THE IMPACT OF THE EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LESOTHO

by

MAPHELEBA LEKHETHO

submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in the subject

EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: DR S M HOBEG

NOVEMBER 2003
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincerest gratitude and appreciation are due to the following people for their support and contributions to the completion of the thesis:

- Dr S M Hoberg, my promoter, for her scholarly remarks and expert supervision of this thesis. Without her exceptionally perceptive mind, prompt and detailed comments in the submissions made, this study would not have been completed.

- Dr A M Bergh, my initial promoter, for her patient and expert guidance during those difficult formative days when the course of the study was still hazy.

- The Lesotho Government for generously awarding me a scholarship.

- My supervisor at work, Mr P. Phamotse, for recommending that I be granted a study leave.

- My colleagues at the Ministry of Education, Mrs M. Fooko and the PIEP staff, Mrs A. Ramakheteng, Mr R. Majara, Mrs N. Malunga-Phuthi and many others for allowing me to print the various versions of the chapters of this thesis in their offices.

- The principals, teachers, learners, school board members, Ministry of Education officials, and the Education Secretaries, who keenly accepted to participate in the study.

- My long time friend, Mr Tlhopheho Sefali, fellow church members and several other friends for encouraging me throughout.

- Mrs I Cooper for her critical editing of the manuscript.

- My mother ‘me ‘Mamapheleba Lekhetho for sacrificing so much for my education.
DECLARATION

I declare that *The impact of the education management system on the effectiveness of secondary schools in Lesotho* is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

[Signature]

SIGNATURE

(MR M LEKHETHO)

DATE

23/02/2004
SUMMARY

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that cause most Lesotho secondary schools to perform poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. The findings of the study show that the problems that contribute to the ineffectiveness of most secondary schools are multiple and interrelated. These problems can be identified at the macro or policy-making level at the Ministry of Education, and at the micro or the individual school level.

At macro level, there appears to be a lack of adequate capacity among the senior management staff to perform the management and governance functions effectively, so that substantive improvement could be realised in the day-to-day operations, and academic results of schools. An upshot of this is that the professional support that the Ministry of Education provides to secondary schools is inadequate. Furthermore, despite the deepening poverty in Lesotho, the state does not provide textbooks to learners in secondary schools. Consequently, many learners do not have all the textbooks, and this affects their learning negatively.

At micro level, the problems that contribute to the ineffectiveness of most secondary schools include teacher tardiness, teacher absenteeism and a lack of learner determination. It is contended that these factors indicate that the management of the school principals is weak. Moreover, because of poverty, many parents fail to pay school fees for their children on time. As a result, many learners are frequently sent back home by the principals to fetch money, and this reduces their academic learning time. The study also revealed that prior academic achievement of learners in primary schools is, to a large extent, a major predictor of their achievement in secondary schools. In this regard, the highly effective schools, which have selective admission policies and accept mainly Form A applicants, tend to consistently outperform the average and less effective schools, which have open admission policies.
In order to improve the academic performance of secondary schools, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education officials, principals, teachers and learners should work more diligently and refocus their efforts on the core business of schools, namely, teaching and learning.

**KEY TERMS:**

School effectiveness, church-state partnership, school-based management, school culture, professional commitment, teacher absenteeism, continuous improvement, parental involvement, accountability, prior academic achievement, admission policy, high-performing schools.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, AIMS, METHOD AND PLAN OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION
1.1.1 The history of Western-type education in Lesotho
1.1.2 Performance in the National School Certificate examinations in Lesotho

1.2 POSSIBLE CAUSES OF POOR EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE
1.2.1 The environment
1.2.2 Resources
1.2.3 Teachers
1.2.4 Learners
1.2.5 Administration and management

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
1.3.1 Systems theory
1.3.2 Governance, administration and management
1.3.3 School effectiveness

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

1.6 METHODOLOGY
1.6.1 Literature study
1.6.2 Quantitative research methodology

1.7 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

1.7 SUMMARY
MACRO- AND MICRO-LEVEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR IN LESOTHO

2.1. INTRODUCTION

2.2 AIMS OF EDUCATION IN LESOTHO: FROM TRADITIONAL TO WESTERN-TYPE EDUCATION

2.2.1 Traditional education

2.2.2 Western-type education

2.2.3 The Basotho people’s expectations of education provided in schools

2.2.4 School ownership in a dual system

2.2.5 Tensions in a dual education system

2.3 THE EFFECT OF UNCONTROLLED SCHOOL EXPANSION

2.3.1 Factors against regulatory mechanisms

2.3.2 Teaching loads and learner-teacher ratios in secondary schools

2.3.3 The relationship between school proliferation, school fees and access

2.3.4 The effect of wastage in secondary schools

2.4 MACRO-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

2.4.1 The National Curriculum Development Centre

2.4.2 The Central Inspectorate

2.4.3 Factors against smooth inspections of schools

2.4.4 The general state of the schools as revealed by the inspection reports

2.4.5 Marginalisation of the secondary sector: the school fees phenomenon

2.5 PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

2.5.1 The state of physical facilities in Lesotho’s secondary schools

2.5.2 The effect of facilities on teacher morale

2.6 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>SCHOOL-BASED GOVERNANCE</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.1</td>
<td>Local level management</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>MICRO LEVEL MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>TEACHERS AND THEIR SUPPORT</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9.1</td>
<td>Teacher quality indicators</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9.2</td>
<td>Teacher motivation and effectiveness</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9.3</td>
<td>School-based professional support to teachers</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>SCHOOL-BASED FACTORS THAT AFFECT PERFORMANCE</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10.1</td>
<td>Instructional time use</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10.2</td>
<td>School admission policies</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. A REVIEW OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>WHAT IS SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS?</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Measuring school effectiveness</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2</td>
<td>Some indicators of school effectiveness</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2.1</td>
<td>Quality of life indicators</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2.2</td>
<td>Teaching quality</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2.3</td>
<td>Integration of democratic principles</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3</td>
<td>Some models used in school effectiveness</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3.1</td>
<td>The goal model</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3.2</td>
<td>The resource-input model</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3.3</td>
<td>The process model</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3.4</td>
<td>The satisfaction model</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3.5</td>
<td>The legitimacy model</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3.6</td>
<td>The organisational learning model</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.5</td>
<td>The historical analysis of school effectiveness research</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.5</td>
<td>Why is there an intensified demand for school effectiveness?</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.6</td>
<td>A paradigm shift in the search for what matters in schools:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
new directions

3.2.7 The main goals of early school effectiveness research
3.2.8 The key factors that affect the academic achievement of learners
3.3 FACTORS THAT SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING
3.3.1 Teacher characteristics
3.3.2 Facilities, equipment and educational materials
3.3.3 Effective support from the Ministry of Education
3.4 CONDITIONS THAT COULD ENHANCE THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS
3.4.1 Strong school leadership
3.4.1.1 Transformational leadership
3.4.1.2 Transactional leadership
3.4.1.3 Purposeful leadership of staff by principal
3.4.1.4 The role of the principal in instructional leadership and curriculum organisation
3.4.2 School-based staff development
3.4.3 Involvement of the deputy principal
3.4.4 Involvement of teachers in school management
3.4.5 Teaching stability and consistency
3.4.6 School culture
3.4.7 Lessons from the Japanese work practices
3.5 TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS
3.5.1 The effect of high expectations on learner achievement
3.5.2 Order, discipline and safe school environment
3.5.3 Maximisation of teaching-learning time
3.5.4 Structuring the learning sessions
3.5.5 Challenging and constructivist teaching approach
3.5.6 Focusing on the basic skills and concentrating on teaching and learning
3.5.7 Impact of parental involvement on promoting effectiveness and learning
4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODS

4.3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.4 SURVEY

4.5 RATIONALE FOR CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY

4.6 REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE SAMPLE

4.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

4.8 PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS GUIDING RESEARCH

4.9 SAMPLING OF THE SCHOOLS

4.10 SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

4.10.1 Data-collection procedures

4.10.2 Method of gathering data

4.10.3 Questionnaires

4.10.4 Interviews

4.10.4.1 Guidelines for interviewing

4.11 QUANTITATIVE DATA-ANALYSIS STRATEGIES: RATIONALE FOR CHOICE OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

4.12 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

4.13 DATA PROCESSING
## 5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

### 5.2 RESPONSE RATE AND STRUCTURE OF DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

### 5.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LEARNERS' DATA

#### 5.3.1 Age of learners as an indicator of effectiveness

#### 5.3.2 Home background factors

#### 5.3.3 Environmental factors

#### 5.3.4 Parental support

#### 5.3.5 Opportunity to study at home

#### 5.3.5.1 Evidence given by the learner respondents as to whether they were afforded sufficient opportunity to study at home

#### 5.3.6 Prior school factors and prior achievement

#### 5.3.7 Location or type of primary school attended by learner respondents

#### 5.3.8 How many times did you repeat classes in primary school?

#### 5.3.9 Secondary school factors

#### 5.3.9.1 How many secondary/high schools have you attended so far?

#### 5.3.9.2 Why did you leave your former high school, if you attended another high school before?

#### 5.3.9.2.1 *I was not re-admitted due to poor academic performance in Form C*

#### 5.3.9.2.2 *Lack of good teaching in the former high school*

#### 5.3.9.2.3 *Exorbitant school fees in the former high schools*

#### 5.3.10 The number of textbooks that the learner respondents had

#### 5.2.11 Have you ever been sent home due to a lack of textbooks?

#### 5.2.13 An indication of whether learner respondents had been sent back home for a long time due to failure to pay fees
5.3 AN INTEGRATED ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF ALL THE RESPONDENTS’ DATA

5.3.1 Current school factors

5.3.2 What do you think are the factors that contribute to the performance of your school in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

(a) Reasons offered by respondents who were negative about the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations

5.3.2.1 Learners are not serious about their studies

5.3.2.2 Lack of a sense of commitment among teachers

5.3.2.3 Learners do not speak English at school

5.3.2.4 Lack of a selective admission policy

5.3.2.5 Poverty of parents and its effects

5.3.2.6 Teacher turnover and shortage of staff

5.3.2.7 Lack of suitable libraries and laboratories

5.3.2.8 The examinations are difficult and not relevant to the social context of learners

(b) Reasons provided by the respondents who were positive about the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations

5.3.2.9 Learner determination and teacher commitment

5.3.2.10 School culture and discipline of learners

5.3.3 Do you think your school has the potential to perform better in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

5.3.4 What do you think can be done to improve the performance of your school in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

5.3.4.1 Collaborative determination and hard work by learners and teachers

5.3.4.2 A culture of speaking English at school
5.3.4.3  Extended and productive study  
5.3.4.4  Recruitment of qualified, stable and dedicated teachers  
5.3.4.5  Teachers should attend classes regularly  
5.3.4.6  Firm and effective school leadership  
5.3.4.7  An adequate provision of facilities  
5.3.4.8  A good admission policy  
5.3.6  What do you think can be done to improve the standard of learning in this school?  
5.3.6.1  Learners should speak English consistently at school  
5.3.6.2  Collaborative determination and hard work by learners and teachers  
5.3.6.3  Provision of facilities such as libraries and laboratories  
5.3.6.4  Extended and productive study time  
5.3.6.5  Employment of qualified, dedicated and effective teachers  
5.3.6.6  Interclass and interschool academic competitions  
5.3.7  What do you think makes some schools more effective (better) than others?  
5.3.7.1  Collaborative determination and hard work by learners and teachers  
5.3.7.2  Availability of qualified, stable and dedicated teachers  
5.3.7.3  Availability of facilities and textbooks  
5.3.7.4  A positive school culture and firm school regulations  
5.3.7.5  Effective leadership of the principal  
5.3.7.6  Learners speak English and teachers enforce this  
5.3.7.7  A selective admission policy  
5.3.8  Satisfaction factors  
5.3.8.1  Perceptions of respondents of whether their teachers were doing their jobs well  
5.3.8.2  A comparison of the levels of satisfaction with teachers, between the learner respondents in high, average and low effective schools
5.3.8.3 A comparison of the levels of satisfaction with teachers between
the learner respondents in rural, peri-urban and urban schools 223
5.3.8.4 Please give reasons that support your answer as to whether you
are satisfied or dissatisfied with your teachers 224
(a) Reasons provided by the respondents who were satisfied with
their teachers 224
5.3.8.4.1 Teachers attend classes regularly and teach effectively 225
5.3.8.4.2 Teachers treat learners well, motivate them and respect their
human rights 225
(b) Reasons provided by the respondents who were not satisfied with
their teachers 225
5.3.8.4.3 Teachers do not attend classes regularly 226
5.3.8.4.4 Unprofessional conduct of some teachers 226
5.3.8.5 Respondents’ perceptions as to whether their principals were
doing their jobs well. 227
5.3.8.6 Reasons provided by the respondents to the question of whether
their principals were doing their jobs well 228
(a) Reasons provided by the respondents who were satisfied that their
principals were doing their jobs well 228
5.3.8.6.1 The principal oversees that the school regulations are kept and
motivates learners 228
5.3.8.6.2 The principal supervises teachers 229
5.3.8.6.3 The principal is firm and does not allow mischief 229
5.3.8.6.4 The principal exercises collaborative leadership 229
(b) Reasons provided by the respondents who felt that their principals
were not doing their jobs well 230
5.3.8.6.5 The principal delays to take action 230
5.3.8.6.6 The principal is too strict, insensitive and hard on learners 231
5.3.8.6.7 Other anecdotal reasons 231
5.3.8.7 The perceptions of learners about the way they were treated at
school 232
5.3.8.8 Please give reasons that support your view as to whether learners are treated well at school

