not part of the formulation process and were not involved in the formulation of the policy. This is partly so because the policy was introduced in haste. It appears implementation as a critical policy phase was reached and done to comply with a court verdict. Thus, principals were neither consulted nor involved in the formulation of the policy. It seems the government used its authority to put the policy in place and disregarded key stakeholders and phases, as participants indicated that they came to be aware of the policy through meetings organised by the MOET. This, as indicated in the participants' views, brings an understanding that the policy document was a top-down issue; participants could not voice their views. At the same time, the government ran the risk of missing great ideas from participants towards the whole policy process. Additionally, the non-involvement speaks to the issue of awareness discussed earlier and makes it clear that participants would not be aware of the policy contents if they were not involved. It further transpired from one of the participants' expressions that it is normal for principals to be left out in the development of policies. Again, the right to participation is featured here and the government has overlooked the right. It appears from the pronouncements that the government has missed the idea that it is a prerequisite for key stakeholders to participate in policy issues and they should understand the contents and origins of policies for proper implementation. Importantly, these opinions are similar with all the participants whether from rural or urban schools.

It was further necessary to establish whether the principals were prepared for the implementation process and how they would find a way of implementing the policy if they were not prepared. The participants made the pronouncements below.

For instance, P7-SG mentioned, "*We were not prepared for the implementation of the policy. We were told right at the time the policy started running that there was the policy*

where there was no charging of fees from parents, we must admit all learners; no child should be out of class despite class sizes. That was it; in short, we were not prepared." P5-SE confirmed, *"No preparations were in place for us, neither teachers, parents, or school committees. Finding your way in the implementation process is just working collaboratively with stakeholders and thinking outside the box look into strategies that will make your school to effectively operate*". P11-SK elaborated, "*The Government did not prepare us for the implementation of this policy, and we came to know of it when it was implementation time".*

In addition, P6-SF also acknowledged that they were not prepared and shared similar sentiments with P7-SG and P5-SE by remarking, "*There were no preparations for us on how to implement the policy. As I mentioned earlier, we were just told in a meeting that there is a new policy in place, and it was narrated to us what was* expected, mainly *not charging parents fees. I think we were told a week or so before the opening of schools".* P1-SA had this to say "*I do not remember a workshop that was meant for the orientation of principals about this policy, but we were invited into a meeting where we were told the policy will come into effect. It is a policy that came as lightning; nothing was prepared by schools for it even in the previous year of its introduction."* P3-SC commented, *"We were not prepared. To implement the policy, one needs to plead with teachers to be patient especially in the absence of adequate resources. At some point, you need to supervise closely your underqualified teachers as some were trained for high school but they are teaching here at primary. You need to create good relations with other schools and the community at large. You will* not *believe that in some instances, I had to run around neighboring homesteads looking for accommodation for teachers."*

P12-SL declared, "*There were meetings organised by MOET in all the regions on the FPE policy and what was expected of us as principals, but in terms of training and preparation for the whole implementation process, there was nothing. To that effect, we were told a week or so before the policy started rolling in schools, through meetings, that we were to implement it. Of course, there was no training. It has been learning on the job all the way for us*."

In agreement with the above participants, P9-SI, P2-SB, P10-PJ agreed that they were not involved and commented that to find their way in the implementation process they just take the directives and do what is expected of them as principals.

The excerpts above indicate that not only the participants were not prepared for the policy implementation, but also stakeholders were also not prepared. According to the participants, policy implementation requires the preparation of implementers. It seems the failure to prepare stakeholders was an oversight by MOET and the government. Such an oversight has a significant impact on the success of the policy at the implementation stage. It is imperative to point out that it is often the skill at which the policy developer communicates, consults, prepares, and involves the stakeholders that determines largely the success of the policy. According to participants, there were no workshops organised for them on how to go about the implementation process. However, what they said indicates that there were meetings arranged before the implementation process, which in part implies sensitisation and preparation of some sort. Therefore, according to them, adequate preparations would have entailed workshops where they could possibly exchange ideas, ask questions, and get clarifications. It remained of interest, however, why the government through MOET could not prepare implementers, as successful implementation hinges on adequate preparation and drilling of policy contents to end users. This also raises the question of the quality of implementation on the ground: how can implementers successfully implement a policy if they are not prepared? Therefore, the participants perceived the implementation of policy changes to require support and MOET as not supportive enough towards the implementation of policy changes. The lack of support is linked to the fact that principals were not equipped for the introduction and implementation process.

The participants in this study could not hold back the fact that they would have loved to be involved in the formulation of the policy and make contributions. The expressions below are informative in this regard:

P11-SK said, "*Given an opportunity in the development of the policy I could have asked that each school submits its operational costs to the ministry and the ministry uses that as a basis for paying fees to each school under the FPE for each learner*". In contrast, P2-SB remarked, *"If I was involved, I would have advised the ministry to engage in a*

feasibility study; a study that would take into consideration the country's economic state and needs of schools before deciding on the grant amount to be paid by the government". P2-SB's view was supported by P10-SJ, who said, *"If I was involved in the development, I would have called for research before deciding on the amount of fees to be paid in schools. Schools are not the same in many ways. Paying the same amount of fees to the different schools is not right at all. I think it was necessary to consider principals' views before introducing the policy and be guided by costs incurred by different schools before coming up with an amount to be paid by each learner".*

Adding to the issue of involvement P1-SA and P8-SH had similar views as P1-SA said, "*If I was involved… I could have requested a higher amount towards the payment of school fees. I would have further recommended that the government consider the physical location of schools and the number of learners. In my view, these two factors could have been paramount in deciding the amount of fees to be paid. You know schools in town incur a lot of expenses such as water bills and rates which schools in rural areas do not pay". P8-SH said, "Probably if we were allowed to make submissions, I would have requested different amounts of fees for different schools. The current E560.00 per child per year paid by the government is not adequate in running schools".* Holding a different view P4-SD added, "*If I was involved in the formulation of the policy, I would have* asked for removal *of support staff salaries from schools to the government".* Adding his view, P5-SE commented, *"If we were allowed to make submissions, I would have requested that parents should also contribute in addition to what the governmen*t *would be paying*".

It is evident from the ongoing excerpts that participants desired to be part of the process. According to them, policymaking is seen as a process requiring discussion and interaction with stakeholders. Such an approach would correct problems that are raised as part of the policy process. Furthermore, the narratives above are indicative that policy development requires democratic participation on the side of the principals. This means that this policy was imposed on them; hence, there was some resistance with some of the principals in this study. It was interesting to note that principals desired to have been involved in the policy process and through being involved; they could have contributed ideas that would ensure the survival of the policy. Their remarks indicate that they would have wished to express their views on sharing of financial responsibilities versus the current scenario where limited funds are available and schools' budgets are stretched.

The amount paid to schools is a top-down issue that does not speak to the reality on the ground. From the pronouncements, there is an indication that participants were knowledgeable that policy implementation requires research; as terms such as feasibility, study and research are used. Participants also understood that policies are contextual; thus, they wished the ministry could have considered the different contexts/environments where schools are operating. One then wonders if the government is aware of the loss it incurred by failing to consult the participants as key stakeholders. There is an indication that if participants were involved and their wishes were incorporated, the government, through MOET, would have come up with a relevant and successful policy for implementation.

The pronouncements above further indicated an inadequate understanding of FPE as an education programme; one of the participants indicated that he could have requested parents to contribute towards the fees of their children. Contribution towards children's education therefore no longer entails free education for learners. Again, featuring from the participants' narratives here is "ignorance of the right to education for learners". On the other hand, it can be noted from the pronouncements that the government through the ministry of education was not proactive with preparations for the introduction and implementation of the FPE policy. The period between the review of the country's 2005 constitution, as stated by participants and the court case verdict of 2009, was adequate for sensitising and preparing implementers. It appears the government is not aware that non-involvement of policy end users can result in the complete failure of the implementation process and water down all efforts in terms of resources and time.

Participants further identified the stage at which the national FPE policy was in terms of review or evaluation.

For instance, P6-SF described the stage of the national FPE policy as follows, *"The policy needs to be reviewed. What is happening in schools should help the government develop a long-lasting policy that will align with our Swazi context*". Providing his side of his story about the policy stage, P1-SA had this to say, "*The fact that we have formed the Parents Teachers Association in my school to generate extra funds for the school indicates that the policy is long overdue for review. A policy is failing to survive the contexts in which schools operate. It needs to be reviewed immediately*". P7-SG was of a similar view as

P6-SF and P1-SA and said, "*This policy is long overdue for review, in fact after a few years of its introduction based on its poor service delivery* in schools the government *was supposed to review it".*

Similarly, P11-SK said, "*It is a policy that is overdue for review. Since its inception, we have been struggling to run schools and it is a pity that it is not clear when it will be reviewed. There was a time when we had a meeting with the ministry together with school committee chairpersons and we requested its review. The government has never considered that request. However, you must know Tshabalala (name of the researcher) that this policy is failing school operations and delivery of quality education ".* In contrast, P9-SH pointed out, *"It still needs to be developed further to allow it to cater for the diverse school contexts. The grants from the government are not enough for running schools".* P3-SC lamented, "*This is a nonstarter policy. You cannot tell me at 560 per learner you can run a school. It would be better if salaries for support staff were coming directly from the government. As is I do not know whether it is due for review or not because it has not been implementable at all".* P4-SD conceded with previous participants, "*I think it is ready for review because we are struggling with its implementation. I think because the government is cash strapped that is the reason it has not been reviewed since it was introduced".*

Sharing similar views with previous participants, P12-SL commented, *"I may not be so familiar with policies but this one FPE is long overdue for review. I think we urgently need a policy that will align with individual schools and make operations easy. You will not believe that the year it was introduced, it was introduced in two levels; grade 1 and* 2 in the same year". Expanding on what has been said by P12-SL, P10-SJ said, *"There is nothing positive achieved through this policy in schools. It needs to be reviewed and the review should be coupled with extensive involvement of stakeholders so that we can come up with a policy that will be in the best interest of the Swazi child and Swazi schools that are lacking so many necessary resources"*. P8-P2 and P5-SE agreed with previous participants as they remarked that the policy needs to be reviewed.