(a) Reasons provided by the learner respondents who felt that they were treated well at school

5.3.8.8.1 Our human respects are respected

5.3.8.8.2 The cultivation of the moral and Christian values

(b) Reasons provided by the learner respondents who felt that they were not treated well at school

5.3.8.8.3 Unfair and unequal treatment

5.3.8.8.4 Lack of professional commitment and negligence of some teachers

5.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS’ DATA

5.4.1 Teachers’ qualifications

5.4.2 Job satisfaction of the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents

5.4.3 Please give reasons as to why you are satisfied or dissatisfied with your job

(a) Reasons provided by the respondents who were satisfied with their jobs

5.4.3.1 I simply enjoy teaching

5.4.3.2 Teaching provides professional autonomy

5.4.3.3 Teaching provides a chance to be involved in preparing young people for the future

5.4.3.4 The working atmosphere at school is favourable and harmonious

(b) Reasons provided by the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents who were dissatisfied with their jobs

5.4.3.5 Teaching academically weak learners and poor academic results of the school

5.4.4 Are you satisfied with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results of your school?

5.4.5 Is there a high incidence of learners who lack textbooks in your
5.4.5.1 How do you deal with the problem of learners who lack textbooks in your school?

5.4.5.1.1 *Sending learners out of class, home or not allowing them to share books with others*

5.5 SUMMARY

6 **RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.2 THE RESEARCH RESULTS

6.2.1 Learners are not serious about their studies

6.2.2 Prior achievement levels of learners in primary school examinations significantly influence their academic performance in secondary schools

6.2.3 Learner transfer between secondary schools is more prevalent in the average and low effective schools than in the high effective schools

6.2.4 Learner respondents in the high effective secondary schools had comparatively more advantageous home backgrounds than those in the average and low effective schools.

6.2.5 A lack of a culture of speaking English in schools affects the academic performance of learners negatively.

6.2.6 Learners in the high, average and low effective schools had different levels of satisfaction with the way learners were treated at school.

6.2.7 The poverty of parents contributes to learners’ poor academic performance.

6.2.8 A school’s admission policy has a great influence on its academic performance.
6.2.9 The quality of education provided by most primary schools is generally poor.  
6.2.10 There were different levels of satisfaction with teachers between the learners in the high, average and low effective schools.  
6.2.11 Teachers are not committed to their work.  
6.2.12 High teacher turnover affects learning negatively.  
6.2.13 Most teachers in secondary schools hold the required professional qualifications.  
6.2.14 Most principals were considered to be doing their jobs well.  
6.2.15 Most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs.  
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS  
6.4 ADDRESSING THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAMBRIDGE OVERSEAS SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS  
6.4 THEMES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH  
6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS  

REFERENCES  

Appendix A
Learners’ questionnaire  
Appendix B
Teachers’ questionnaire  
Appendix C
Principals’ questionnaire  
Appendix D
Deputy Principals’ questionnaire  
Appendix E
School boards’ questionnaire  
Appendix F
Ministry of Education officials’ questionnaire  
Appendix G
An interview schedule for Education Secretaries / Supervisor  
Appendix H
Covering letter
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>The Lesotho Ministry of Education</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A model to address the poor performance of secondary schools in Lesotho</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1  Overall performance of schools in the COSC examinations from 1998 to 2002  5  
Table 1.2  Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 1998 by Proprietor  5  
Table 1.3  Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 1999 by Proprietor  6  
Table 1.4  Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 2000 by Proprietor  6  
Table 1.5  Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 2001 by Proprietor  7  
Table 1.6  Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 2002 by Proprietor  7  
Table 2.1  Number of secondary schools, learners, teachers and learner-teacher ratios by governing body - March 2001  32  
Table 4.1  Theoretical sample sizes for different sizes of population and 95 percent level  148  
Table 5.1  Dates of birth of learner respondents  169  
Table 5.2  Summarised dates of birth of learner respondents  169  
Table 5.3  Materials available at the learners’ homes  173  
Table 5.4  The class in which the learner respondents passed Standard 7  177  
Table 5.5  The year in which the learner respondents completed Standard 7  179  
Table 5.6  Location or type of primary school attended  180  
Table 5.7  Number of times learner respondents repeated in primary schools  182  
Table 5.8  Number of secondary schools attended by learner respondents  184  
Table 5.9  Have you ever been sent back home for a long time due to failure to pay school fees on time?  188  
Table 5.10  How would you rate the performance of your school (schools) in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?  189  
Table 5.11  Does your school have the potential to perform better in the
| Table 5.12 | Do you think that your teachers are doing their jobs well? |
| Table 5.13 | Do you find your teachers to be doing their jobs well? |
| Table 5.14 | Do you find your teachers to be doing their jobs well? |
| Table 5.15 | Do you think the principal of your school is doing his/her job well? |
| Table 5.16 | Do you think that learners are treated well at school? [Yes] [No] |
| Table 5.17 | Teachers’ qualifications |
| Table 5.18 | Number of teachers by subject specialisation |
| Table 5.19 | Are you satisfied with your job? |
| Table 5.20 | Are you satisfied with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results of your school? |
| Table 5.21 | The respondents’ opinions as to whether there was a high incidence of learners who lacked textbooks in their schools |
CHAPTER 1

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, AIMS, METHOD AND PLAN OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Lesotho education system is often criticised as ineffective. The high failure rate in the national examinations, a high repetition and drop-out rate, weak management and supervision of schools, and an excessive number of educationally unviable, mainly secondary schools across the country, are indicators of the ineffectiveness of the education system (Ministry of Education 2000b:32; UNESCO 2000:28). Many factors work against the efficient management of schools and effective teaching and learning, resulting in a high wastage rate in mostly secondary schools. The ineffective school management, teaching and learning, in turn, lead to the poor performance of most learners in the national examinations, particularly the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations (UNESCO 2000:30; Mopheme – The Survivor 27 February 2001:5). The government is concerned about the standard of education and about value for the money spent on education by the public (Ministry of Education 2000b:32). Parents complain that the education system is wasting their hard-earned money since their children continue to perform dismally, particularly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

1.1.1 The history of Western-type education in Lesotho

After the advent of the white missionaries in Lesotho in 1833 and the establishment of Western-type schools, the proprietorship, management and running of schools was chiefly the domain of three mainstream Christian churches, namely the Lesotho Evangelical Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of Lesotho. Other churches and the community in collaboration with the state currently own a few mostly secondary schools. The Education Department was established in 1927 and “undertook the formulation of a uniform syllabus and a system of school inspection” (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1982:2). Accordingly, in an effort to
standardise the syllabus and work in the different schools, a standard examination for primary and secondary schooling was subsequently introduced in 1927.

The Ministry of Education (2000:1) reports that since 1994 the Lesotho government has intensified a major project of building additional classrooms in most primary and secondary schools with a substantial number of learners. The government is also responsible for the remuneration of teachers and the denominational Education Secretaries of the three mainstream churches. The Education Secretaries are appointed by their respective churches to coordinate and supervise the educational work of their schools, and to liaise with the Ministry of Education on matters of management of schools. Thus with the increasing curricular and funding involvement, the governance and control of schools is the shared responsibility of the churches and the state in Lesotho.

Matooane (1980:240) states that in 1945, Britain established the Clarke Commission on Education, to examine

- the organisation and control of schools;
- the place of missionary effort; and
- the financial provision made and the method of administering it.

By implication, the Commission delineated the roles and responsibilities, and the ambit of control of the church proprietors and the government as stakeholders (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1982:2). In 1982 the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1982:3) reported that education in Lesotho “is organized under two distinct institutions: the government and churches.”

Currently, the partnership between the state and the church still exists, and it seems unlikely that the government will take over the church schools in the near future. According to Moelatsi oa Basotho (14 January 2001:1), a Catholic-owned weekly newspaper, at a jubilee ceremony held on 6 January 2001 by the Lesotho Evangelical
Church at Thaba Bosiu, the Prime Minister of Lesotho, the Right Honourable Pakalitha Mosisili stated that the government had made a gross mistake in closing down the seven church-owned teacher training colleges and replacing them with the government-owned National Teacher Training College in 1975. *Moeletsi oa Basotho* (14 January 2001:1) quoted the Prime Minister as saying: “As the Government, we discarded the foundation stone, and demolished the pillars of our nationhood, by closing down the church-owned teacher training colleges in Lesotho” (translated from Sesotho). This statement highlights the affirmative position of the government regarding the state-church partnership in the management and governance of schools.

There are different views on the impact of this shared responsibility or dual control system. Many educators, parents and members of the community argue that the dual management arrangement of schools causes confusion as there are two distinct authorities in control of schools. The dual control system sometimes causes dysfunctional or weak school management as no single authority is responsible for education in the country. This means that before the government can implement any new education policy or legislation, it has to engage in extensive discussions with the church authorities in order to get their assent. Some hold that this partnership is itself a cause of ineffectiveness in schools. Others maintain that the overall ineffectiveness of secondary schools is rooted in the schools themselves. According to them, the management system, the leadership style of the school principals, teacher quality, teacher motivation, school resources and learner motivation by the principals and teachers are the main variables that result in school effectiveness.

The researcher therefore wished to probe the perceptions of school management, school boards, teachers, learners, Ministry of Education officials and the Education Secretaries/Supervisors in terms of these variables, in order to determine their influence (impact) on school effectiveness in the context of Lesotho.
1.1.2 Performance in the National School Certificate examinations in Lesotho

The effectiveness of a school is often linked to the results of candidates in the national examinations. This is regarded as an indicator of learner achievement. In addition, the causes of the poor performance of secondary school learners in the Lesotho national examinations, particularly the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC), are hotly debated annually.

In Lesotho, school certificates are awarded in three divisions, namely one, two and three, or first, second and third class, respectively. Division one is the highest and qualifies learners for university entrance. Division two also qualifies learners for university entrance, depending on whether they obtained a credit in English language. Division three or third class is the lowest, and the majority of candidates who pass in this division rarely get admission to tertiary institutions in the country.