It emerged from the pronouncements that the national policy needed to be reviewed immediately. In fact, according to the participants, the review was long overdue. From the narratives above, the participants agreed that the national FPE policy has not been

reviewed since it was introduced. The participants' views continuously indicated and emphasised that the policy is due for review. It was shocking, however, that the government would not review policy for such a long period as ten years. It seems the government disregarded the overall objective of reviewing policies that are meant to help education authorities strengthen the education system. It further transpired from the participants' pronouncements that the policy was not enabling principals to offer quality education for learners. Worth noting is that the non-involvement of principals in the policy process gave challenges to the implementation process as participants could not own the policy. The narratives also reveal that adequate funds are required to run schools. It seems that the role played by principals as education stakeholders are crucial to the progress, achievement and success of educational policy implementation. Some of the roles include the advisory role which principals could have provided to the government. Consequently, by the absence of the review, the government continues to ignore the challenges on the ground as it is only through reviewing the policy that the challenges can be addressed. This means the challenges will intensify or persist if not addressed.

Describing their experiences in the implementation process, some of the participants further indicated that there was contestation of the policy, and they made the following remarks:

P8-SH remarked, "*Teachers have been the most affected stakeholder group because the policy did not bring enough resources to schools". Correspondingly, P4-SD commented, "I must say since the inception of this policy, teachers are a prominent group with contestations particularly because they are the ones who suffer when schools fail to provide adequate resources for teaching".* P6-SF narrated his side saying, "*We have not had much opposition to this policy, and maybe I can cite teachers as a group amongst stakeholders that did not understand the whole process. Unions also unsuccessfully contested this policy. Implementation of this policy calls for working collaboratively with all stakeholders including parents and teachers"*. P10-SJ added to the pronouncements made by P4-SD and S6-SF and highlighted that unions and teachers have not been happy with the FPE policy.

In addition to the above pronouncements, P12-SL also identified teachers as a stakeholder grouping that contested the policy and said, "*Yes teachers are one group that have been resistant towards this policy. They have had so many questions and so many "whys?" All their reasons are valid that the policy greatly tampered with their duties. They have suffered greatly in terms of the availability of teaching resources. As a mitigation process, we hold meetings to discuss challenges together and decide on what needs to be done and do it".* P3-SC elaborated on this issue and provided this explanation, *"Teachers are suffering a lot and they have openly challenged several issues. As principals, we had to frequently plead with them and provide them with feedback from government and governments' expectations of schools in the whole implementation process of the policy".*

Correspondingly, P11-SK pronounced, *"I must say since the inception of this policy teachers are a prominent group who contested the policy. Teachers have requested on several counts to collect extra fees through 'civvies' but the government considers any fundraising as a top-up".* P5-SE commented, "*We have not had much opposition to this policy. Maybe I can cite teachers as a group amongst stakeholders that did not understand the whole process. The Swaziland Association of Teachers (SNAT) also contested this policy after seeing the challenges it was posing to the education system but to no success".*

The views expressed by the participants above are indicative that teachers and their unions are the outspoken contestants to the introduction and implementation of the FPE policy. Reasons for the contestations relate to the shortage of teaching-learning materials resulting from low funding. The fact that the government has banned any form of fundraising activities in the schools further compounds the challenges associated with the shortage of finances. The pronouncements indicate that policy changes require the cooperation and will of teachers. It might have been helpful to involve them in the early stages of the policy: the developmental stage.

However, it seems teachers are not cognisant of the learners' right to education: a policy that embraces the right to education should be well received by teachers. It transpired from the conversation that mitigation measures employed by principals as they deal with the contestants include holding meetings with teachers negotiating with them to work under the given conditions.

It was crucial in this study to establish the roles principals execute as they implement educational policy changes. The pronouncements below are informative in this regard:

P5-SE said, "*We do all the administrative work but mainly we need to keep good records of funds received and report on how the funds have been spent".* Sharing some of the sentiments expressed by P5-SE, P3-SC described their roles as principals and added, "*Primarily as a principal, you are chief accounting officer in the school, and this is so applicable in the implementation of the policy. You prepare a budget for the FPE funds, liaise with the ministry, through the school development plan and submit a list of your available learners to the ministry. The list enables you to receive funds for operations*".

P4-SD further narrated their roles as principals in the implementation of the policy and said, "*We make a list of admitted learners submit it to the government to receive funds to run the school, we go around hunting for donors to ensure operations stretch up to the end of the year as the funds from government are not adequate*". Upon sharing a similar view with P4-SD, P6-SF also spoke about their roles and pointed out, "*I report all admitted learners to the ministry, this helps to receive funds equating to the available number of learners, prepare the school development plan, and prepare a financial report for FPE funds received from the government".*

P8-SH commented, *"I coordinate information between the school and the ministry, we prepare a school development plan working in collaboration with teachers and submit to the ministry and importantly we budget, receive and account for all fees*". P2-SB added: "*As principals, we keep on negotiating with teachers to be patient and work under the given conditions (lack of resources) with the hope that things will change soon". P10-SJ said, "In ensuring implementation of the policy the previous year you formulate a plan of operation for the following year. This is known as the school development plan. As a principal, you develop it together with the teachers and the school committee … However,*

I must acknowledge that at times we deviate from the policy and implement it in a manner suitable for our contexts. For instance, we find ourselves depending on one supplier purchasing equipment on credit which is not acceptable, but if that will enable the school to continue operating in the absence of funds why not?" Similarly, P7-SG pointed out, *"In executing our roles we develop a school policy that is in line with the FPE policy known as the school development plan or strategic plan and we use it all year round". Holding a different view, P1-SA said "We mobilise additional resources from parents. Yet, this [mobilising additional resources from parents] is not acceptable by the government".*

Describing their roles P9-SI added, *"We do everything expected of a school principal. Of course, some responsibilities come with the implementation of this policy which was not there before, and they include the development of the school policy; known as the school development plan. There are guidelines set in the Inqaba SchoolsProgramme (2011) that we must follow when we develop this policy*". P11-SK stated, "*All the administrative roles* empower *the school committee, look for donors,* limit *school participation in extracurricular activities, and whatever you can do to cut your expenses*". Adding on what entails their roles, P7-SG, added, "*We prepare a school development plan that will guide the operations of the school. This is done the year before you receive the funds. We prepare a document annually. We also work hand in hand with parents and the ministry of education".* Recounting how they execute their roles in the implementation process P12-SL said, "*We do everything expected of a school principal. Our responsibilities extend to include accounting for the finances received from the government and managing the school operations".*

It emerged from the narratives above that principals execute a variety of roles as they implement policy changes. These roles include financial roles, compiling lists of admitted learners, preparing a school development plan, coordinating information between the school and the ministry, seeking donors, working collaboratively with parents and teachers. In describing their financial roles, terms such as "*receive funds, account for funds, budgets and prepare a financial report*" consistently feature. It was obvious from their pronouncements that the management of the school's finances is an integral part of implementing policy change in schools. However, none of the participants indicated that their financial roles or the management of the finances and accountability equipped them

to make a positive contribution towards the improvement of quality teaching and learning in the school.

Again, most of the participants could not elaborate on what this process entailed even when they were probed; they could not recognise that the school's FPE policy (the school development plan) was meant to assist them as leaders together with school committees and teachers monitor the school's progress and or evaluate such. At the end of the evaluation stage, they should be able to see where and how they may have gotten off course. Thus, through this process, they should be able to improve and prepare a better document for the following year and deliver quality education. A lack of self-application of principals in the development of the school policy process was observed, as they could not provide many details. An observed trend from the participants' pronouncements is a consistent agreement that they were involved in the development of the school FPE policy, but not the national FPE policy.

Having explored the roles of participants in the implementation of policy change, it was necessary to understand how participants implement policy changes. The next section provides data in this regard.

6.7.3 Principals' implementation of policy change and reasons for such implementation

How participants implemented policy changes was significant as it affected their perceptions of the policy. I was therefore interested in understanding the views, and experiences that participants in this study had about the implementation process. Principals narrated how they implement policy changes, and the verbal quotes below indicate how they go about the whole process.

For instance, P4-SD pointed out the following: *"Implementation of this policy requires learning every day, patience every day, and trials every day. You know serving as a principal under the given circumstances is so frustrating. The fact that we were not involved in the whole process of developing and introducing the policy makes our work very difficult. We do not know how the government reached E560.00".* Sharing similar views with P4-SD, P11-SK remarked, "*It is difficult to provide all school needs in implementing this policy. As a principal, you need to prioritise what can be funded. Therefore, in my case, we prioritise the payment of support staff, utilities, and vegetables*

in the kitchen". P8-SH explained, *"Many activities must be taken care of through the funds, but as a principal, you have to be vigilant and monitor the expenditure closely. The government does not pay the funds on time, in some instances he would pay a few schools and rush to the media to say schools have been paid FPE grants, only when a handful has been paid. We are not receiving the support we need from the government as we implement this policy".*

Equally, P3-SC remarked, "*We have seen ourselves looking for more donors while implementing this policy, owing suppliers, failing to provide enough teaching resources and cutting on support staff. For instance, before FPE we used to have a caretaker we had to lay him off because the funds were not enough. We cannot even ask parents for additional fees most of them cannot afford."* However, P6-SF said, "*To cover all the costs and continue to have a premier school we are using the PTA to generate funds. Each parent pays E1000 towards PTA funds, and we use this to supplement the meagre money received from the government. Principals are not allowed to collect extra funds from parents under the implementation of this policy… in short we use the PTA to see the school operating smoothly".*

P6-SF was further supported by P1-SA, who said, "*For me, my school is in town there was no way to survive implementation of this policy with the funds we receive from the government. I engaged the committee and sold the idea of forming a Parents Teachers Association (PTA). Luckily, the school committee has been so receptive to ideas, and we formed the association guided by the Schools Committee Constitution (2011). I must say that as a school we have been able to survive over years because of the pro-activeness of the PTA. Let me share with you a letter I recently sent to parents indicating how bad the situation is in terms of finances which is mainly because of FPE. Funds received under FPE are not enough to run schools."*

The letter reads as follows:

Important notice

Good morning dear parents. Please take note of the following:

Suspension of online learning through WhatsApp

- You are hereby notified that teachers will not send some work for a month

- The school has E1291 while PTA has E2024.

- No more money to carry out this exercise.

- We are hoping that by the time we resume lessons parents would have made their contributions

Meanwhile

- Parents may come to borrow some books beginning from Tues 11th August

- Please help your children to study while at home

Blocking parents on WhatsApp

- We are going to allow only teachers to send messages through WhatsApp beginning from August.

- Parents will be allowed only to message individual teachers who will be group admin...

We shall forward you with the statistics of contributions before the end of the day

School crisis

- The school support staff has been laid off due to unavailability of funds...this is their 3rd month

- The present G7 is also going to have challenges with their lessons soon.