Table 1.1 below reflects these divisions as classes I, II and III, respectively. In Lesotho, General Certificate of Education (GCE) is used to show candidates who obtain very low grades and do not qualify to pass even in division three, or candidates who fail to obtain at least a pass or grade 8, which is the lowest grade, in English language, even though they may have scored good grades in other subjects. The tables below show the patterns of the overall learner performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate between 1998 and 2002. All the tables have been adapted from the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate pass lists of the Examinations Council of Lesotho. In disaggregating the examination results according to proprietors, great care was taken when capturing the results of each school from the pass lists to ensure that no omissions or inaccuracies occurred. Despite the researcher’s meticulousness in this regard, there are some slight differences in the totals between the summarised results in Table 1.1 and the disaggregated results in Tables 1.2 through to Table 1.6. These differences possibly derive from the results of some schools that were not published in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate pass lists. For example, Table 1.1 shows that the total
number of school candidates in 1998 was 5,992, while that of schools disaggregated according to proprietors was 5,879 as reflected in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1 Overall performance of schools in the COSC examinations from 1998 to 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>% SC passes</th>
<th>GCE Passes</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>55 (0.9%)</td>
<td>605 (10.0%)</td>
<td>1319 (22.0%)</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>3903 (65.1%)</td>
<td>110 (1.8%)</td>
<td>5992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>115 (2.0%)</td>
<td>769 (13.6%)</td>
<td>1618 (29.0%)</td>
<td>2502</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>3042 (53.8%)</td>
<td>104 (1.8%)</td>
<td>5648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>137 (2.4%)</td>
<td>694 (12.0%)</td>
<td>1646 (28.5%)</td>
<td>2477</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>3189 (55.2%)</td>
<td>104 (1.8%)</td>
<td>5770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>169 (2.4%)</td>
<td>937 (13.5%)</td>
<td>2009 (29.0%)</td>
<td>3119</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>3673 (53.0%)</td>
<td>93 (1.3%)</td>
<td>6929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>208 (2.9%)</td>
<td>1138 (16.0%)</td>
<td>2233 (31.3%)</td>
<td>3579</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>3467 (48.6%)</td>
<td>85 (1.2%)</td>
<td>7131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 1998 by proprietor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>% SC Passes</th>
<th>GCE Passes</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27 (1.0%)</td>
<td>328 (13.0%)</td>
<td>620 (24.7%)</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>1524 (60.8%)</td>
<td>7 (0.2%)</td>
<td>2506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9 (0.6%)</td>
<td>105 (7.2%)</td>
<td>314 (21.7%)</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>1019 (70.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4 (0.6%)</td>
<td>72 (10.6%)</td>
<td>150 (22.2%)</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>447 (66.4%)</td>
<td>2 (0.2%)</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6 (0.9%)</td>
<td>51 (8.2%)</td>
<td>101 (16.4%)</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>457 (74.3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Com.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13 (5.9%)</td>
<td>36 (16.3%)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>171 (77.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 (4%)</td>
<td>86 (22.9%)</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>274 (73%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>E. Med</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 (20.9%)</td>
<td>21 (48.8%)</td>
<td>12 (27.9%)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>1 (2.3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>55 (0.9%)</td>
<td>605 (10.2%)</td>
<td>1319 (22.4%)</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>3893 (66.2%)</td>
<td>9 (0.2%)</td>
<td>5879</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.3 Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 1999 by proprietor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>% SC Passes</th>
<th>GCE</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>51 (2.1%)</td>
<td>363 (15%)</td>
<td>737 (30.4%)</td>
<td>1151</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>1237 (51.1%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8 (0.6%)</td>
<td>138 (10.5%)</td>
<td>350 (26.7%)</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>789 (60.4%)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21 (2.9%)</td>
<td>142 (20.2%)</td>
<td>205 (29.2%)</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>321 (45.7%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16 (2.5%)</td>
<td>64 (10.3%)</td>
<td>164 (26.4%)</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>347 (55.9%)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Com.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>14 (5.9%)</td>
<td>49 (20.6%)</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>161 (67.9%)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4 (1.3%)</td>
<td>31 (10.1%)</td>
<td>90 (29.4%)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>177 (57.8%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>E. Med</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13 (22.4%)</td>
<td>16 (27.5%)</td>
<td>23 (39.6%)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>6 (10.3%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>114 (2%)</td>
<td>768 (13.6%)</td>
<td>1618 (28.7%)</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>3038 (53.8%)</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>5646</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.4 Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 2000 by proprietor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>% SC Passes</th>
<th>GCE</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42 (1.7%)</td>
<td>312 (13.2%)</td>
<td>736 (31.3%)</td>
<td>1090</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>1232 (52.4%)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16 (1.1%)</td>
<td>121 (8.5%)</td>
<td>409 (28.8%)</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>833 (58.7%)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37 (5.3%)</td>
<td>107 (15.5%)</td>
<td>174 (25.2%)</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>366 (53.1%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20 (2.8%)</td>
<td>73 (10.5%)</td>
<td>170 (24.4%)</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>409 (58.8%)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Com.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>14 (6.2%)</td>
<td>61 (27.2%)</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>143 (63.8%)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6 (1.7%)</td>
<td>46 (13.5%)</td>
<td>92 (27.1%)</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>188 (55.4%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>E. Med</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15 (24.5%)</td>
<td>29 (47.5%)</td>
<td>17 (27.8%)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>137 (2.4%)</td>
<td>702 (12.2%)</td>
<td>1659 (28.7%)</td>
<td>2498</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>3171 (54.9%)</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>5775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.5 Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 2001 by proprietor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>% SC Passes</th>
<th>GCE</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>71 (2.5%)</td>
<td>407 (14.6%)</td>
<td>886 (31.9%)</td>
<td>1364</td>
<td>49.1 (49.7%)</td>
<td>1381 (60.6%)</td>
<td>29 (1%)</td>
<td>2774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>25 (1.3%)</td>
<td>199 (10.7%)</td>
<td>478 (25.7%)</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>37.7 (60.6%)</td>
<td>1126 (44.9%)</td>
<td>30 (1.6%)</td>
<td>1858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24 (3.2%)</td>
<td>123 (16.8%)</td>
<td>248 (34%)</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>54.1 (56.9%)</td>
<td>328 (4.9%)</td>
<td>6 (0.8%)</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25 (3.6%)</td>
<td>93 (13.7%)</td>
<td>157 (23.2%)</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>40.6 (56.9%)</td>
<td>385 (2.3%)</td>
<td>16 (1.6%)</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Com.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (1.6%)</td>
<td>34 (14.1%)</td>
<td>62 (25.7%)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>41.4 (58%)</td>
<td>140 (60.6%)</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10 (2.5%)</td>
<td>36 (40.4%)</td>
<td>32 (35.9%)</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>38.6 (60.6%)</td>
<td>237 (12.3%)</td>
<td>3 (0.7%)</td>
<td>391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>E. Med</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10 (11.2%)</td>
<td>137 (35%)</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>41 (35%)</td>
<td>87.6 (12.3%)</td>
<td>11 (0.7%)</td>
<td>0 (9%)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>169 (2.5%)</td>
<td>896 (13.2%)</td>
<td>2000 (29.6%)</td>
<td>3065</td>
<td>45.4 (45.4%)</td>
<td>3608 (1.6%)</td>
<td>85 (1.6%)</td>
<td>6758</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 1.6 Performance of schools in the COSC examinations in 2002 by proprietor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>Class I</th>
<th>Class II</th>
<th>Class III</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>% SC Passes</th>
<th>GCE</th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>74 (2.8%)</td>
<td>471 (17.6%)</td>
<td>825 (30.8%)</td>
<td>1370</td>
<td>51.17 (48.3%)</td>
<td>1293 (53.3%)</td>
<td>14 (0.5%)</td>
<td>2677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34 (1.8%)</td>
<td>240 (12.6%)</td>
<td>538 (28.1%)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>42.5 (55.8%)</td>
<td>1067 (1.7%)</td>
<td>33 (1.7%)</td>
<td>1912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48 (5.3%)</td>
<td>160 (17.6%)</td>
<td>333 (36.7%)</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>59.6 (40%)</td>
<td>363 (0.4%)</td>
<td>4 (0.4%)</td>
<td>908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Govt</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23 (3.0%)</td>
<td>110 (14.5%)</td>
<td>204 (26.9%)</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>44.5 (53.3%)</td>
<td>404 (2.1%)</td>
<td>16 (2.1%)</td>
<td>757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Com.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (0.4%)</td>
<td>29 (10.4%)</td>
<td>103 (36.9%)</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>47.7 (48.4%)</td>
<td>135 (3.9%)</td>
<td>11 (3.9%)</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10 (2.2%)</td>
<td>85 (18.7%)</td>
<td>180 (39.6%)</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>60.4 (38.0%)</td>
<td>173 (1.5%)</td>
<td>7 (1.5%)</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>E. Med</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18 (20.5%)</td>
<td>41 (46.6%)</td>
<td>25 (28.4%)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>95.5 (4.5%)</td>
<td>4 (0.5%)</td>
<td>0 (0.5%)</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>208 (2.9%)</td>
<td>1136 (16.1%)</td>
<td>2208 (31.2%)</td>
<td>3552</td>
<td>50.2 (48.6%)</td>
<td>3439 (1.2%)</td>
<td>85 (1.2%)</td>
<td>7076</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in Table 1.1, the overall results were poor across the denominational spectrum, with the highest results in 2002 at 50.2% and the lowest in 1998 at 33%. All the tables indicate that between 1998 and 2001 the results never rose above 50%. In 2002, for the first time, the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results rose just above the 50% level to 50.2%. This is a further indication that no efficacious interventions have been put in place to improve the situation. A further cause for concern is the low percentage of first class passes.

A slight improvement was seen in the number of first class passes in 2002, which increased to 208 (2.9%) from 169 (2.4%) in 2001, while second class passes increased to 1,138 (16.0%) from 937 (13.6%) in 2001. Third class passes increased slightly to 2,233 (31.3%) from 2,009 (29.2%) in 2001. These improvements are still insignificant, given that 3,467 (49.8%) of the candidates obtained the General Certificate of Education, while 85 (1.2%) candidates failed all the subjects that they sat for in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in 2002. Similarly, in 2002 the majority of the candidates, 2,233 (31.3%) obtained third class passes and thus could not qualify for direct admission to the National University of Lesotho and most tertiary institutions. This condition also applies to many of the 1,138 (16.0%) candidates who obtained second class passes, but failed to obtain credits in English language.

In view of the above, it can be concluded that the results of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in Lesotho are generally poor and point to the fact that the Lesotho secondary school sector is wasteful and highly ineffective. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of candidates across the denominational schools obtain their General Certificate of Education. For example, Table 1.1 reflects that from 1998 to 2001
over 50% of the candidates obtained a General Certificate of Education, with the highest in 1998 at 65.1%. It can be surmised from the overall examination results that the parents’ complaint is justified that their children are not taught properly and that the high school fees paid while their children continue to fail are, in effect, a waste of their hard-earned money.

Dividing the schools according to proprietors, however, reveals that the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church of Lesotho and government schools are somehow better off when compared to other denominations and proprietors. A possible explanation for this could be that the schools belonging to these proprietors are relatively better resourced in terms of physical facilities and tend to have a retaining effect on both learners and teachers. It may also be inferred that since there are only a few Anglican Church of Lesotho schools, they are manageable. Of the three main churches, the Lesotho Evangelical Church schools recorded the lowest pass rates from 1998 to 2002. This could be due to a lack of adequate facilities, which are associated with high achievement, weaker school administration, a lack of a strong work ethic amongst the teachers, the admission of intellectually weaker learners, and a lack of a powerful task-oriented school culture shaping the behaviours of learners and teachers. This could be linked to the fact that there are no powerful central, district or local level governance structures to ensure that the principals discharge their duties effectively and to deal with non-performing principals.

The rapid expansion of schools appears to be another factor causing the general poor performance of schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this regard, Mopheme – The Survivor (27 February 2001:5) reports that the Registrar of the Examinations Council of Lesotho stated that the number of schools had increased from 125 in 1999 to 130 in 2000, which brought the average pass rate down. Most of the new schools that registered for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations belonged to the Lesotho Evangelical Church. The rapid expansion of schools is regarded as disadvantageous to the academic success of learners as the new schools lack qualified teachers and many of the resources required for effective teaching and learning.
With respect to the more recent performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, there has been a slight upward trend since 1999 when the results rose above the 40% level for the first time. However, in qualitative terms the results are still unimpressive as the majority of the learners continue to fail the core subjects. In this regard, the *Southern Star* (15 February 2002:11) and the Registrar of the Examinations Council of Lesotho (2002:iii) emphasise that the 2001 results reflect that the majority of the candidates, including the best performers, had serious difficulties in mathematics, and this is considered a hurdle in their academic career. According to the Registrar of the Examinations Council of Lesotho (2002:iii), the 2001 examination results reflect that even the best performers were three levels below the usual aggregates, and “they just refused to excel” (original emphasis). Overall, Lesotho secondary schools appear to have an overwhelming majority of learners whom Stoll and Mortimore (1997:10) describe as “at risk.”

**1.2 POSSIBLE CAUSES OF POOR EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE**

One of the factors that motivated this study was the question of the extent to which poor performance of learners in the national examinations indicates the quality of teaching or administration in the organisational structure of the school system. In Lesotho there are multiple and multilevel causes of learners’ poor performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or National School Certificate and General Certificate of Education examinations. These causes could be traced to various factors, including the environment, resources, learners, teachers, administration and management.