Admission of 2021 G1

- We shall notify you in due course

N.B: There are TV and radio lessons the ministry will be running. I will forward the timetable. You are given 3 weeks to bring your suggestions to this group.

Principal

P1-SA further added, "*You see how bad it is we had to lay off the support staff because of lack of funds. The government has not paid fees for term 2. So as a leader, you have to think out of the box on how to get the school running".*

The narratives above indicate that participants need to employ context-relevant strategies in the process of implementing the policy. Participants from urban schools had similar views and they were able to mobilise parents and form PTAs. Participants from rural schools, because of their socioeconomic environments, could not use this option despite their wealth of experience as principals. It seems principals need to be proactive with their financial management responsibilities and it appears from the pronouncements that

finances are the core of the school operations; hence, they need to be attentive with their financial transactions. Generating extra funds featured as a necessary strategy employed by participants as a means of implementing the policy. It seems without the employment of this strategy, schools would not survive and the strategies included the use of PTAs and engaging donors.

Adding to the issue of lack of funds and how they go about implementing the policy, P5-SE explained that "*To implement this policy you just weigh your school financial activities and honour key financial obligations. We totally lost confidence in the government, and we are convinced that he does not have the interest of learners at heart, let alone that of quality education; why always delay the payment of fees? FPE has also made parents abandon their roles; they are not cooperative even with helping their children at home partly because they are not paying the children's fees*".

It can be noted from the ongoing pronouncements that principals deviated from the norm to implement the policy due to inadequate funds for operating schools. A drastic deviation is that of charging parents extra fees through PTAs. This in part indicates that principals do not understand the concept of free education and FPE as a programme. Principals feel they have been left alone and without support in the implementation process, thus they must find their own ways of ensuring the smooth running of schools. The above scenario, as portrayed by the participants, indicates severe financial issues where they are forced to set aside important educational activities. It also emerged from the pronouncements that school-funding issues can create a major problem for effective teaching and learning as well as student achievement. Evidently, reduced budgets in schools often result in compromised education and lack of resources.

Providing his description on how they implement the policy, P7-SG said, "*Implementing this policy is a tall order. It is a pity that we were not involved when it was developed. As a principal, you needed to create good relations with neighbouring schools and suppliers. There are times when as a principal you have to borrow even food from neighbours borrowing from you"*. In the same view, P10-SJ commented, "*At one point we had zero balance in the bank account. Given that scenario, you loan what you do not have from school A. The government does not pay the FPE grants to schools on time. As schools, we can no longer employ computer teachers because they are not salaried by the*

government. They draw their salaries from the little funds that we receive from the FPE grants. The money received through the FPE programme is not enough". In supporting P10-SJ's view, P9-SI explained, "*To sail through the implementation process, you must be a highly relational person. Work closely with colleagues, parents, suppliers and be able to negotiate so that you are always afforded assistance. That is how we have been able to survive because fees are not paid to the school on time by the government. As principals, we have suffered a lot of stress. We have had big numbers especially in the lower grades with students failing to acquire many basic skills. Teachers have been without accommodation"*. P2-SB, in agreement with P9-SI, had this to say, "*The key challenge of this policy is the lack of funds in schools. To implement this policy, you need to be wise and be willing to learn every day from the success of other schools and colleagues. At times, you have to buy on credit from suppliers. Serving as a principal in the era of free primary education has not been easy. Am glad to retire this year".*

The excerpts above indicate that effective communication and negotiation skills are necessary strategies principals need to employ as they implement the policy. The terms are relational, and creating good relations are used to signify the necessity of proper communication and negotiation skills.

P12-SL provided the following explanation: "*We were not prepared and for us to sail through it has been trial and error and working closely with colleagues and sometimes not adhering to government requirements. You know as a principal you have to employ what will work in your school"*. P12-SL was supported by P8-SH, who expressed dissatisfaction about the whole process and said, "*To implement this policy you do what will work in your context because the introduction of the FPE was just a fulfilment of a political promise, not that as a country we were ready for it. We just wait and see how sustainable it is; otherwise, it is not productive. I think parents can afford to fund primary education better than the provisions of this policy".*

P2-SB also commented, "*There are many reasons we implement the policy the way we do. As principals, we have been thrown into the deep end. We were not involved in the development of the policy and the reasons for introducing this policy. The funding from the government is failing to deliver quality education. More so, the lack of necessary equipment is demotivating to everyone, including us principals, let alone teachers".*

Participants also indicated that they were not receiving the necessary backing from the government, as P1-SA said, "*In fact, as principals, we are not receiving the support we should be receiving from the government. How does the government as a custodian of the policy expect us to run schools if there are no funds?*" Adding to what has been said by P1-SA, P3-SC explained, "*Government is failing to pay fees on time, as a result, we sometimes buy on credit from suppliers, a practice that is against government guidelines. You know when teachers ask for materials, and you cannot provide them as a principal they become demotivated. The quality of teaching and learning depends so much on the availability of resources, which in return creates a conducive environment to learning and motivates staff. We are just left alone in the whole implementation process*".

The narratives of the principals presented here describe how they implement policy changes within the contexts of their schools. It emerged from the participants' views that implementation of the policy is a tall order coupled with many challenges mostly revolving around the shortage of funds. The implementation process according to them has been a context where they have encountered many challenges coupled with stress, demotivation and loss of confidence in the current system of government. Participants' comments indicate that there are guidelines provided by the government in the implementation process. The lack of funds seems to be a key factor that prevents effective implementation of the policy. This key factor forces principal to implement the policy as they deem fit. The lack of funds pushes principals to investigate options that are against governments' guidelines and results in charging parents extra fees. It is observed that in the process of charging parents extra fees, the principals distance themselves and use the PTA to drive the whole revenue process. Principals know that as government employees, if they are found contravening the law, they stand to be charged. For that reason, they hide behind the parents and the PTA runs the account into which extra fees are collected. Yet, it seems the funds charged by PTAs are exorbitant, as they almost double what the government pays through the FPE grants. Principals, as indicated in the excerpts above, were of the view that the FPE grants received from the government are insufficient. Principals cited the role of seeking for donors to ensure adequate resources in schools.

Principals pointed out that implementing educational policy changes under the FPE policy was impractical. One of the contributing reasons to the impracticality is the delay in the payment of grants to schools by the government, which results in a lack of funds and difficulty in school operations. The impracticality is also attributed to the non-involvement of participants in the policy process and lack of preparedness. The delay in the payment of fees to schools is seen by participants as a lack of support from the government and featured as a reason for the implementation direction adopted by school principals: deviation from government guidelines. A continuous expression of the review of the national policy was observed throughout as participants said that the policy has not been reviewed. At some point, this would be followed by laughter, indicating that the review of the national policy by the government is a far-fetched idea. Lack of preparation and lack of funds for the implementation process also featured to be a propelling reason for the way the implementation has been handled by principals.

On the review of the school's FPE policy, the participants had the following to say:

P9-SI provided this explanation: "*As a school, we have reviewed the school policy. As per government procedure, the school policy is reviewed annually but the national policy has not been reviewed. I am part of the team [school development plan team] that reviews the policy using the Inqaba Schools Programme (2011) to guide us. This team includes teachers, school committee representatives and learners*". In the same manner, P2-SB commented: "*We revise the school policy annually with the school committee as people who are representing the interest of parents, teachers, and learners. To develop the school policy, we use the Inqaba Schools Programme. There are seven pillars highlighted in the Inqaba Schools Programme that we must embrace in the development of the school policy. The national policy has not been reviewed since FPE was introduced in schools"*. Similarly, P10-SJ said, "*I am the chairperson of the committee that is responsible for the review of the school policy. I work with representatives of the school committee, teachers and learners. We have reviewed the school policy many times. The national policy has not been reviewed by the government*".

Agreeing with previous participants, P8-SH added, "*There has been a review of the school policy, not the national policy. The school policy is reviewed annually as per government requirements. After it has been reviewed, you submit it to your pastoral*

inspector within the regional offices. Every school has a pastoral inspector. I am involved in the review of the school policy. I work with the school development plan committee that includes teachers, the school committee, and learners. We use the Inqaba Schools Programme to guide the development of the school policy". P6-SF, in agreement with principal P8-SH, provided the following explanation: "*The national policy has not been reviewed since its inception but the school policy… has been reviewed. We review it yearly guided by government regulations. I am a custodian of this policy, so I am the central officer in its development and review. Candidates for inclusion in the review of the policy include the three key stakeholders: parents, teachers and learners*." Further probing into the involvement of learners in the review process P6-SF said, "*Yes, we ask them to share what they would like to see happening in their schools and we try to figure out how to infuse that into the policy. As per the government's requirement, you have to use the Inqaba schools to develop the school policy. As we develop the policy, we take note of the seven pillars found in the Inqaba schools and infuse them into the school policy*".

P7-SG endorsed what previous participants have said: "*There has been a review of the school policy as mentioned earlier but the national policy has not been reviewed. The school policy is reviewed annually. As a principal, I am extensively involved in its review because it is a road map that details how the school will operate*". Acknowledging what has been said by P7-SG, P3-SC commented, "*The national policy has not been reviewed but we have reviewed the school policy many times. The Participants in the review of the policy include the principal, teachers, and the school committee as representatives of parents. We use the Inqaba Schools Programme to craft".*

P5-SE further added on the issue of reviewing the policies and said, "*The school policy has been reviewed many times but not the national policy. There is no way I can be left out in the review of the school policy. As a principal, I must coordinate everything because I am answerable at the end. The Inqaba Schools Programme, I think it is a 2011 document if I remember well. This document guides the development of the school policy. When we develop this policy, we include teachers, the school committee, and learners through their representatives. If you do not have this policy, you will not receive FPE grants the following year"*. In a similar manner, principals P4-SD, P11-SK, P3-SC and P12-SL agreed with previous participants and said the school development team, which

comprises the school principal, teachers, representatives of parents, and learners, reviews the school policy annually. In concluding the issue of policy review, P1-SA had this to say, "*If I can be precise, I can say we review the school policy annually with the teachers and the school committee and we use the Inqaba schools programme as a guiding document. The national policy has not been reviewed since it was introduced. I think we have covered that one already. We have excluded learners to some extent, I think it's a wrong mentality on our part,* to assume *that because they are primary school learners, they cannot make significant contributions and we end up thinking for them".*

The school's FPE policies are reviewed annually. It should be noted that all the participants provided similar comments on how the FPE policy is reviewed. The similarities in the responses emanate from the fact that the participants held similar FPE mandates from MOET, whether schools were in rural or urban areas. The government requires schools' FPE policies to be reviewed yearly following the Inqaba Schools Programme. Importantly, in some schools learners, teachers and the school committee are involved in the review of the policy, while in some schools learners are excluded. Participants had differing views in terms of learners' participation in the review of the policy as in some schools they participated and not in others. Again, it seems principals overlooked the right to participation by learners. It remains of interest as to how they can effectively implement the policy if key stakeholders (learners) are excluded. Participants were all in agreement that the national policy has not been reviewed since it was introduced. One then wonders how the government was enforcing schools to review school policies yearly when the national policy, the master policy, was not reviewed. It was surprising however, that some of the participants could not highlight specific areas of review that they normally improve annually. This raised a concern whether principals were reviewing the policies to suit the changing educational contexts in their schools, or they would just do a copy and paste of the previous year's policy.