**1.2.1 The environment**

Environmental factors play a crucial role in determining the academic success of learners in school. For example, parents with a high level of education usually show higher appreciation for students’ learning and create opportunities for learners to learn at home, while providing support and supervision in their academic work.
Walberg (in San Diego County Office of Education 1997:1) contends that creating an academically stimulating home environment is one of the key determinants of the academic achievement of learners. He found that there are connections between the academic success of learners and what he termed a “curriculum of the home.” Walberg (in San Diego County Office of Education 1997:1) concluded that a curriculum of the home has a stronger effect on learners’ academic achievement than the family’s socio-economic status. According to the San Diego County Office of Education (1997:1), some of the activities that signify the curriculum of the home include informed parent-child conversation about everyday events, encouraging and discussing leisure reading, monitoring and joint analysis of television programmes. The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network (2002:1) reports that when parents are involved in their children’s learning, learners tend to achieve high academic scores, regardless of their socio-economic status, ethnic background or parents’ education level.

Moreover, the American Federation of Teachers (2002:1) reports that the home environment is critical to the academic success of learners and therefore recommends that parents should create conditions that emphasise the importance of education. The American Federation of Teachers states that parents can create a warm and supportive climate at home by showing an interest in the child’s progress and accomplishments. In particular, parents can show an interest in their children’s education by assisting them in their reading and homework, supervising and limiting television viewing, and discussing their children’s progress with their teachers, among other things. In this regard, the American National Education Association (2002:1) stresses that a “home environment that encourages learning is more important to student achievement than income, education level or cultural background.”

In a study of primary schools in Zimbabwe, Ross and Postlethwaite (1992:38) found that the main reason for some schools’ high achievement is their “well-off” locations or rich environments, which designate that parents in those areas have enabling amenities, such as television sets, radios, books and a self-contained home. The school environments also
play a crucial role in moulding learners’ intellectual capacity. For example, the candidates who performed well in the examinations were found to have an adequate supply of books, stocked libraries and other educational facilities vis-à-vis those who studied in schools where these are unavailable (Ross & Postlethwaite 1992:38). In a similar study on the factors that influence Malaysian learners academic performance in school, Ching (1990:1) found that the location of the school affects the academic achievement of learners, and that the urban schools often outperformed the rural ones. Ching ascribed this to the inequalities in the distribution of economic and educational resources, which were favoured the urban areas.

Riddell (in Jansen 1995:193) maintains that, “The influences which have moulded a child before he or she reaches secondary school constitute more significant influences on the child’s academic achievement than factors to which the child is exposed in the secondary school classroom.” This emphasises the importance of a good quality primary education as a necessary foundation and condition for achievement in secondary schools. The prior secondary school factors that influence learners’ performance in secondary education could include their home backgrounds, the quality of instruction offered in primary schools, and their social environments.

There are differences in the academic exposure of rural and urban learners. Coverdell (2002:1) points out that the “experience of students in urban Maseru is not all that different from that of their contemporaries in the United States. On the other hand, Basotho students attending school in the mountains often have more in common with rural American youth at the turn of the (20th) century.” In Lesotho, the differences between rural and urban amenities and opportunities are so stark that urban learners are afforded a far greater comparative advantage in their scholastic pursuits than those in the rural areas where there is a scarcity of the amenities that can enrich learning, such as television sets, books and an academic ambience of proficiency in spoken English.
1.2.2 Resources

In Lesotho, there is a general dearth of educational materials and some specialised facilities because the funds to run the schools come from parents. Thus the schools are often marginally resourced. So, for example, the Ministry of Education (2000b:29) reports that the “case of laboratories and workshops is less encouraging… . Many schools still lack laboratories.” In this regard, a contributory factor could be that the limited financial resources available in schools are spread too thinly across operating costs, infrastructure development and salaries for private teachers and ancillary staff, who are normally not on the government payroll.

A lack of facilities and educational resources in many secondary schools in Lesotho is positively linked to the poor quality of secondary school education (UNESCO 2000:28). According to Mopheme – The Survivor (27 February 2001:5), a lack of laboratories or materials for science subjects in schools means that there is no interface between theory and practice. This implies that learners do not have a thorough and practical understanding of the subject content that they have learnt theoretically. The inadequacy of resources affects the performance of learners in general and in public examinations in particular. Their poor performance in the public examinations often results in the majority of school-leavers not being absorbed into the labour market or institutions of higher learning.

1.2.3 Teachers

In Lesotho, teachers have frequently been accused of lacking the motivation and commitment to do their work dutifully. In reviewing the education sector analysis in Lesotho, the Ministry of Education (1999:14) found ample evidence to suggest that teachers lack motivation and professional commitment. The indicators often cited include ineffective teaching and assessment practices, teacher absenteeism and tardiness, and shoddy preparation of lesson plans, or no lesson planning at all, in some cases (Central Inspectorate 1996:2 and 2000:18).
A critical shortage of science and mathematics teachers is another factor associated with the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations (Ministry of Education 1992:64; 2003:69, 71). The shortage of teachers is more pronounced in the mountain and impoverished areas of Lesotho, due mainly to the lack of social amenities and the general underdevelopment of the areas where these schools are located. Not only is there a critical shortage of suitably qualified teachers, but also a high staff turnover, particularly with regard to mathematics, science and English. The schools in Lesotho that perform well academically commonly have sufficient numbers of qualified teachers for all the subject areas who are committed and competent in their subjects. Another contributory factor could be high staff morale, boosted by the characteristic good quality of learners who attend these schools. An enabling condition that facilitates the teachers’ work in these schools is the powerful task-oriented environment, which is characterised by a strong cohesive school culture.

1.2.4 Learners

Access to schooling and the quality of education are among the factors that cause the ineffectiveness of the majority of schools. The education statistics reveal that in Lesotho many children of school-going age are not in secondary school, presumably due to financial constraints. For instance, according to the 2001 education statistics, 415,007 learners were enrolled in primary schools, but only 77,919 in secondary schools, or 18.8% of the number in primary schools (Ministry of Education 2003:27, 63).

Inadequate resources and circumstances beyond learners’ control push them out of the system or force them to drop out. School fees for most secondary schools are very high, which makes it difficult for most parents to finance their children’s education. The Ministry of Education (1999:18 and 2000b:32) concluded that it is an enormous waste for the nation and the individual families if children drop out before reaching Form 5 or fail the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this regard, the Ministry of
Education (1999:18) reported that school fees are a heavy expense for the majority of families and reduce access to and the retention power of secondary schools.

The learners’ poor performance in English language is another major factor in the general poor performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. Candidates who do not pass English language automatically fail even if they pass other subjects well. In Lesotho, a substantial number of candidates who obtain a second class in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations frequently fail to obtain a credit in English language. As a result, they normally do not qualify for direct entrance to university and some other tertiary institutions, particularly if they obtained symbol E or 40% margin. In this respect, the Examinations Council of Lesotho (1998:commentary page) notes that the 1997 statistical analysis “reveals that only 256 (8%) school candidates for 1997 November examinations obtained credits in English language. The majority of candidates scored Grades 7 and 8.”

In 1998, the Examinations Council of Lesotho (1999:commentary page) found that “**English language continues to be the main cause of failure.** Even above-average candidates who managed to obtain merits and first classes in JC (Junior Certificate examinations) obtained a lower class grade because they could not obtain a credit in English language” (original emphasis). It should be noted that in School Certificate and General Certificate of Education, Grade 1 is the highest and Grade 9 the lowest. Only Grades 1 to 8 are recorded on certificates as follows: Grade 1/2 – A; Grade 3/4 – B; Grade 5/6 – C; Grade 7 – D; Grade 8 – E.

Other factors besides the English language problem are also listed as contributing to the poor performance of secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, such as learners’ earlier achievements in the Primary School-Leaving Examinations and Junior Certificate Examinations (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1984:iii; Ministry of Education 1999:1). Lefoka and Polaki (1997:16) maintain that some of the failings of the Lesotho secondary schools are precipitated by the lack of an admission policy in some schools. They found that some teachers attributed the low
efficiency of their schools to a lack of selectivity in admitting learners and accepting learners who had been refused admission in other schools.

The 1998 results seem to contradict that the learners’ poor performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations was due to their earlier achievements in the Primary School-Leaving Examinations and Junior Certificate Examinations. According to the Examinations Council of Lesotho (1999:commentary page), “The 1998 results are, however, generally lower than those of the last two years even though 1996 Junior Certificate candidates had results which were statistically the best this decade (1990-1998).” This refers to the same group of learners who did well in the Junior Certificate examinations in 1996. This variability in the learners’ academic performance indicates that secondary schools in Lesotho have the internal capacities to compensate for the inadequacies or academic deficits suffered in primary education.

1.2.5 Administration and management

In Lesotho, there is a general feeling among the role players in education service delivery and the entire populace that, despite the heavy financial investments of families, there is a continuing and perennial problem of the inefficiency or dysfunction of the education system, or the inefficiency of school-based management (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1984:30; 1989:22; UNESCO 2000:28). This is again attributed to the inefficient utilisation of human and non-human resources. In 1984 already, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1984:iii) considered one of the causes of the problem of poor results to be the “ineffective school management and administration, school size (with larger schools getting better results).” Furthermore, the Ministry of Education (1992:101) and the Government of Lesotho and the United Nations Children’s Fund (1997:83) stated that the problem of school ineffectiveness or poor school quality emanates from ineffective or weak school management, low teacher morale and marginal involvement of communities in education issues. Hence, it can be argued that there is a positive link between strong school management and good performance in the national examinations. Weak school leadership is characterised by the inability of school
principals to create a studious school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.

In the context of Lesotho, then, the factors highlighted above have a great impact on school effectiveness. In determining school effectiveness, however, these factors do not work independently or in isolation, but rather systematically in an interdependent or inter-relational network.

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Today, organisations such as schools are better understood in terms of the models on which they are formed, organised and operate. One such model is the systems theory or systems approach, which is based on the interrelationships or interactive partnerships between the stakeholder groups and the political, economic, religious and other systems that collectively affect education service delivery.

1.3.1 Systems theory

Whitaker (1998:105) defines a systems theory as an integrated whole whose essential properties arise from the interactions and relationships between its parts. In this regard, Forojalla (1993:179) adds that a systems approach “involves thinking of the whole problem and its interacting subparts or components, as well as analysing, selecting, implementing and monitoring the optimum alternative sequences of the component parts in order to achieve outcomes.” This underlines the fact that an educational problem cannot be understood fully by looking at it in isolation. It should, rather, be viewed as part of a network of interactions between different parts and functions. Forojalla (1993:179-180) argues that a systems approach is a systematic and strategic problem-solving process, which may be used to identify and resolve important educational problems.
General systems theory (GST) was developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, an Austrian-Canadian biologist, who viewed an organism as a composite of cells, which are constituted of molecules, which have to work in harmony for the good of the whole system (Owens 1991:57). Social systems theory is thus based on the notion of interdependence, co-operation and a symbiosis between the stakeholder groups, subgroups and individuals in an organisation who must work harmoniously for the accomplishment of organisational goals.

According to Sheppard (1998:49), the systems analysis theory was adapted by Johnstone (1981), who maintained that there were three main indicators within subdivisions, namely input, process and output indicators. Johnstone (in Sheppard 1998:50) stated that the input indicators refer to the relevant physical facilities such as personnel and financial resources devoted to education. The process indicators refer to the manner in which the resources are distributed in a system. This may refer to the management capacity and leadership styles of the school principals. The output indicators reveal the quantitative and qualitative value of the products, or the level of skills produced by the education system.

Berkhout and Bondesio (1996:17) state that the political system influences the education system in the sense that the control, administrative structure and financing of education are the result of a government’s political activity, and that this is normally typified by the formulation of legislation. According to Berkhout and Bondesio (1996:16), “Official organizations and institutions obtain their power from legislation approved in Parliament.” Thus, a well-established political system is essential for the effective running of the education system. The Ministry of Development Planning (2000:1) reported that since 1990 Lesotho had suffered intermittent political disturbances that impinged on education service delivery. In this way, an unstable political system is inimical to the smooth running of the education system as education service cannot be delivered effectively in a hostile socio-political environment. In Lesotho, the value of a political system in shaping the education system is also seen during election campaigns when the political parties often use education as an electoral tool to solicit votes by
outlining their vision and policy in respect of the education system of the country. Thus, the route education takes draws in part on politicians’ political manifesto. In the traditional tripartite arrangement of the Lesotho education system, politicians link their education policies to the religious system, which controls a large proportion of schools.

The religious system or church also plays a major role in the management of the education system. The ownership of schools is largely in the hands of the denominational authorities responsible for the appointment of the school principals and teachers. The culture and philosophy of the schools are normally based on the religious norms and values of the relevant proprietor church. These, in turn, influence the behaviour of school principals, teachers and learners. In Lesotho, the diverse religious belief systems among the communities trigger the initiation of numerous schools. The initiators of secondary schools usually open them under the pretext that certain church schools do not admit their children because they belong to a different denomination, or they attended a primary school of a different denomination.