Participants further the indicated implications of FPE on primary education based on their experiences, and they made the following pronouncements:

P6-SF exclaimed, "*FPE is destructive to primary education. The policy needs to be revised. All the hassles and turmoil we went through taught me that we were supposed to be involved as principals and teachers before the introduction of the policy*". Sharing

similar views, P10-SJ added, "*FPE has not been good for primary education; it has lowered the standard of education. As principals, we have suffered a lot in the implementation of this policy"*. P2-SB indicated that, "*With FPE if I can be precise, I can say most things are deteriorating in schools. In implementing the FPE program, I discovered that free education is not good at all, parents should fund the education of their children"*. Similarly, P4-SD added, "*FPE kills primary education; funds are not enough. You cannot charge top-up fees as a principal. Procedures to charging top-up fees are dire. Parents and the government are not supportive. Parents have abandoned their roles of supporting their children. We struggle as principals to make ends meet in schools. Do you believe that at times we have been without money to pay support staff? Government should revise this, and parents should contribute to the education of their children*".

P12-SL believed: *"As long as the government does not involve stakeholders, his policies will remain unconducive. This policy is not working for the education system". Correspondingly,* P8-SH commented, "*Through the implementation of FPE, I am convinced that people who will be affected in their roles by the introduction of any policy must be involved in the initial stages of that particular policy. I can say FPE has a negative impact on primary education*"." Interestingly, P1-SA, P3-SC, P5-SE, and P11-SK agreed that FPE was not an effective policy for primary education.

Notably, there are similarities in the participants' perceptions of the policy. Participants from rural schools seem to be experiencing more challenges that include a lack of support from parents as they implement the policy. There is a continuous pronouncement by participants that for the policy to be effective, parents are supposed to pay fees. According to them, FPE requires adequate funding. The policy came along with a ban of school fees and without involving the school principals for their input. The non-participation of principals during the development of the national FPE policy compromised principals' buy-in of the policy. As a result, they feel not everything about this policy is working for them. Based on their experiences of the implementation process, the policy has a negative impact on primary education. In their view, their participation could have enabled them to contribute better ideas such as asking parents to contribute to their children's education.

In this study to generate further data, I analysed documents as explained in chapter 5. In the process, I analysed all twelve schools' FPE policies to crosscheck information provided by participants. The section below provides data as analysed from the documents.

6.8 Data from document analysis

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, this study further analysed each school's FPE policy, known within the Eswatini's primary school context as the school development plan, and the following data emerged:

In all the schools that participated in the study, each school had its own FPE policy. The policy was crafted using the Inqaba Schools Programme (2011). The FPE policy had existed in all the schools for one year as per the government's requirement. All the school policies had the following subtopics drawn from the Inqaba Schools Programme (2011) and were referred to as pillars:

- Quality teaching and learning
- Protection and safety
- Psychosocial support
- Food and Nutrition
- Health
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene
- HIV, life skills, and gender.

Each school had indicated under each pillar what was to be done to achieve that pillar. For example, almost all schools were going to use staff development workshops to realise quality education. Under food and nutrition, schools indicated that they were going to supplement the food supplied by the government through buying vegetables and meat, depending on the availability of funds.

It further transpired from the documents that the government pays E560.00 for all learners in lower grades, and learners in middle grades received E580.00, while learners from upper grades received E680.00 from the government towards their fees. Table 6.3 indicates the money received by schools for the implementation of the policy based on schools' enrolments.

It transpired from the documents that the key role player for developing the school policy was a committee known as the school development plan committee. The committee included the principal, who played a crucial role in stirring all the work of designing the school development plan. The committee further included two members of the school committee representatives, who represented parents, two teachers, and two learners.

The purpose of the policy, as guided by the Inqaba Schools Programme, was to enable each school to work to the best of its potential and provide a conducive environment that will result in quality teaching and learning, hence allowing all learners to develop fully. The analysed documents indicated meetings as prominent implementation strategies provided by the policy. The policy in all schools did not provide for any reactive and proactive strategies for contesting views. The policy as developed in schools was binding because quarterly reports prepared by the school principal are presented to the school committee as representatives of parents. The school committee was free to invite parents when they needed their input. However, there is a compulsory meeting stated in the school policies that must be held with parents at the end of the year. In analysing the document, it transpired that the schools' activities undertaken by the school in the year are indicators that the policy fulfils what it is meant for. The policy in all schools qualifies for review annually; however, it is not stated who qualifies to review it. Table 6.3 below indicates a summary of schools' budgets in terms of funding operations. Importantly school A (SA) and school F (SF) collected funds from parents using the PTA.

Table 6.3 Summary of schools' budgets in terms of funds for operations.

	SA	SB	SC	SD	SE	SF	SG	SH	SI	SJ	SK	SL
Total budget	1440320.00	230320.00	360180.00	208800.00	208800.00	429200.00	522000.00	321280.00	415280.00	300720.00	296782.00	201660.00
FPE grant	411430.010	201600.00	540960.00	196000.00	291200.00	414000.00	505120.00	281120.00	400960.00	275920.00	255920.00	181440.00
Parents Contribution	704000.00	0.0	0.0	0.0		6800.00	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 6.3 indicates the 12 schools' budgets that participated in this study. For ethical reasons as mentioned earlier, they are referred to as SA, SB, and so forth.

Importantly, there were many similarities in the analysed schools' FPE policies. This was because the Inqaba Schools Programme as a legal document in developing the school policies guided all the schools. Consequently, both interviews and analysed documents indicated the following similarities:

- All schools had FPE policies referred to as the school development plan.
- All school policies had seven categories or seven pillars as key content areas for the policies.
- All school policies are reviewed annually.
- Funds paid by the government through FPE grants were not adequate based on the schools' budgets, as income from grants was lower than budgets.
- It was noted through the analysed documents that some schools charged parents extra fees.
- It is noted from the analysed documents and the interviews that funds paid by the government through FPE grants are not sufficient to run schools.

However, there were noted differences from the analysed documents and the interview data, and the following transpired as differences:

- In all schools within the policy document, learners were featured as members of the school development plan committee, which did not align with what some of the participants said. Some participants had indicated that they do not include learners in the development of the policy, and this was contrary to the document findings.
- The government was not only paying E560.00 for learners through the grant, as indicated by participants. It was interesting to note from the school policies that the government was not paying E560.00 for all learners as mentioned by principals in the interviews. It transpired that learners in middle and upper grades received E580.00 and E620.00 respectively from the government, towards their fees partly because there are practical subjects in upper grades demanding extra equipment.

From the analysed documents and the interviews, the following conclusions were drawn:

- School policies are crafted using the Inqaba Schools' Programme.
- School policies are reviewed annually.
- Learners are deprived of the opportunity to participate in the development of the school policy in some schools.
- Some principals deviate from the government's guidelines in the implementation of the policy and charge parents extra fees.
- Funds received by schools through the FPE grants remained insufficient for schools' operations.
- The best option to run schools in the absence of adequate funds, as expressed by participants, was to do what was suitable for one's context, including non-prioritisation of teaching-learning resources, rather ensuring the payment of staff salaries and utilities where possible.

6.9 Conclusion

The findings of this study have revealed that principals have a conceptual understanding of educational policy change and consider it a collaborative effort. It is for this reason that they regarded themselves as key stakeholders in the policy implementation process. The findings further indicate that principals execute a variety of roles in the implementation of

the policy. Further, the findings of this study revealed that principals were not involved or prepared for the implementation process. They experienced some challenges while implementing the policy, as the national policy itself has not been reviewed since inception. Therefore, they preferred to implement the policy as they deem fit.

Importantly, at the onset of the study, I employed Viennet and Pont's theory as a framework for guiding the study. This framework is presented in figure 6.1 below:

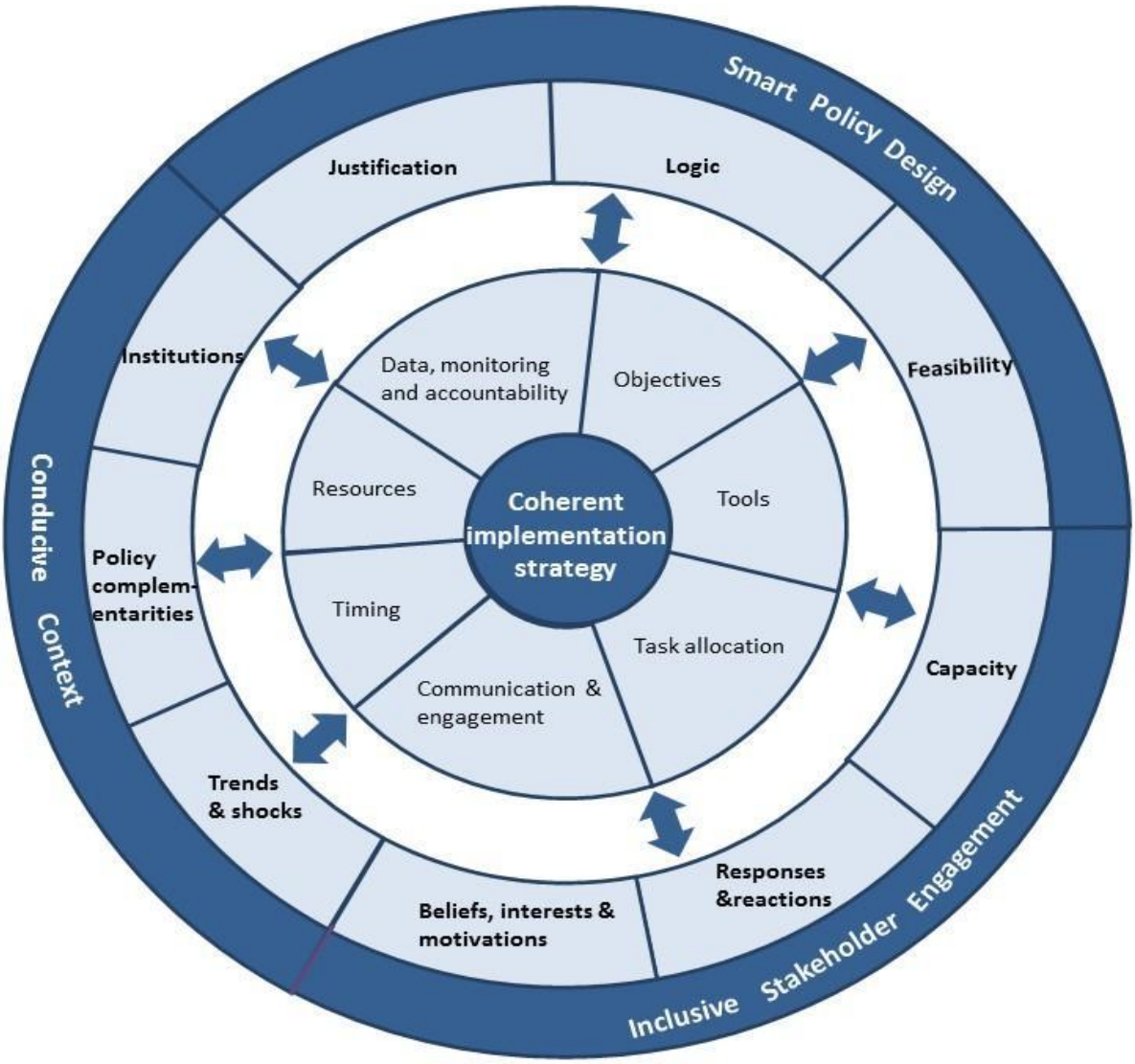

Figure 6.1 Education policy implementation: A visual framework

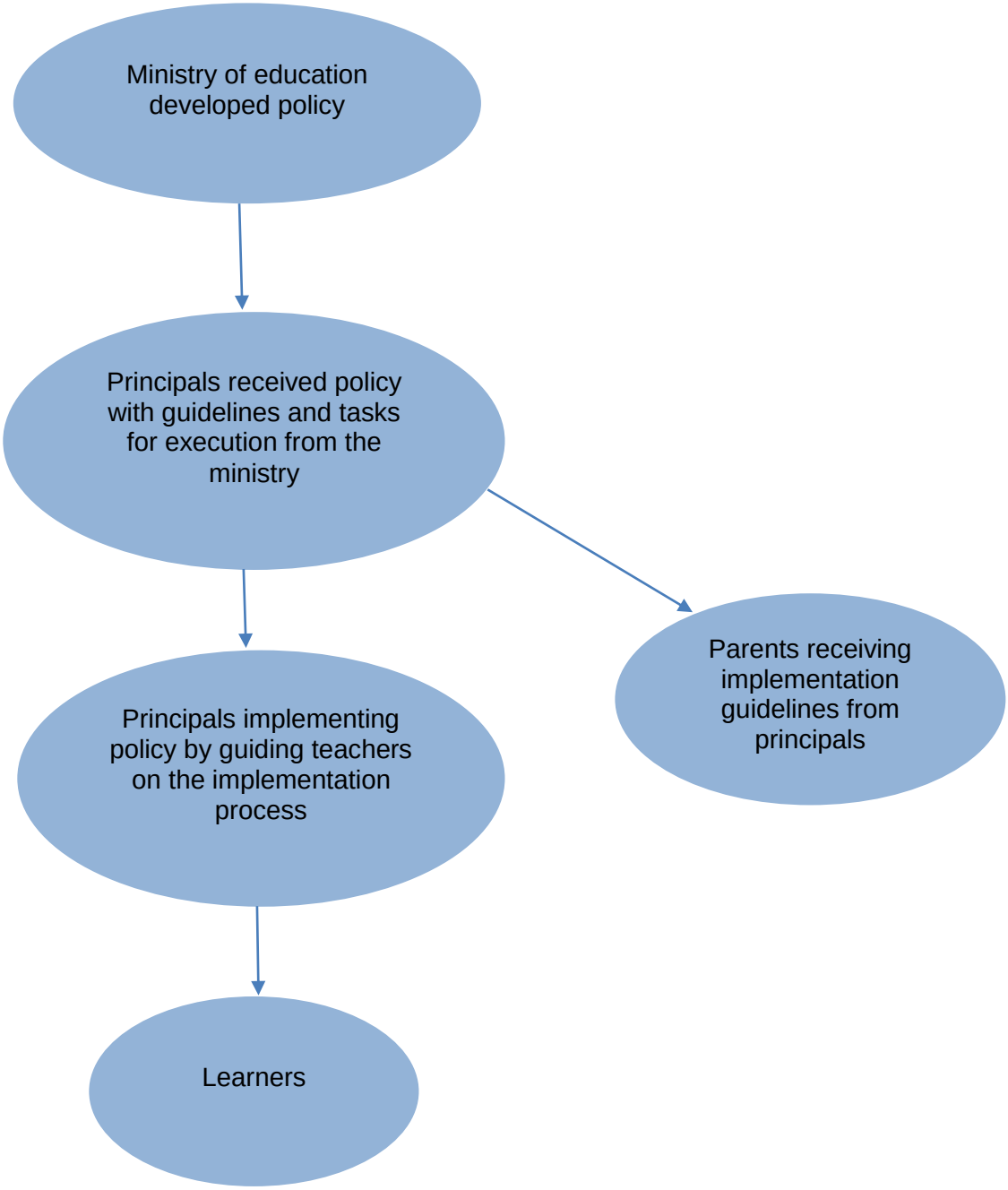

Figure 6.2: Eswatini model of implementation of education policy change

6.9.1 The emerging model from the theory and the findings

Based on Viennet and Pont's framework of educational policy implementation, there are findings of this study that fit into the framework. These findings are discussed below:

(i) **Tasks:** In the implementation process of the policy it was revealed that principals executed different tasks as part of their implementation roles.

P3-SC attested, "*Primarily as a principal, you are chief accounting officer in the school, and this is so applicable in the implementation of the policy. You prepare a budget for the FPE funds, liaise with the ministry, through the school development plan and submit a list of your available learners to the ministry. The list enables you to receive funds for operations".*

Emanating from the excerpt above is clear that principals executed a variety of roles as key stakeholders in the implementation process.

(ii) **Tools:** It transpired from the findings that there are tools used by principals in the implementation of policy changes and these include the school policy, the Inqaba Schools programme, and the budgets. The pronouncement below is informative in this regard:

P9-SI said, "*We do everything expected of a school principal. Of course, some responsibilities come with the implementation of this policy, which was not there before, and they include the development of the school policy; known as the school development plan where we tabulate our budgets. There are guidelines set in the Inqaba Schools programme (2011) that we must follow when we develop the school policy".*

(iii) **Data monitoring and accountability:** It transpired from the findings that principals in the implementation of policy changes were also responsible for data monitoring and accountability issues.

P6-SF attested, *"I report all admitted learners to the ministry, this helps to receive funds equating to the available number of learners, prepare the school development plan, prepare a financial report for FPE funds received from the government*."

Principals were responsible for monitoring data of available learners in the schools and to liaise with the ministry regarding it. Additionally, participants had the role of accounting for school funds.

(iv) **Institutions:** Schools featured as institutions of practice where the policy was being implemented. P1-SA said, "*For me, my school is in town and there was no way to survive implementation of this policy with the funds we receive from the government"*.

It is clear that principals were executing their roles in schools as institutions.

(v) **Responses and reactions:** Teachers and their unions contested the policy. They were not happy with the policy, and they have openly expressed that. P5-SE commented, *"We have not had much opposition to this policy. I can cite teachers as a group amongst stakeholders that did not understand the whole process. The Swaziland Association of Teachers (SNAT) also contested this policy after seeing the challenges it was posing to the education system but to no success*".

(vi) **Trends and shocks:** The findings indicated that there were developments and surprises as principals were implementing policy changes. In line with this P4-SD pointed out the following: "*Implementation of this policy requires learning every day, patience every day, and trials every day. You know serving as a principal under the given circumstances is so frustrating. The fact that we were not involved in the whole process of developing and introducing the policy makes our work very difficult. We do not know how the government* reached E560.00". Adding to what has been said by P4-SD, P11-SK remarked, "*It is difficult to provide all school needs in implementing this policy. As a principal, you need to prioritise what can be funded. Therefore, in my case, we prioritise the payment of support staff, utilities, and vegetables in the kitchen"*. In a similar view P8-SH explained, "*Many activities must be taken care of through the funds but as a principal, you have to be vigilant and monitor the expenditure closely. The government does not pay the funds on time".*

Lack of funds appeared to be a common problem in all schools that participated. As participants were implementing the policy, there were surprises they encountered as some of the activities and events unfolded. Thus, they referred to their experiences to be characterised by learning every day.

The above findings fit into Viennet and Pont's framework because they all occur when principals are implementing the policy. All the activities as revealed in this section occur at a later stage of the policy, the implementation stage. Notably, from the findings of the study there are new elements that can be incorporated into Viennet and Pont's theory to come up with a model that could be used for implementing educational policy changes in Eswatini. These findings include support of implementers, evaluation and review of policies. This model is presented in figure 6.3 below and it is also discussed in detail.