Since education is a composite of several systems and subsystems, the economic system of a country undoubtedly has a role in shaping the education system and learners’ school success or level of achievement. According to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (1996:7), Lesotho is “one of the world’s 40 lowest-income economies – 93rd among 127 countries.” This economic indicator explains why the overwhelming majority of Basotho people live in poverty. Poverty is more prevalent in the rural and mountain areas where over 80 percent of the people are classified as “destitute” (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 1996:9; Ministry of Development Planning 2000:7). The poverty makes it difficult for the government and families to provide adequate educational resources for learners, and emphasises that the majority of the learners live in educationally deprived home, social and school environments. Lesotho’s low economic ranking is largely due to the fact that the country has a weak economic base with water as the only major natural resource. Due to its geographic position and its political and economic restraints, the country is dependent on South Africa. The Commonwealth Yearbook (1999:167) states that the economy of Lesotho is inseparably linked to that of
its more affluent and larger neighbour, South Africa. In fact, the largest portion of the country’s income comes from the Southern African Customs Union import tariffs, the deferred pay and remittances from the migrant workers employed in South African mines (Ministry of Development Planning 2000:2).

In the light of the aforementioned, the Lesotho education system will be put into the perspective. The concept education system will be defined first. UNESCO (1998:26) defines an education system as “the overall network of institutions and programmes through which education of all types and levels is provided to the population.” Berkhout and Bondesio (1996:3) define an education system as “well-ordered activities for collective education” and “a unit or whole of mutually ordered fixed uniform activities for the collective provision of education in a specific geographic area.” For them, an education system is analogous with formal education, which is institutionalised, has chronological grades, is structured in a hierarchical pattern and takes place in recognised institutions such as schools, colleges and universities. According to Ruperti (1976:3), an education system is more than a school and suggests formally organised educator, which centres on school activities. The school is one of the many interwoven social institutions that cooperate with each other in an organised and coordinated education system.

1.3.2 Governance, administration and management

At micro level, governance is the major responsibility of the school board as it is charged with the powers of control of the entire school, recruitment, discipline and dismissal of the professional staff. The school board is responsible for the conduct of the school in accordance with legislation (Blake & Hanley 1995:65).

The South African Department of Education (1995:52) states that governance and management are interwoven elements aimed at enabling schools to provide education effectively. The relationship between governance and management is so close that it is difficult to draw a distinction between them because some functions overlap and can thus be “assigned to either, according to institutional context” (Department of Education
1995:52). According to the Department (1995:52), governance is concerned with the formulation, adoption and monitoring of institutional/school policies, while management is concerned with the day-to-day operation of the school, or “delivery of education.” According to Buckland and Hofmeyer (in McLennan 1996:37), “Governance is an issue not only at the national level, but also at every level of the system down to the individual school. Because it is centrally concerned with the distribution of power, it is often summed up by the question: ‘who decides?’”

The distinction between the core functions of management and governance seems to be analogous to the organisation or management arrangement in the Lesotho secondary education sector. In Lesotho, at local level, school governance is the core function of the school board, whose remit is basically to develop the school policies and procedures, to ensure that the school principal implements them accordingly, and to monitor and evaluate them. Thus, the main function of the school board is to develop the operational framework that guides and directs the activities of the school personnel.

According to Whitaker (1998:23), management focuses, among other things, on keeping the organisation running efficiently, maintaining day-to-day functions of the school and ensuring that the work gets done. In this way, management is concerned with the principal’s supervision of the teachers’ professional work and ensuring that effective teaching and learning take place at school. Therefore, the Department of Education (1995:52) stresses that management is the domain of the administrative and professional staff in an individual school, though this does not absolve members of other stakeholder groups, such as the school board, from commenting on what goes on in the school. Adesina (1990:7) defines management as the task of organising and mobilising both the human and material resources in a particular system in order to achieve the identified objectives.
1.3.3 School effectiveness

The concept school effectiveness forms an integral part of this study. Stoll and Mortimore (1997:9) indicate that there has been a burgeoning interest in school effectiveness, prompted by a desire to raise educational standards in schools. This has caused many schools to ask, “What can we do to provide pupils with the best possible education?” Sheppard (1998:84) defines an effective school as one in which learners progress further than could be expected from the consideration of its intake or the inputs provided to it. Sheppard (1998:84) maintains that an effective school “adds value’… to the learning experiences of learners when compared with other schools having similar intakes.”

Harris, Bennet and Preedy (1997:1) allude to the assertion that the issue of educational effectiveness is topical, and argue that educational effectiveness is important on the political, research and practitioner agenda. Hence, there has been unremitting pressure on schools to improve their academic performance, to become more effective and efficient. Harris et al. (1997:1) argue that school effectiveness is primarily concerned with goals and seeks to know why schools with initially comparable learners or inputs differ in the extent to which they achieve their goals. Thus one of the tenets of school effectiveness is to take into account the inputs, processes and contexts in which education takes place. According to Heneveld (1994:1), effectiveness refers to the outcomes of education to what children learn.

The Lesotho government, parents, teachers and the general public are deeply concerned about the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. Parents complain about the inefficiency and poor productivity of secondary schools and the expense of their children’s education. In effect, most parents feel that they do not get their money’s worth out of education.

Some blame the poor academic performance or high wastage rate in Lesotho secondary schools on the dual control of schools by the church and state, and a lack of clarity on their roles and responsibilities. With regard to school management, many school
principals seem to lack the managerial and supervisory skills required for the effective and efficient running of the schools.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The researcher formulated the problem to be investigated in this study as follows:

Why do most Lesotho secondary schools perform poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

Further questions to be probed include:

- What indicators (particularly school management indicators) can be used for evaluating secondary school effectiveness in Lesotho?
- What are the roles of the different partners in the management of secondary schools in Lesotho?
- What is the effect of the dual control of schools at a macro level on the management of individual schools?
- What can be done, especially with regard to school-based management, to improve effectiveness in Lesotho secondary schools?

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The general aims of this study are as follows:

- To identify areas of weakness in school management which could contribute to ineffectiveness in schools.
- To investigate different management practices in the secondary schools and the possible effect on the educational output.
• To investigate the interaction and power relationships between the macro- and micro-level stakeholders in the education system, with special reference to the proprietor churches, government and parents.

• To make recommendations for the improvement of effectiveness in secondary schools in Lesotho.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in the study. Data collection is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

1.6.1 Literature study

The researcher conducted a literature study on the management of schools. The literature study deals with the Lesotho education system; a critical analysis of the links between governance, management and resources, and the effectiveness of schools; and school effectiveness, using selected indicators. This is followed by a critical analysis of the implications and relevance of the issues in the Lesotho educational context. The impact of the school principal’s management, school effectiveness indicators and the roles of different stakeholder groups in school management are explored. The literature study probes current thinking on the macro- and micro-level management of schools, with special emphasis on the micro level.

1.6.2 Quantitative research methodology

Cohen and Manion (1998:7) and Welman and Kruger (1999:7) state that quantitative research can also be referred to as a natural-scientific method or a logical positivist approach. In terms of this method, the social world is treated like a natural world, which has hard, external and objective reality that can be investigated and measured scientifically, free from the prejudices and biases of the researcher (Cohen & Manion 1998:7; Welman & Kruger 1999:7). Scientific procedures or universal laws are applied at
all stages of quantitative research in order to generate objective findings. Furthermore, Schumacher and McMillan (1993:14) and Charles (1995:115) point out that quantitative method relies on statistical numbers to present data. Best and Kahn (1993:26) add that in quantitative research, statistics are usually used to analyse and interpret data, and to make comparisons and contrasts in order to discover the relationships that exist between the non-manipulated variables.

In the present study, the respondents included twenty-five Form E learners, ten secondary school teachers, one principal, one deputy principal and one school board member in each of the twenty-five senior secondary schools selected in the district of Maseru. The participating twenty-five schools were selected by stratified random sampling to ensure that they were representative of the proprietors. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:162) point out that in stratified sampling, the population is divided into subgroups on the basis of the variables identified by the researcher. Once this is done, the sample can be drawn randomly from each subgroup.

In addition to the original twenty-five secondary schools selected in the district of Maseru, forty-five secondary schools were purposively selected in the districts of Leribe, Berea, Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek and Qacha’s Nek, exclusively for the principal, deputy principal and one school board member samples. The purposive selection method was used because it was difficult to find these people, particularly the school board members, who either lived or worked far from the schools under their control. Cohen and Manion (1998:89) state that in purposive sampling researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample, based on their judgement of their typicality, to build a sample that satisfies their specific needs.

Questionnaires were distributed to twenty Ministry of Education officials as well. These comprised ten Central Inspectors, eight Area Resource Advisors and two Area Management Advisors selected in the districts of Leribe, Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale’s Hoek. Lastly, four Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of government- and community-controlled schools were interviewed, using structured and unstructured
questions. The choice of several stakeholder groups was intended to ensure that the research findings are complementary, and that there is a high degree of validity and congruence in the findings.

Questionnaires and interviews, using open-ended and closed questions, were used as data-collection techniques. The responses were encoded and tabulated in order to develop frequency counts. Data reduction and analysis were done by means of the Microsoft Access program for data capturing and developing frequency counts.

1.7 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 briefly outlined the proprietorship of Lesotho secondary schools, the background to the study, the problem statement, the aim of and motivation for the study, and the research methods used.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of Lesotho’s education system and explains how the system works, particularly governance, administration, management and control at various levels. An historical analysis of government and other documents pertaining to the dual control in the Lesotho education system is included.

Chapter 3 covers the literature review on school effectiveness and selected indicators of school effectiveness pertaining to school-based management.

Chapter 4 describes the empirical investigation.

Chapter 5 discusses the results in relation to the identified management issues.

Chapter 6 concludes the study, makes recommendations for improving the management of secondary schools, aimed at enhancing the overall effectiveness of schools, and suggests areas for further research.
1.7 SUMMARY

A dominant feature of the Lesotho education system is the partnership between the state and the church in the management and governance of education. Some argue that this dual control is unfavourable to the effective management and governance of schools and prevents the state, the proprietor church authorities and principals from acting decisively, particularly on controversial educational issues. The converse also applies.

Moreover, the factors that impact on the effectiveness of secondary schools in Lesotho are interrelated. These include the learners, teachers, the learners’ home and social environments, school management and the economy. Learners’ academic achievement in primary school and their motivation are crucial to enhancing their academic performance in secondary school. Similarly, teachers’ motivation and professional efficiency are critical elements for improving the academic performance of schools. In terms of the economy, Lesotho is one of the poorest countries in the world. Most of the families are poor and can ill afford the high school fees and other educational costs. Furthermore, learners are frequently sent home by the school principals to collect money, and this wastes much of their academic learning time. The researcher submits that in order to improve the quality of educational outcomes in Lesotho secondary schools, the Ministry of Education should play a more visible and proactive role by ensuring that principals, teachers and learners work diligently in schools.
CHAPTER 2

MACRO- AND MICRO-LEVEL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SECTOR IN LESOTHO

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of Lesotho’s education system and explains how the system works, particularly with regard to governance, administration, management and control at various levels, within the church-state paradigm. An historical analysis of the dual management pattern will be given. How the various interest groups operate in an inter-relational set-up and the impact of such networking and links on the effectiveness of the education system will be discussed. From the discussion it should become clear that much of the malaise in the secondary system stems from a lack of powerful management capacity at all levels of secondary education.

The weak system of management and infrequent and inadequate inspections of secondary schools in Lesotho promote a lack of accountability, supervision and executive action to remedy problems of staff discipline and absenteeism (Ministry of Education 1999:14; 2000b:30). In 1989, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1989:22) identified principals’ inadequate supervision of schools, the frequent absence of teachers from classes, and poor curriculum and administration due to a lack of proper guidelines for principals as some of the problem areas in secondary schools.

From the above, the lack of a good work ethic amongst the teaching staff, including the principals, indicated by frequent staff absenteeism, could be considered a cause of ineffectual schools as the learners’ time-on-task is seriously reduced and their morale diminished. The lack of powerful school-based management capacity in Lesotho secondary schools appears to be strongly correlated with the pervasive school ineffectiveness. In the light of the problem statement of this study, the question is what impact a lack of work ethic amongst teachers and principals has on the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.
2.2 AIMS OF EDUCATION IN LESOTHO: FROM TRADITIONAL TO WESTERN-TYPE EDUCATION

2.2.1 Traditional education

Education in most African nations started long before missionaries introduced Western education. In Lesotho, as in other African countries, traditional education took place in different contexts, such as the home, initiation school and the environment people lived in, using different modes, including riddles and stories (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1982:1; Masumbe & Coetzer 2001:208). This traditional education was free and compulsory as every “competent adult served as a model and a teacher, and every elder was potentially a reference library” (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1982:1). This indicates that the Basotho people have long cherished the value of education in character building and social development. Thus, they saw education as a worthwhile public investment, whose benefits lay in teaching young people respect for the ways of the tribes, conflict resolution, community expectations and family management.

2.2.2 Western-type education

In 1833 the first missionaries of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society arrived in Lesotho, followed by the Roman Catholic Mission in 1862, and then the Anglican Church in 1875. The advent of the first group of missionaries ushered in the opening of the first school for infants and a reading centre for adults in 1838 (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1982:1). The main focus of the first schools was the acquisition of functional literacy and reading of the Bible (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1982:1; Masumbe & Coetzer 2001:209). According to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1978:47), no attempts were made to teach economic skills needed for social development. The curriculum of the time was apparently tailored to expand and accelerate the evangelical work of the missionaries.
The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1978:48) states that, unlike other British colonies, the pre-independence colonial government left the ownership and control of education in the hands of the missionary authorities. In this regard, teacher management was the domain of the church-appointed school manager, who was responsible for the immediate appointment, transfer and discipline of teachers at parish level, but had to work in collaboration with the relevant denominational Education Secretary, who had executive powers (Ministry of Education 1996:6; World Bank 1999:9). The church’s totalitarian control in school and teacher management favoured the church, and this prompted the government to agitate for equitable power sharing with denominational authorities, so that it could be more actively involved in school governance. From this stance, it can be argued that what the government actually wanted was a well spelled out partnership with the church, with a clear-cut delineation of functions.

2.2.3 The Basotho people’s expectations of education provided in schools

According to the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1982:89), the Basotho people’s expectations of the education provided to the youth included building a strong foundation for advanced academic and professional training on the primary education base, with special emphasis on mathematics and science, and encouraging a spirit of cooperation and service to the less privileged members of the community. Ideally, the national aims and principles should guide the nature of education service delivery. In this respect, the effectiveness of an education system is measured by the achievement of these goals. However, as indicated by the Examinations Council of Lesotho (1999:commentary page; 2002:i), to date, the performance of learners in mathematics and science is still poor and this signifies that there are no effective government programmes to deal with this problem. Learners are often accused of being snobbish and disrespectful to the school authorities (Moeletsi oa Basotho 4 November 2001:3). This is an indication that the system is failing to inculcate a spirit of respect, social harmony and service to the community. The question is why most schools fail to achieve these academic and social aims.
According to the World Bank (1999:26), an effective education system is one that promotes the social and economic development of a country. An education system is effective, then, to the extent that it improves the quality and quantity of its outcomes as well as accessibility. The allocation of resources should be aimed at increasing the number of learners participating in school, especially those from the lower income groups (World Bank 1999:26). The core argument here is that education should reach out to the poor, open opportunities for them and, above all, ensure that all children or a large proportion of them experience academic success at school. In this regard, the Ministry of Economic Planning (1997:169) maintains that the concept of learners as clients to whom a service is provided should underpin education policy. Learners should, therefore, be afforded the right of access to education and training, so that they can realise their full potential during their lives. In this sense, education is seen as a mode of economic and political advancement.

According to the Ministry of Education (1992:12), the main goal of the education sector reform programme was to “improve the quality and the internal efficiency of the education system” (original emphasis). An improvement in quality was expected to raise the achievement levels of school-leavers while internal efficiency was intended to improve the progression of learners from primary to secondary school. From 1992, when the current education sector reform programme was adopted, to 2002, there was a mild improvement in the quality of Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results. A considerable improvement in performance was seen in 2001, when the pass rate increased to 45% from 42.9% in 2000 and the number of second class passes rose to 937 (13.5%) from 694 (12.0%) in 2000. In spite of these improvements, the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations remains poor by all standards since it still ranges between 45% and 50%. A lack of practical intervention strategies seems to be the main weakness of the Lesotho education system. This is linked to a lack of administrative capacity to institutionalise and operationalise the change programmes mainly at macro- or policy-making level at the Ministry of Education.
2.2.4 School ownership in a dual system

In Lesotho, education is mainly the domain of the Christian churches and this is confirmed by the statistics below:

Table 2.1 Number of secondary schools, learners, teachers and learner-teacher ratios by governing body - March 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governing Body</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>Number of learners</th>
<th>Number of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEC</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>10156</td>
<td>12700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCM</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>12590</td>
<td>16980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4231</td>
<td>5818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AME</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov &amp; com</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4567</td>
<td>5142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other miss</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>2129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>34226</td>
<td>43693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Ministry of Education (2003:60)

**Key:**

*Qual* – qualified teachers; *L:T* – learner: teacher ratio; *Unqual* – unqualified teachers;

*Gov* – government; *miss* – mission; *com* – community.

From Table 2.1 it is clear that education is mainly in the hands of the Christian churches, given that the government and the community own only 23 (10.6%) secondary schools. Separating the community secondary schools from the government secondary schools indicates that the government owns only 10 (4.6%) secondary schools.

In a dual system of education, it is not always easy to judge the extent and interplay of power relations between the church and the state. For example, London (1994:92) describes the dual system of education in Trinidad and Tobago that started in 1870 as a system of education where the religious organisations cooperate with the government in running the education system. In this arrangement the state finances the provision of
facilities. However, London (1994:92) states that “this provision has of late been inspired by the political cachet amassed by the church and subsequently used to influence government spending. It is sometimes difficult to tell who holds the balance of power.”

From this account, it would appear that state financing is a characteristic feature in a dual education system. There appears to be some confusion as well over whether the state or the church should exercise more control. In Lesotho, this uncertainty is, to some extent, the source of conflict and bickering between the school authorities and the users of education, namely parents, learners and other role-players. Consequently, when there is conflict, teachers and parents report to the Ministry of Education or the denominational Education Secretariat of the relevant school, depending on the nature of their case and where they think their case can best be handled. This situation frequently causes inertia and aversion on the part of both the government and church authorities to take action, and makes them baulk at making a binding and resolute decision. This practice of acting diplomatically seems to characterise the dual education arrangement, as the two major partners try hard to avoid shaking their already fragile and uncertain relationships and by so doing cause chaos to the system.

With regard to the state-church partnership in education service delivery in Lesotho, Ntimo-Makara (1985:137) stresses that the state sees the church as an indispensable partner in working towards the education and training of Basotho. This has warranted that the government should maintain strong commitment to a partnership (World Bank 1991:12). This confirms the point that the state wants to maintain a working mutual relationship with the church. At the same time, the church also feels bound to the state as the major financier of its schools, particularly with regard to the capital budget and teachers’ salaries. In this context, it is the political responsibility of the government to provide schools with additional classrooms and educational materials (Moeletsi oa Basotho 25 February 2001:2).

The dual system of education sometimes poses problems in regard to policy development, educational reform, the employment of teachers and management issues. In
1991, for example, the World Bank (1991:12) reported that the church-state partnership in Lesotho is less effective as it encumbers the government’s “powers in respect of policy-making for, and regulation of, the education service as a whole.” Setoi (1996:61) states that the government is kept in the dark with regard to the criteria used by different denominational institutions in employing teachers and that the churches consider the church affiliation of a teacher more than his/her academic qualifications. He goes on to say that in some schools under-qualified teachers are running the schools because they are members of the relevant denominations, yet there are better qualified teachers in the same schools (Setoi 1996:61). From this, it can be deduced that failure to recognise effort and management ability in teachers and the application of denomination-based criteria when promoting or appointing staff hinders the effective development of schools as this practice eliminates some potentially effective school leaders.

According to the Ministry of Economic Planning (1997:169), as dualistic as the education system is, the government still remains a superior partner. In terms of the government’s policy statement, it bears the final responsibility of managing the education of the country. The executive powers of running the education system are vested in the Ministry of Education, which is responsible for the training and payment of teachers’ salaries, school inspections, administration of examinations, and development and authorisation of curricula, among other things (Ministry of Education 1996:6; Ministry of Economic Planning 1997:169). Hence, according to the Ministry of Economic Planning (1997:69), “While the education system is shared between the government, churches and the community, the government retains principal responsibility for the development of the service” (own emphasis added). Similarly, it would seem that from the church’s point of view, it is the responsibility of the government to provide facilities, give direction and financial support to schools: “Parents and the church are the great assisters of the government in educational matters. This is the truth that we cannot escape” (Moeletsi oa Basotho 25 February 2001:2) (translated from Sesotho).

From the above, it is clear that the state is assumed to be the custodian of the nation and, as such, has a political mandate and a moral obligation to provide equal educational
opportunities to the nation’s school-age population. The fact that, though in partnership with the church, the government has the principal responsibility for managing the education system thus implies that if the system is to be improved, the government cannot maintain a complacent and indecisive stand.

2.2.5 Tensions in a dual education system

Over the years, tension has arisen between the state and the church over the running of the schools. The degree of tension has varied across the denominations, with some churches appearing more flexible and amenable to government-initiated reforms and policies, whilst others are either sceptical or opposed to them. In a study of education administrators’ and community members’ perceptions of the church-state partnership in education management, Khama (2000:4) found that the church is polarised along political lines: “In Lesotho the church denominations are widely known to have a covert alliance with the political parties.” This lack of unity within the church weakens its covert alliance and prevents it being heard. Likewise, it could be concluded that the ideological disunity within the church causes the government to act diplomatically in handling educational issues. The problem statement of this study raises the question of what impact the church-state tensions have on the effective management of schools.

The Education Act of 1995 made provision for greater government control and powers in the management of education, particularly with regard to teacher management (World Bank 1999:9; Ministry of Education 2000b:8). In accordance with the Act, the government established the Teaching Service Commission. Some of the responsibilities of the Commission are the “hiring, development, deployment, discipline, promotion and compensation of teachers” by the government (World Bank 1999:9). Prior to the Education Act of 1995, these functions were the sole responsibility of the church school manager, who had to inform the Ministry of Education through the Education Secretary for the endorsement of his decisions. The Act restricted the proprietors’ employment powers and circumscribed their overall powers in the running of schools. To some extent, this explains why during the implementation of the Act, a conflict of interests arose.
between the government and some church denominations. From his experience as an Education Officer in 1998, the researcher noticed that the source of conflict was a perception by some church authorities that this Act was a government strategy to usurp their powers and control over their schools.

The introduction of free primary education by the government in 2000 also triggered tension between the church and the state. Some church authorities resisted the implementation of this policy, arguing that they had not been adequately consulted in its formulation. They were also sceptical about the preparedness and capacity of the government to carry out this mammoth task (Ministry of Education 2000a:4). Some maintained that the implementation of free primary education was not home-grown, but a product of coercion and international pressure on the Lesotho government by donor agencies or development partners such as the World Bank (Public Eye 28 January 2000:6). Some viewed the government’s introduction of free primary education as a gesture of political expediency or a strategy to lure voters (Public Eye 4 February 2000:7). In this regard, the Bishops of the Catholic Church stated that the free primary education policy was unlawful because it had not been published in the Government Gazette and, as such, lacked the force of law (Moeletsi oa Basotho 4 November 2001:3). From the fierce resistance to this policy, it could be deduced that the church authorities saw this as another strategy that would weaken their hold on the control of schools. In addition, the implementation of free primary education meant the cessation of the school fees paid to schools, part of which accrued to the church authorities.

From the foregoing it is evident that over the years the government has progressively and proactively been moving towards the control of education. Positive strides have been made in exerting more control over the system by exercising firm control on policies and the development of the entire system. At the same time, the government has indicated that it will not take over the church schools and that it prefers to sustain the cooperation with the proprietor churches (Education Act of 1995; Moeletsi oa Basotho 14 January 2001:1). From this, it would appear that the government is caught between two poles. On the one hand, it wants to exercise more control over schools in order to determine the
direction education should take, and perhaps to improve school quality and effectiveness. On the other hand, it would seem that the government is forced to nurse the marriage with the churches in order to maintain stability within the education system. The church representatives, in their turn, are forced to reciprocate the diplomatic, soft-edged approach in their interactions with the government, particularly when dealing with sensitive educational matters. However, Ntimo-Makara (1985:139) points out that the denominational Education Secretaries’ allegiance and loyalty to their churches surface plainly when there are contentious government policy issues to be dealt with.