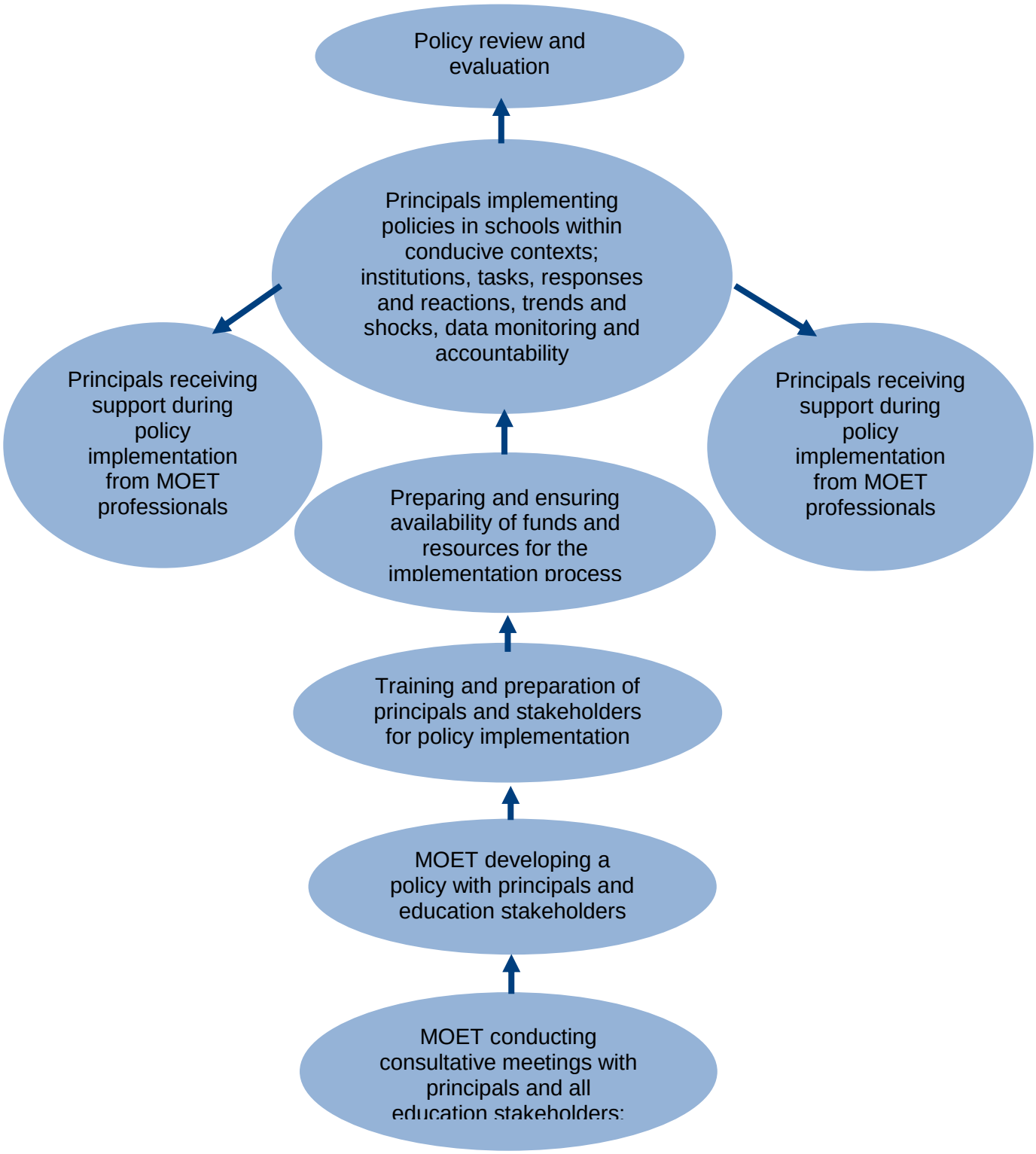

Figure 6.3: The model for implementing educational policy changes

6.10 Description of the model for implementing educational policy changes

Phase 1: MOET leading consultative meetings with principals and education stakeholders

The proposed model advocates for a consultative planning phase. This phase can be used to engage stakeholders to identify the need for a particular policy including how the policy can inform and improve education. All stakeholders that have an interest in education should be formally engaged by the ministry and be made part of the early stages of the policy process. Engagements should be formal; as informal engagements usually result in a lack of consistency. In this study, participants consistently expressed that stakeholders were not involved in the policy process. Considering this finding, the model proposes that stakeholder engagement be made part of the formal programmes for educational policy implementation. Private entities and non-governmental organizations that commit to working with schools in the provision of education should be closely engaged. The reason for their engagement is that the findings of the study indicated that educational policy implementation extends to include all education stakeholders: parents, teachers, donors and the business community (suppliers).

Phase 2: MOET developing a policy with principals and education stakeholders

The proposed model advocates for the development of the policy in collaboration with principals and stakeholders. The findings of the study indicated that principals were not part of the policy formulation process. Involving principals in the development of the policy will make them be aware of the policy goals and allow for a buy-in into the policy, and support and ownership of the policy. It is imperative to point out here that policies often fail because of dictates from the policymakers, who may not know the challenges and realities facing implementers.

Phase 3: Training and preparation of principals and stakeholders for policy implementation

The proposed model advocates for the training and preparation of stakeholders for the policy implementation process. The findings of the study indicated that participants were neither trained nor prepared for the implementation. Good policy making requires implementers to be given sufficient time to participate in the policy process. This was not the case in Eswatini for the development and implementation of the FPE policy. Thus,

this model supports the need for adequate training and preparation of principals and stakeholders. It is important to note that policies often fail at implementation because insufficient attention is given to those who will be responsible for the implementation. Therefore, the training period can increase the attention given to implementers and create opportunities for clarification of the issues that relate to the policy.

Phase 4: Ensuring availability of resources in preparation for implementation

Additionally, this model proposes ensuring the availability of resources before the implementation of the policy. Based on the findings of the study lack of resources appeared to be a leading challenge in the implementation of policy changes, resulting in teachers and the unions contesting the policy. Itost of the time adequate resources are needed to implement policy changes. Importantly, when policies are introduced, they usually compete for various resources within the organisation. Additionally, lack of resources, as indicated in theme 3, was identified as a challenge that has a negative impact on educational policy implementation, which can be detrimental to the quality of education. Thus, the ministry should consult with school principals in the provision of and access to specific resources needed by schools to realise the full implementation of policies. Donations and funding should be sought where possible especially where MOET cannot provide that funding.

Phase 5: Principals implementing policy with support from MOET

The proposed model acknowledge that the implementation of policy changes should not be left to principals only. There should be a well-coordinated collaboration between principals and professionals (inspectors) from the MOET during implementation. The support should occur simultaneously with the implementation process, as indicated in figure 6.3. Formal support structures are essential for principals during the implementation of educational policies, as they give implementers confidence. Therefore, principals should be provided with support whenever possible, and the support should be school specific. School-specific support is likely to be highly effective as schools differ in terms of physical location and needs. Some schools are in rural and some in urban areas; hence the challenges encountered during implementation will always differ.

Phase 6: Policy evaluation and review

The proposed model regular require evaluation and review of policies. Participants in the study bemoaned the fact that the policy has not been reviewed for a period of more than 10 years. It is important that policy review and evaluation are conducted for checking the effects of the policy. Therefore, the review and evaluation of a policy can assist in determining if the goals and purpose of the policy are still being met, and determine if changes are required to mend the effectiveness of the policy. Moreover, this phase can help education authorities to discover successes achieved through the policy, challenges encountered and improvements that can be made. Concerns that can be addressed in the review include determining if a policy is still needed or whether it can be combined with another policy, to ensure its effectiveness.

6.11 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I presented and analysed the findings of the study based on the collected data. Based on the chapter findings, I also suggested a model that can be used in the implementation of policy changes. The next chapter, chapter 7, focuses on the conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings as they relate to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, chapter 6, presented research findings on the experiences of Eswatini Primary School principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. This chapter builds on the findings set out in the previous chapter by concluding the study. I divided the chapter into five sections. In the first section, I provide a summary of the contents of each chapter of this study. In the second section, I present a summary of the research findings of the study. I briefly discuss the summary of the findings to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework. I further present the contribution made by this study to the body of knowledge. Regarding the aim and the objectives of the study, I deduced conclusions and recommendations as to improvements and solutions on the implementation of educational policy changes in Eswatini primary schools. Implications for further research are discussed, but I first presented the limitations of this study as they inform the implications.

7.2 Overview of the study

This study consisted of seven chapters that comprehensively and systematically addressed the aim and objectives of the study. In chapter one, I placed the study in the context of implementing policy changes in Eswatini primary schools with an emphasis on educational policy changes. The focus of the study was narrowed down to the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. The research aim and the problem statement were presented. An overview of the theoretical framework and the research methodology that I employed in the study comprises part of this chapter.

In chapter 2, I reviewed the relevant literature on the experiences of principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. In this regard, I reviewed international and continental literature related to the current study, guided by the research questions. In chapter 3, I discussed the changing policy landscape in the education system of Eswatini. An overview of the education framework in Eswatini was presented, including the country's constitution, the legal instruments in which the country is a signatory, and the policies that influence the whole education system. Within this chapter, I provided a brief

overview of educational policies, the conditions, and the processes that led to the introduction of FPE in Eswatini. I reviewed the relevant legislation (The 1999 Education Act, the constitution of the kingdom of Eswatini 2005, the Free Primary Education Policy 2009, and the School Management Guide 2011) highlighting how they have influenced the introduction of FPE. I further discussed trends in the FPE discourse to understand how principals have experienced the implementation of FPE.

In chapter 4, I presented the theoretical framework that underpinned the study according to Viennet and Pont's (2017) theory. This theory serves as a lens for interrogating and understanding the complex nature of the roles that school principals grapple with as they implement educational policy changes. In chapter 5, I discussed the research methodology employed to generate and analyse data on the experiences of Eswatini Primary School principals in the implementation of policy change. I started by identifying the research paradigm and its applicability to this study followed by a detailed description of the qualitative case study design in which this study is embedded. Sampling procedures that were used in selecting participants of the study were also presented. Additionally, I discussed research instruments, data generation procedures, as well as data analysis. Lastly, I presented ethical considerations that I followed in undertaking this study together with the measures that were put in place to ensure the reliability of the study.

In chapter 6, I presented the data collected from the school principals regarding their experiences of the implementation of educational policy changes. In analysing the data the goal was to summarise what I observed and heard in the field, in terms of frequent expressions, ideas, words, or themes that would assist me in making sense of the data as it emerged for the readiness of interpretation. I did this within the boundary of my research questions and objectives (Maree, 2020).

7.3 Summary of findings

The main aim of the study was to explore the experiences of Eswatini Primary School principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. The key findings from the participants' perceptions are presented below:

Principals had a conceptual understanding of educational policy changes. The understanding and knowledge of the concept manifested in different forms; policy change as regulators, policy changes as binding, educational policies being flexible and adaptable, and educational policy development as a collaborative effort. The description of policy change as binding agreed with Melford (2019) and Schwela (2018), who had unanimously defined educational policy change as institutionalising new rules or procedures, passing laws, ordinances, mandates, and resolutions. Policies establish standards in schools and assist with holding the educators and schools accountable. Policies help schools establish rules and procedures thus creating standards of quality concerning learning and safety (Appleton, 2017). The collaborative effort was in accordance with Bell (2016) and Northouse (2017), who described policy collaboration requiring continuous collaboration with stakeholders. The collaborative nature of policies enables schools' operations and allows for homogeneousness in schools.

The finding that educational policies must be flexible and adaptable was observed as consistent with the view of Rue and Byars (2016) who suggested that educational policy changes are hinged on the constant flow of new requirements, added responsibilities, and extended expectations. It was further evident from the findings that policies allow for similarity in schools as organisations. Importantly, empirical evidence (Cerna, 2018 & Northouse, 2017) points out that the lack of collaboration amongst policymakers and implementers can lead to policy failure. In addition, Nilsen (2015) explains that the policy process should take into consideration the divergent views, interests, and communication of the rationale for change, as well as foster a consensus through engaging stakeholders. This notion resonates and gives credence to Viennet and Pont's (2017) theory that identified the policy process to entail inclusive stakeholder engagement as a key determinant.

The findings of the study further indicated that principals execute various roles in the implementation of educational policy changes. This finding aligned with Thomas and Knezek (2015), Banoglu (2017), Cheng (2016 and Yee (2020) who remarked that principals execute a variety of roles as they implement policy changes. Schwela (2018) further supported the finding; Bridges and Watts (2014), who indicated that school principals' roles are diverse in the implementation of educational reforms. The executed roles according to the findings include financial roles, developing a plan of operation for

the school, coordinating information between the school and the ministry, working collaboratively with stakeholders, generating extra funds to ensure effective operations and management of the school. These findings were also in consonance with Dinc (2016), Graven (2017), Edward (2017), and Freedman (2018), who have seen the school principal as an important component in implementing educational reform while executing a variety of roles. However, participants in the study indicated that they were not involved nor prepared for the implementation of the policy. These findings are confirmed by Zayim (2015), Kipkoech (2012), Bradshaw and Buckner (2014). These scholars consistently and unanimously agreed that principals are often left out in the early stages of the policy process yet by the implementation they are at the centre stage. The views of the aforementioned scholars have further corroborated with Bennell's (2016) assertion that has bemoaned the non-involvement of principals in the policy development process. Wiener (2019) has correctly argued that the implementation process cannot be effective if implementers are not involved in the development process. This important finding was further contrary to Curtain (2018) who argued that good policymaking requires consultation of the end-users of the policy. Nonetheless, the execution of various roles by the principal gives credence to Viennet and Pont's (2017) theory that states that policy implementation entails tasks that are executed by implementers of policies.

It was also established in this study that school principals employ different strategies to ensure the implementation of policy changes. The strategies that principals employed comprised context-relevant strategies that included seeking donors, charging parents extra fees, prioritising school financial activities, effective communication, and negotiations with stakeholders. Significantly, Thomas and Knezek (2015) have acknowledged that the principal needs to be smart in implementing policy changes. As per the findings, numerous reasons accounted for implementing the educational policy changes the way that principals implement them. The investigation shows that the principals experienced a lack of funds and that was one of the reasons that pushed principals to implement specific policy changes. Consequently, in this challenge principals found themselves charging parents extra fees, seeking donors and honouring financial obligations that were on the priority list. Richards (2017) similarly notes that a lack of funding is a major problem experienced by principals that engaged in the implementation of policy reforms. Florah (2019), Brubaker (2016), and Rogers (2017), who note that

reforms need to be backed by sustainable financing, further support this view. Additionally, participants indicated that they were not receiving support from the government while engaging in the implementation process and that the national FPE policy has not been reviewed for a length of time creating an unworkable environment. The employment of context-relevant strategies further gives credence to Viennet and Pont's (2017) framework that advocates for a conducive environment as a key determinant for educational policy implementation.

7.4 Contribution of the study to the body of knowledge

The study contributes towards a theory that focuses on the holistic implementation of educational policy change through advocating for the support of principals as well as constant review of policies. The theory proposed is based on the notion that for any policy to be effectively implemented there must be extensive support of implementers or school principals. The support should be context relevant and school-specific/individual. Through this support; principals are likely to effectively implement policy changes and gain confidence as they are implemented. The major aim of individual support is to ensure proper implementation. The study established that Viennet and Pont's (2017) theory is relevant to policy implementation. Their theory is holistic in the implementation of education policy changes but lacks support during implementation, and the review of policies was a cause for concern. This study, therefore, unearthed how principals as stakeholders who are at the helm of educational policy implementation can be involved and supported. Well-supported principals have great potential to deliver better implementation strategies. For instance, MOET can provide education professionals who can support principals throughout the implementation process, policy failure and dissatisfaction of stakeholders can be in the past. Further to providing support for principals, there is a call for the review and evaluation of policies. Policies that are consistently reviewed and evaluated tend to align with societal needs and respond to contextual issues. Applying this model can help principals and MOET in effectively implementing policy changes. If the ministry embraces this theory, it will be able to develop and implement sustainable policies, policies that can be relevant to the Eswatini context.

7.5 Limitations of the study

The limitations of the study are summarised below:

- Only qualitative research design was used in this research. Results might have been different if there was a combination of research designs.
- Principals were the only participants in the study; if teachers and school committees were included, the results might have been different.
- Only two regions took part in the study. Findings might have varied with schools based in the four regions of the country.
- The findings of this study cannot be generalised, since the study employed twelve principals from only two regions.

7.6 Recommendations

7.6.1 Recommendations to the ministry

Recommendation 1: Involving principals and stakeholders in the policy process

Since it has been established throughout the study that there is a lack of involvement of principals and stakeholders in the policy process; the ministry of education and policy developers need to find a way of involving principals as end-users in the policy formulation process. In addition, the ministry and policy developers need to work with the principals who have served for a long time under the context of policy changes drawing from their experiences and discussing how to involve the principals in the entire policy process.

Recommendation 2: Preparation and providing of support to school principals

It is argued that preparation of implementers is necessary for the effective implementation of policies and it has been established in this study that principals were not prepared nor supported for the implementation process. Therefore, the ministry must consider the preparation of school principals in the form of training and workshops prior to implementing a new policy as a way of empowering them and ensuring that they are ready for the implementation process. This will ensure that they are supported as they implement the new policy.

Recommendation 3: Review and evaluation of policies

Research findings indicated that the national policy has not been reviewed for ten years and it was hindering principals in offering quality education. In this regard, it is recommended that the ministry of education consider an occasional review of policies. Policy review and evaluation should be occasionally carried out as this allows for the checking of the policy. This would be to check if it still achieves the desired goals and unearths existing challenges so that they can be addressed as soon as possible.

7.6.2 Recommendations for further research

The following propositions are possible avenues for further research within the context of implementing policy changes in Eswatini including:

Recommendation 1

Education stakeholders' perceptions of implementing educational policy changes in Eswatini are crucial, given that the educational policy changes seem to be a norm within the education systems and for that reason the contributions of stakeholders to policy change. Hence, further research is necessary in this regard.

Recommendation 2

The experiences of teachers in the implementation of educational policy change. It would be interesting to know how teachers have experienced educational policy changes considering that they are the key implementers.

7.7 Conclusion

This study aimed at exploring the experiences of Eswatini primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. The intention in undertaking the study was to inform MOET and policymakers on what is taking place. It was also intended to reveal what is needed to be done. The study was justified because there is inadequate research and knowledge gaps that exist in understanding the experiences of primary school principals in the implementation of educational policy changes. It concludes that for effective policy implementation, stakeholders should be extensively involved and prepared for the implementation process. During policy implementation, implementers

should be provided with adequate support and this support should be relevant to individual schools, coupled with constant review and evaluation of policies. In addition, this study proposes a policy implementation framework that can lead to the effective implementation of policy changes in Eswatini.

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ANNEXURE A: ESWATINI MINISTRY OF EDUCATION APPROVAL

The Governmer the Kingdom of Eswatini

Ministry of Education & Training

Tel: (+268) 2 4042491/5
Fax:(+268) 2 404 3880

P. O. Box 39
Mbabane, ESWATINI

12th February, 2020

Attention:
Head Teacher:

Manzini Nazarene Primary School	**Lamgabhi Primary School**
Ludzeludze Primary School	**Cetshwayo Primary School**
Sydney Williams Primary School	**Ndzingeni Nazarene Primary School**
Lozitha Primary School	**Maphalaleni Primary School**
Mafutseni R.C. Primary School	**Ngonini Primary School**
Beaufort Nazarene Primary School	**Peak Nazarene Primary School**

THROUGH
Hhohho and Manzini Regional Education Officer

Dear Colleague,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA – MS. GOODNESSS XOLILE TSHABALALA

1. The Ministry of Education and Training has received a request from Ms. Goodness Xolile Tshabalala, a student at the University of Pretoria that in order for her to fulfill her academic requirements at the University she has to collect data (conduct research) and her study or research topic is: '*"Primary school principals experiences of the implementation of policy change" change"* The population for her study comprises of teachers from the primary schools mentioned above. All details concerning the study are stated in the participants' consent form which will have to be signed by all participants before Ms. Tshabalala begins her data collection. Please note that parents will have to consent for all the participants below the age of 18 years participating in this study.

2. The Ministry of Education and Training requests your office to assist Ms. Tshabalala by allowing her to use above mentioned schools in the Hhohho and Manzini regions as her research site as well as facilitate her by giving her all the support she needs in her data collection process. Data collection is one month.

DR. N.L. DLAMINI
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

cc: Regional Education Officer – Hhohho and Manzini
Chief Inspector – Primary
12 Head Teacher of the above mentioned school
Dr. M. Nthontho – Research Supervisor

Page 1

ANNEXURE B: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

ANNEXURE C: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

28 October 2019

The Director
Ministry of Education and Training
P.O. Box 39
Mbabane
Eswatini

Dear Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN TWELVE SCHOOLS

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for my PhD in the Faculty of Education. I hereby wish to apply for permission to conduct research in the Hhohho and Manzini region in twelve primary schools. This study will involve only twelve principals from these schools.

The topic of my research is: **Principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change**. The purpose of the study is to explore leadership experiences of school principals in the context of Free Primary Education policy in selected schools in Eswatini.

This research project will involve individual semi-structured-interviews with the principals. There will also be an analysis of documents which will form part of the study. Documents

to be analysed are the Schools' Free Primary Education Policies. The information obtained will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and will be used solely for this research purpose only.

It is my belief that the research findings will make a creditable contribution towards exposing the experiences of principals in the implementation of policy change. The value of the study also lies in the fact that it has got a potential of providing a policy implementation model that can be incorporated into a structured principal leadership training and be adopted at Ministry level within a developing context of Eswatini.