Based on the above, the researcher is of the opinion that the partnership between the state and the church should be maintained for now. There is, however, a need to redefine it in the light of the emerging global and local challenges, such as “Education for All,” which underpin the right of every child to education and dictate that learners should be provided with good quality education, indicated by high rate of survival, high rate of retention, successful learning, participation in school activities, and improved quality examination results. In the researcher’s view, the government has a moral obligation to make education, particularly secondary education, accessible to the majority of the youth of Lesotho. It is politically and morally unjustifiable that many children do not have access to secondary education simply because their parents cannot afford the fees and other educational costs.

2.3 THE EFFECT OF UNCONTROLLED SCHOOL EXPANSION

The uncontrolled expansion of schools, particularly secondary schools, is a threat to the Lesotho education system. Several factors are responsible for this excessive school growth. First, there is increasing social demand for secondary education and this is exacerbated by the restrictive admission policies of most better high schools. According to the World Bank (1999:26), secondary net enrolments are estimated to be growing at the rate of 6.5% per year. Secondly, there is financial gain to be made from establishing a school. Thirdly, and most importantly, the excessive school expansion could be linked to the government’s lack of a firm grip on the management and governance of the education
system. This impedes the effective management of schools, seriously diminishes the educational quality, and contributes significantly to the high failure and dropout rates.

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1978:48) attributes the problem of excessive school growth to the failure by the colonial administration to control the unhealthy competition between the church denominations to establish their own schools. The World University Service of Canada (1997:14) states that community or proprietor initiated schools are usually built without a national development plan, and having numerous “small schools is seen as a duplication of effort and an inefficient use of resources.” This renders development and maintenance efforts diffuse and ineffectual as they are spread over many schools.

Many of the excess schools throughout the country have enrolments that are too small for them to be effective – smaller than the 200 and 400 learners prescribed for a junior and senior secondary school, respectively (Ministry of Education 1992:31; World Bank 1995:49; 1999:26). In regard to this problem, Setoi (1996:62) states that there is such tremendous rivalry amongst the churches to establish their own schools that in “a community of some 800 children who could be served by one school,” it is quite common to find three or four denominational schools. In this context, the motivation or competition to establish a school seems to be denomination-based rather than driven by genuine social demand. The World Bank (1995:49) and UNESCO (2000:28) identify inefficient or weak school management as another feature of the new, small secondary schools, resulting in poor academic performance by learners. In terms of the problem statement, the question is what the effect of the lack of control mechanisms and a regulatory framework is on the proliferation of schools.

Three explanations can be offered for the failure of proposals to control the unnecessary school growth. First, in Lesotho, the government does not have control over the admission policies of secondary schools and because of the strict selectivity in popular schools, many children fail to gain admission to the school of their choice. This, in turn, encourages excessive school growth. Secondly, the fact that the government does not
have full control over the entire education system makes the proliferation of secondary schools hard to contain since it is a politically charged issue. Thirdly, the competition for school expansionism has become politicised because it is denomination-driven, and this may cause some government officials to bow to social pressure.

2.3.1 Factors against regulatory mechanisms

Over the years, the government has had sufficient legislation aimed at controlling the excessive growth of schools. For example, as early as 1984, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1984:iii) proposed the consolidation of small, uneconomic, inefficient secondary and high schools into larger, more efficient schools. Subsequently, proposals to consolidate, rationalise and apply strict regulations in opening new secondary schools were made to improve quality and efficiency in the secondary sector (Ministry of Education 1992:8 and 63; 2000b:32). Furthermore, in terms of section 6 of the 1995 Education Act, it is an offence to open a new school without the approval of the Minister, and anyone contravening this law is liable, on conviction, to a fine of up to M2,000 (± R2,000) or imprisonment for a period up to two years.

In view of the above, it can be assumed that the government is aware of the problems in the country’s secondary education and of effectual strategies for tackling them. However, the government appears to be failing to enforce strict adherence to the prescribed procedures for opening new secondary schools and to systematically implement development plans. Thus, complacency, typified by aversion to initiate reform, seems to be the main factor causing this situation. This is compounded by the fact that the problem of excessive school growth is politically delicate and sensitive. Hence, if the government were to imprudently enforce authoritarian control over schools, the already existing dormant tensions between the government and the church could escalate. This situation is seen as inimical to the proper functioning of the education system. Therefore, the question here is how the government can best handle the daunting challenge of excessive school growth, which impedes the quality of secondary education.
2.3.2 Teaching loads and learner-teacher ratios in secondary schools

The numerous small schools spread throughout the country and the wide variances in school sizes seem to hinder the strategy of increasing or standardising the teaching loads across the schools to the acceptable average teaching load of 30 periods per week for every teacher. This, in turn, frustrates the policy of increasing the learner-teacher ratio to an acceptable 25:1 (Ministry of Education 1992:63). The Ministry of Education (2000b:31) reported that in 1998 almost “59% of teachers taught less than 15 to 30 periods a week. Again roughly around 15% of them were teaching only 20 periods per week.” It can therefore be argued that the majority of teachers in Lesotho secondary schools are under-utilised, which eliminates teaching overload as a cause of poor performance in the national examinations. This raises the question of why most Lesotho secondary schools continue to perform poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations even though the majority of teachers have low teaching loads.

2.3.3 The relationship between school proliferation, school fees and access

The lack of firm macro control of the education system has many effects, including the fact that most secondary schools charge prohibitive fees. The reason for this could be that the new secondary schools do not receive any assistance from the government therefore the school fees are the main source of funds for capital development.

Since the government does not have full control over schools, there are wide discrepancies in school fees. For example, in some cases, the small and educationally unviable schools charge much higher fees than schools with better facilities, organisation, administration, staff, tuition and results (UNESCO 2000:30). As early as 1978, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1978:55) reported that high fees paid by parents “account for about 40 percent of those leaving school prematurely.” Given the forty percent of learner wastage caused by failure to pay fees, action should have been taken long ago to contain this loss of talent. In the researcher’s view, the low access and
high dropout rates in secondary schools in Lesotho are escalating because of the rising level of poverty, which renders many families unable to afford school fees.

The problem of school fees impinges on the process of teaching and learning. From his experience as a teacher from 1993 to 1997 and observations during the empirical research, the researcher found that students’ learning is sometimes inordinately disrupted by school principals, who send them home during the school hours to collect the school fees. This highlights the fact that in Lesotho, there is a correlation between the way the collection of school fees is administered and the amount of teaching and learning to which learners are exposed. This, then, has a negative impact on the students’ learning time and the teachers’ instructional time and schedules. This situation raises the question of whether the government provides the necessary guidance to principals on the effective collection of school fees in order to minimise the learners’ loss of time.

2.3.4 The effect of wastage in secondary schools

As stated earlier, the unplanned growth of schools causes inefficiencies in secondary schools, characterised by a high wastage rate. In this regard, as early as 1978, the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1978:97) reported that wastage “from secondary school grades is unparalleled by any country South of the Zambezi.” In addition, the wastage is much higher in Form E because of the high failure rate in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations (Ministry of Education 1992:33; 2000b:31-32). Compared to other levels, Form E is strikingly the most wasteful of the secondary system and warrants collective action or concerted effort by all the stakeholders to turn the situation around.

According to the Ministry of Education (2000b:32), the inefficiency of the secondary sector is so extreme that a cohort analysis indicates that for every 100 children of the 1998 Form A cohort, only 10 or 11 (10.6%) could expect to graduate or complete their Cambridge Overseas School Certificate. This situation highlights the poor quality and
low internal efficiency of the Lesotho secondary education system. This wastage rate is high by any yardstick and warrants intervention to redress it.

The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1978:97) reported that a contributory factor in the high wastage rate is the learners’ academic weakness and that “statistics show that 4 percent of pupils leaving school prematurely do so on account of poor scholarship.” It could be argued, however, that the learners’ scholastic weakness in secondary schools is, in effect, caused by their poor foundation at earlier levels of their schooling, and other factors beyond their control. The World Bank (1991:8) stresses that the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is due to “poor preparation in primary school: when students in secondary institutions are inadequately prepared, it is difficult for instruction in secondary school to overcome this handicap.” In this way, prior deficiencies caused by primary schools have ongoing effects on learners. These deficiencies may necessitate a remedial approach being adopted in secondary school teaching as a way of laying a strong foundation for secondary education. This may be arduous for secondary school teachers, given the time constraint and pressure to finish the syllabus. Thus, the question is what impact low quality education in primary school has on the achievement of learners in secondary school.

The performance of learners in the Junior Certificate and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is low in the key subjects of mathematics, science and English (Examinations Council of Lesotho 1999:commentary page; Southern Star 15 February 2002:11). The Examinations Council of Lesotho (2002:vi) attributes the poor performance of learners in mathematics to the fact that most candidates lack computation skills: “Generally, candidates lacked the ability to read information presented in diagrammatic form.” In this respect, the question is whether learners are taught mathematics properly, and whether the government and schools have special programmes to respond to this crisis. Among other things, the poor academic performance of most learners in mathematics is attributable to the fact that some good mathematics teachers opt for other better paying jobs (Southern Star 15 February 2002:11). The high mobility
of mathematics teachers could be linked to the government’s failure to attract and retain them, by offering competitive remuneration packages. It would perhaps be a worthwhile strategy for Lesotho to introduce slightly better salaries for science teachers vis-à-vis their non-science counterparts, as is the case in a country like Botswana.

The poor performance of learners in English could be connected to the fact that learners are exposed to very little English in their social environments and in primary schools, in particular (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1978:5). The Examinations Council of Lesotho (2000:ii) attributes the poor performance of learners in English to a lack of “a culture of reading and regular practice over a period of time” (original emphasis). In view of this, most learners can barely grasp the basics of the English language in secondary school. This raises the question of what can be done to improve the perennial problem of poor performance of learners in the core subjects of mathematics, science and English in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

2.4 MACRO-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

Despite the dualistic pattern of the education system, at macro level, the government remains the major custodian of the entire system. At executive or macro level some of the roles performed by the government include liaison with local and international agencies on behalf of the denominational schools on infrastructure development, teacher training and development, and other instructional issues.

Figure 2.1 below is a schematic representation of the Ministry of Education to indicate the flow of information and services across the hierarchy and indicate where different school matters are handled. Although not exhaustive, figure 2.1 illustrates the salient divisions and levels pertinent to the secondary sector, dealing with secondary and high school matters.
The Permanent Secretary is usually a political post, the appointment of which is on a two-year contract basis. In Lesotho, as in most other nascent democracies, political affiliation and allegiance to the ruling party is the main consideration for the post of Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Secretary is usually charged with the overall executive responsibility of the entire Ministry, and liaises with the Minister of Education. The second tier of senior management is constituted largely by the five Chief Education Officers for different departments. The Chief Education Officers assist the Permanent Secretary in the execution of his or her duties, which include the development and supervision of policy. The Chief Education Officers are the most senior civil servants or technocrats within the Ministry of Education charged with the executive and professional responsibility of supervising their departments. However, there are growing signs that appointments to the senior management posts of Chief Education Officers are becoming
politicalised, in the sense that recently, some of these posts have been filled by candidates presumably handpicked by the senior management staff. This kind of promotion, which is arranged internally, designates the micro politics of gate keeping, as it excludes other potential competent candidates from applying and contesting fairly for the post. This prevents the chances of injecting new ideas into the system through highly skilled candidates.

The government runs education through its Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education has two major departments directly responsible for providing educational services and support to secondary schools, namely the Central Inspectorate and National Curriculum Development Centre. At district level, the District Education Officers, who are, in turn, responsible to the Chief Inspector of the Field Services, are responsible for the general administrative functions of secondary schools, in that they handle all the educational matters pertaining to their district. These include settling disputes in schools and processing teachers’ employment contract forms before being forwarded to the Teaching Service Department. To some extent, the work ethic and performance of the central inspectors, curriculum developers or subject specialists and District Education Officers are greatly influenced by the philosophy, vision, and work ethic of the senior management staff, who are responsible for setting the trend and standard of performance.

2.4.1 The National Curriculum Development Centre

The primary task of the National Curriculum Development Centre is to develop the curriculum, develop appropriate materials and methods, devise and carry out plans for disseminating the curriculum materials and methods to schools and teachers, and organise in-service training workshops for teachers. Efficiency improvement also falls within the terms of service of the National Curriculum Development Centre. In this way, one of the core functions of the curriculum developers is to revise and review the secondary curriculum (Ministry of Education 1998a:27). From the reports reviewed, it would seem that the National Curriculum Development Centre is not doing much towards improving efficiency in curriculum delivery in secondary schools. For instance, there is no evidence
that it interacts frequently with secondary schools, the Central Inspectorate and the Examinations Council of Lesotho, in an attempt to explore ways of improving curriculum delivery in schools. Thus, it can be concluded that the role of the National Curriculum Development Centre in ameliorating the national crisis of poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is limited.