Yours sincerely

Goodness Tshabalala (Researcher)

Prof. M. Nthontho (Supervisor)

ANNEXURE D: INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

Dear Principal,

I am a student studying through the University of Pretoria. I am currently enrolled for my PhD in the Faculty of Education.

I have to complete a research study and one of the requirements is that I conduct research and write a research report about my work. I would like to ask you whether you will be willing to participate in this research.

The topic of my research is: **principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change**. The purpose the study is to explore experiences of school principals in the context of implementing policy change with special reference to Free Primary Education policy.

Some research has been done on this topic in other countries, but we hope to find out what the situation is in schools in Eswatini. The research will include a 45-60 minutes interview with you on your experiences as a school principal and an analysis of the schools' FPE policy.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about this topic. The interview will take place at a venue and time that will suit you, but it may not interfere with school activities or teaching time and will not take longer than an hour. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed for analytic purposes. I will also do an analysis of the schools' FPE policy. This information will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor and will be regarded as confidential and anonymous.

You do not have to participate in this research if you do not want to, and you will not be penalised in any way if you decide not to take part. If you decide to participate, but you change your mind later, you can withdraw your participation at any time.

Your identity will be protected. Only my supervisor and I will know your real name, as a pseudonym will be used during data collection and analysis. Your school will not be identified either. The information you give will only be used for academic purposes. In my research report and in any other academic communication, your pseudonym will be used and no other identifying information will be given. Collected data will be in my possession or my supervisor's. It will be locked up for safety and confidential purposes. After completion of the study, the material will be stored at the university's Education management Department according to the policy requirements.

If you agree to take part in this research, please fill in the consent form provided below. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact my supervisor or me at the numbers given below, or via Email.

Goodness X. Tshabalala (Researcher)

Supervisor: Prof. M. Nthontho

ANNEXURE E: PERMISSION LETTERS

Dear Sir/madam

Permission to Mrs G.X. Tshabalala to conduct research

Permission is here by granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school which is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'.*

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

for.

Principal

P.O. Box 775
MANZINI

PRIMARY SCHOOL
Phone: +268 25052814
Cell: +268 78468958

Email address: mnps@swazi.net
"Inevitable Success"

14/05/2020

Sir/madam

Permission to Mrs G.X. Tshabalala to conduct research

Permission is here by granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school which is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'.*

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

Principal

18 may 2020

Sir/madam

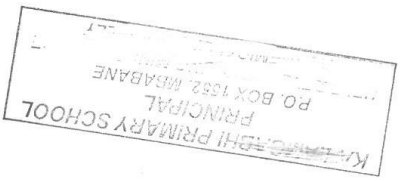
Permission to Mrs G.X. Tshabalala to conduct research

Permission is here by granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school which is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'.*

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

Principal



05 May 2020

Sir/madam

Permission to Mrs G.X. Tshabalala to conduct research

Permission is here by granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school which is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'.*

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

Principal

05 May 2020

Sir/madam

Permission to Mrs G.X. Tshabalala to conduct research

Permission is here by granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school which is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'.*

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

Principal

PRIMARY SCHOOL

VISION: Inspired to lead every learners to success
MISSION: To help develop the young minds to achieve the best academically and socially

PHYSICAL ADDRESS:
CELL: (00268)
TEL:
POSTAL ADDRESS: PO BOX 1552
MBABANE

10 May 2020

Sir/madam

Permission to Mrs G.X. Tshabalala to conduct research

Permission is here by granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school which is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'.*

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

Principal

02 June 2020

Sir/madam

Permission to Mrs G.X. Tshabalala to conduct research

Permission is here by granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school which is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'.*

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

Principal

PRIMARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPAL
P.O. BOX 1552, MBABANE
ACADEMICALLY & SOCIALLY

PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O.Box 2853
Manzini
Swaziland
Tel: 2505 3567

23 may 2020

Sir/madam

Permission to Mrs G.X. Tshabalala to conduct research

Permission is here by granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school which is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'*.

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

Principal

Striving for perfection
Col. 3:23

3 May 2020

Sir/madam

Permission to conduct research in our school

This letter serves to confirm that permission has been granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school. Her study as per her request is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'*.

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Yours faithfully

Principal

PRIMARY SCHOOL

P.O.Box 286
Manzini
Swaziland
Tel: 2505 3567

3 May 2020

Sir/madam

Permission to conduct research in our school

This letter serves to confirm that permission has been granted to Mrs. G.X. Tshabalala to conduct a study in our school. Her study as per her request is on *'Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change'.*

The purpose and procedures to be undertaken in the study have been fully explained to the school.

Primary School
P.O. Box 2863
Manzini
Tel: 2505 3567

Yours faithfully

Principal

Striving for perfection
Col. 3:23

ANNEXURE F: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A STUDY

Consent form

I, _____ (your name), agree / do not agree (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **primary school principals' experiences of the policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ANNEXURE G: SIGNED CONSENT FORMS

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: P Sabangu Date: 01/06/20

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: 05/05/20

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: Hthretha Date: 02-06-2020

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: Mleko Date: 23/05/2020

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: 18/05/2020

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

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- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: 14/05/2020

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

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- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: 03/05/2020

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind e.g., research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: 05/05/2020

CONSENT FORM

I,  (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

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- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
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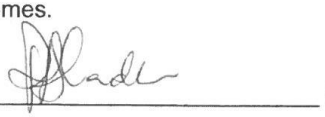
Signature:  Date: 19/05/20

CONSENT FORM

I, _____ (your name), agree / ~~do not agree~~ (delete what is not applicable) to take part in the research project titled: **Primary school principals' experiences of the implementation of policy change.** I understand that I will be interviewed about this topic for approximately one hour at a venue and time that will suit me, but that will not interfere with school activities or teaching time. The interview will be audio taped.

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- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature: _____ Date: 10/05/20

ANNEXURE G: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Time of interview: _____ Duration_____

Date: _____

Place: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee_____ Pseudonym: _____

Race _____

Male/Female_____

Study title: Experiences of principals in the implementation of policy change

Study purpose: to investigate how the Eswatini principals experience implementation of policy change.

Kindly note that there are neither wrong nor right answers in our discussions.

Remember:

1. Everything you share and discuss in this interview will be treated as confidential and will only be revealed to my supervisor and co-supervisor. I am only interested in your personal understanding and experiences of the promotion of postgraduate students' voice in the university decision-making processes and practices.
2. Everything you share and discuss will be audio recorded.
3. You can stop participating at any time without giving any reason.

Are there any questions that you would like to ask for clarification before we start?

Interview questions

1. What do you understand by or interpret the concept of policy change?

2. In 2010, Ministry of Education, Eswatini introduced the Free Primary Education Policy in schools.
   (a) Are you aware of such a policy?
   (b) How did you become aware of it?
   (c) What was your role at its introductory stage in schools?
3. There are three stages through which the policy must go in order to reach its maturity. These are developmental, implementation and review stages.
   (a) At what stage can you say is this national policy to date?
   (b) Why do you say it is at the stage you mentioned in (a)?
   (c) Were you involved in the developmental stage of the national policy?
      (i) If yes, what role did you play?
      (ii) If no, do you find it necessary for you to have been involved? Why do you say so?
      (iii) What influence do you hope to have had if you were involved that you do not currently have?
   (d) Are you involved in the implementation stage?
      (i) If yes, how did you find out that you are supposed to participate in the implementation of the policy at your school? What form of preparation did you receive for your implementation role? From whom was the preparation and how long was it?
      (ii) If you did not receive any form of preparation, how did you find your feet into your implementation role?
4. In order to implement the national policy, each school need to develop its own policy on free primary education.
   (a) What role did/do you play in the development of the school's policy?
   (b) What documents guided your school's policy development process? Whom did you involve in the development of the school's policy? Why the people you mentioned? What role did each play?
   (c) Whom have you excluded (not involved) in the implementation of this policy? Why the people you mentioned?
   (d) The development and implementation of policies are usually clouded with contestations by those directly or indirectly involved. What contestations have you experienced so far? From which stakeholder groupings do you experience

most of the contestations? Why do you find such grouping to be the most contesting?

(e) How do you deal with the contesting views on the development and implementation of the school's Free Primary Education policy?

(f) What strategies do you employ in implementing the school's policy?

(i) How do you employ strategies in (f) above?

(ii) Would you say strategies in (f) are or are not working for the best interest of the school? Justify your response.

(iii) What challenges have you experienced in implementing the school's policy?

(iv) What mechanisms have you employed in overcoming the challenges above?

(v) Do you get any support in implementing the Free Primary Education Policy in your school? If yes, from whom? What kind of support does each of the support structure you mentioned render?

5. Has there been policy review process for the following policies:

(a) National Free Primary Education Policy?

(b) Free Primary Education Policy for the school?

(c) If yes, after how many years has each of these policies been reviewed:

(i) The national policy?

(ii) School's policy?

(d) Have you been involved in any of the above policies' review? In what way?

(e) If no, on which one were you not involved? Would you have wanted to be involved? What contribution do you hope to have made?

(f) If the school's policy has gone under review, who participated in the review process? Why these people? How did each of them participate?

(g) If the school's policy has not yet gone under review, do you find the review process necessary? Motivate your response.

(h) If the school is considering the review process, after how long can it be? Who would be the reviewers, why them and what would their role be?

6. How have your experiences of the implementation of the Free Primary Education Policy shaped your thinking about free primary education in schools?

7. What implications do you see the Free Primary Education Policy having to primary education?

Is there anything else you would like to share with regard to your experiences of your participation in the governance of your school?

ANNEXURE H: GUIDELINES FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOLS' FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION POLICY

Study title: Experiences of principals in implementation of policy change

The following items will be used as the guidelines for analysing the schools' FPE policies

1. Which legal documents were consulted during the crafting of the school policy on Free Primary Education?
2. For how many years does the policy exist?
3. Who crafted the policy?
4. What was the purpose of the policy?
5. Who are the role players for the policy implementation?
6. What implementation strategies does the policy provide to the parties involved?
7. What proactive and reactive strategies does the policy provide in dealing with contesting views of the parties involved?
8. Is the policy binding? If yes, what measures are put to place for schools that do not abide by the policy?
9. What are the indicators that the policy fulfils what it is meant for?
10. After how many years does the policy qualify for review and by whom?

Researcher: Goodness Tshabalala **Sign**: _____

Supervisor: Professor MA Nthontho