2.4.2 The Central Inspectorate

The Central Inspectorate, which was established in 1988, encompasses ten subject specialists in the following subject areas: English, mathematics, science, geography, history, development studies, religious education, agriculture, home economics and commercial subjects (Ministry of Education 2000b:30). Their major task is to inspect, support, supervise, monitor and evaluate the work of schools as well as ensure that the curriculum is offered effectively and in accordance with the norms and standards prescribed by the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education 1992:63; 1995:2). In this way, the main function of the Inspectorate is to ensure that there is good practice in the schools, both in pedagogy and administration. This means that the Inspectorate should organise in-service meetings or workshops for teachers and visit schools to demonstrate aspects of curriculum policies and provide support services to the school administration. A Canadian Team of Educators (1979:2) emphasised the need to have a strong inspectoral system in Lesotho in order to ensure that government expenditure on education is accounted for and that investments are utilised prudently. A powerful Inspectorate would likewise ensure that the citizens, who contribute money in the form of fees, get full value and worth for their money.

2.4.3 Factors against smooth inspections of schools

The reports reviewed indicate that overall, the inspectors fail to visit schools as they should. Several intervening factors inhibit inspections, such as strikes in schools, too many sporting activities, and, in some cases, a lack of cooperation from the school managers (Ministry of Education 1998b:35). The intermittent political disturbances from
August 1994 to September 1998 were another factor that militated against the smooth schedule of school visits and inspections (Ministry of Education 2000b:30). A country’s stable political system is an educational imperative as it provides an environment conducive and amenable to the effective performance of duties. Here the question is what impact the unstable political system had on the effectiveness of secondary schools.

The modus operandi of the Central Inspectorate when inspecting schools is somewhat counter-productive in the sense that they conduct a comprehensive, full inspection in a school visited, taking an average of three days in one school. This means that they carry out a limited number of inspections in a year, especially given that there is only one inspector per subject for the whole country. This problem is compounded by variables within the Ministry of Education that shift the focus of inspectors and hamper their work. In this regard, for example, the introduction of free primary education in January 2000 is a case in point. The researcher noted that during the community mobilisation campaigns, which ran from November to December 1999, some central inspectors were assigned to some districts to assist in sensitising the communities about the free primary education programme. The scenario outlined above explains why some schools have not been inspected since their establishment. The problem statement raises the question of how a lack of capacity on the part of the Central Inspectorate impacts on the effective running of secondary schools.

2.4.4 The general state of the schools as revealed by the inspection reports

In order to gain an overall picture of what goes on in schools, the researcher reviewed five inspection reports of the Central Inspectorate. The reports reveal that schools generally take a long time to grow in terms of physical facilities, learner enrolments and the required levels of efficiency.

The problems common to most of the schools included serious mismanagement, malpractice and dereliction of duties by the school principals. These were indicated by teacher absenteeism, unhealthy relations and a breakdown of communication between
principals and staff. According to the Central Inspectorate (1996:2), teachers did not show interest in the general welfare of learners, yet learners were eager to learn. With regard to the quality of teaching and learning, the inspection reports indicated that teachers did not exert themselves fully in their teaching, and that their lesson plans, preparation books and schemes of work were prepared in a shoddy manner. In terms of staffing, the reports indicated that in the majority of schools, teachers were operating below the recommended workload of 30 periods per week. It could be deduced from the above scenario that the dismal performance of most schools in the national examinations is largely a result of weak school management. Other variables such as low teacher morale could be viewed as manifestations of weak school management.

In 1996 and 2000, the Central Inspectorate (1996:9; 2000:9) assessed the internal efficiency of inspected schools, using a retention-performance value. This is a measuring instrument that looks at the learners’ progression or “flow-through” and the school’s “holding power” by comparing the entrants at Form A and Form D with the number of passes in the Junior Certificate and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, respectively (Central Inspectorate 2000:9; UNESCO 1998:18). In general, the pattern of learner enrolments declined as the academic years pass. In other words, the percentage of a cohort of learners who enrolled in Form A in a given school-year, and who eventually reach Form E is low, which suggests that the dropout or wastage rates are high. One possible explanation for this low holding power is that some schools, particularly the high performers, are so examination-oriented and results-driven that they would rather limit their external classes of Form C and Form E.

2.4.5 Marginalisation of the secondary sector: the school fees phenomenon

Education in Lesotho is funded with public funds, parental contributions and donor monies. The recurrent costs are mainly covered by the government and parents, while the capital costs are, in the main, covered by donor funding (Ministry of Education 1992:34; 2000b:29). Due to the global focus shift to primary education, which is considered basic and compulsory, the secondary sector has received marginal attention from the
government, with much more investment injected into the primary sector. According to the Ministry of Education (1992:39), “As the concentration over the coming five years will be upon improving the quality and efficiency of primary education, about half of all the investment funds will be going to that sub-sector. Approximately 25 percent of funds will go to secondary education.” This points to the remote attention given to secondary schools and explains why the government has devoted marginal resources to secondary education. It can be deduced that the marginal resources that the state and the proprietor churches allocate to secondary schools are commensurate with their ineffectual operation and distressing educational outcomes. This raises the question of what the impact of the marginal resources injected into the secondary sector by the state and the church is on the effectiveness of secondary schools?

Lesotho education is financed by various unconnected agencies, such as parents, the community, the government, foreign donors and proprietors (World University Service of Canada 1997:2; Ministry of Education 2000b:1-2). These disparate sources of income make it difficult to determine the total cost that goes into education. At variance with the fact that the secondary sector has proved to be the most wasteful of all the education levels in the country, it has continued to receive a relatively small budget from the government. In this respect, the Ministry of Education (2000b:1) reported that spending “on secondary education, as a proportion of total Ministry of Education recurrent budget, also declined slightly from 26.9% in 1993/94 to 23.4% in 1998/99” and that primary education received about half of the education sector’s budget in order to fulfil the goal of poverty alleviation. Similarly, in line with the free primary education programme, which currently covers Standards 1 to 4, the Ministry of Education budget for the financial year 2002/2003 reflects that primary education has received over half of the education sector’s budget (Ministry of Education 2002:11, 20-21). A budget cut to the secondary sector can be considered a serious divestment, especially because secondary education is the most expensive of all the levels, and causes families to struggle hard to raise the funds to educate their children. The Ministry of Education (1998a:3) reported that the school fees in Lesotho secondary schools are about seventeen times higher than
primary schools, and that some secondary schools charge fees that are more than customary.

The literature reviewed indicates that the government has been concerned with regulating and rationalising secondary fees. In 1994, the Ministry of Education (1998a:3) commissioned a study to investigate school fees. The study found that in 1994 schoolbooks alone cost something in the order of M500 (Ministry of Education 1998a:3). In 2003, the textbook price list of the Lesotho High School (2003:unnumbered page) indicates that the cost of school books has jumped to around M1,500 for a Form A learner. Most parents cannot afford this. The fees and educational costs are among the causes of conflict between teachers and learners, as the majority of learners do not have the prescribed books, and the teaching-learning process is consequently adversely affected. The rationalisation or standardisation of fees would therefore help to de-escalate these tensions to some degree. The government could also institute a book rental scheme similar to the one in primary schools, where parents rent books by paying a nominal book fee to the revolving fund or seed money. This strategy could go a long way towards overcoming the problem of a lack of books amongst most learners. In the light of the problem statement of this study, the question is to what extent a lack of adequate textbooks and other resources contributes to ineffective teaching and learning, and poor performance in the national examinations.

2.5 PHYSICAL FACILITIES AND SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

According to Postlethwaite (1998:290), research in developing countries found that one of the factors undermining the education system is a lack of adequate and suitable facilities. The task of providing adequate facilities throughout the developing world is onerous, facilities are often in short supply, and even those that do exist are substandard or in a deplorable condition (London 1994:89; Postlethwaite 1998:290). In a study of fourteen countries classified by the United Nations as “least developed,” including Togo, Zambia, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania, Postlethwaite (1998:310-312) found that many school facilities, such as piped water, staff room, electricity and libraries, were non-
existent and that most learners did not have textbooks and supplementary materials. Postlethwaite (1998:307-310) found such a critical shortage of classrooms that in most cases learners were taught in classrooms that were in a serious state of disrepair, or in makeshift structures, with the worst cases being where classes were conducted in the open air. The above scenario portrays the unsettled conditions under which teaching and learning take place in some developing countries and helps to explain why teacher productivity and professional efficiency are compromised and student learning is hampered.

London (1994:90), the Department of Education of the United States of America (2000:1) and others found a strong correlation between the quality of physical facilities and learner achievement. One possible explanation for this condition is that the more affluent a school is, the greater the chances of attracting both good learners and good teachers. However, it would appear that good facilities influence learner achievement more in a situation where supportive conditions such as strong school leadership and teacher commitment exist. A study of the District of Columbia school system found that the learners’ standardised achievement scores were lower in schools with poor buildings or substandard facilities, such as science laboratories and classroom furniture, even after controlling for variables such as the learners’ socio-economic status (Department of Education of the United States of America 2000:1).

In the light of the above, it would seem that for an education system to improve the achievement levels of learners, the starting point is to ensure that there are adequate facilities and resources in schools. In this sense, it could be asserted that attractive facilities provide an academic task-oriented ambience, which makes it possible for teachers to concentrate their energies and efforts on the core business of curriculum delivery. In the same way, it would appear that good facilities stimulate the interest of learners to learn and subsequently enhance their achievement levels.
2.5.1 The state of physical facilities in Lesotho’s secondary schools

A dominant feature in Lesotho’s education system is a wide range of inequalities in the quality and standard of facilities in secondary schools. Currently, there is still a critical shortage of speciality facilities such as laboratories, workshops for practical subjects and libraries (Ministry of Education 2000b:29; 2003:67-68). In this regard, the 2001 education statistics indicate that in 2001 there were 231 laboratories serving 77,919 learners in 217 secondary schools (Ministry of Education 2003:64, 68).

However, dividing the number of laboratories in secondary schools in 2001 into districts reveals that some districts had more laboratories than the number of schools. For instance, Maseru district with 49 secondary schools had 68 laboratories, while Leribe district with 50 secondary schools had only 44 laboratories, and Qacha’s Nek district with 11 secondary schools had only 9 laboratories (Ministry of Education 2003:61, 67). Similar discrepancies are revealed when the laboratories in schools in 2001 are divided into proprietors. In this regard, some proprietors had more laboratories than the number of their schools, while others had fewer laboratories than the number of their schools. For example, the Lesotho Evangelical Church with 69 secondary schools had 58 laboratories, the Roman Catholic Mission with 78 secondary schools had 101 laboratories, and the Anglican Church of Lesotho with 31 secondary schools had 27 laboratories, while the 23 government and community controlled secondary schools had 36 laboratories in 2001 (Ministry of Education 2003:60, 68). This could be considered a lack of planning and the effect of the proliferation of schools, which is more common among proprietors with fewer laboratories than the total number of their secondary schools.

With respect to the number of classrooms, an analysis of the 2001 education statistics reveals that in 2001, there was an overall learner-classroom ratio of 39:1 in Lesotho secondary schools (Ministry of Education 2003:60). This ratio is within the acceptable margin, as it is slightly below the standard of 40 learners per classroom prescribed by the Ministry of Education (World University Service of Canada 1997:22). When the learner-classroom ratio was dissected according to proprietor, it was found that in 2001, the
Lesotho Evangelical Church and other missions had the highest ratio at 40:1, followed by the government and community controlled schools at 39:1, and then the Roman Catholic Mission at 38:1. The overall learner-classroom ratio of the Anglican Church of Lesotho schools was 37:1, while that of the African Mission Episcopal schools was 36:1. Thus, it can be concluded that overall, there was no shortage of classrooms in Lesotho secondary schools in 2001.

Of all the proprietors, the Roman Catholic Mission, the Anglican Church of Lesotho, and the African Mission Episcopal Church had relatively low learner-classroom ratios. Most Roman Catholic Mission schools were started with strong financial assistance from overseas sister missions. The same is true for some Anglican Church of Lesotho schools and the African Mission Episcopal schools. Moreover, there are only a small number of Anglican Church of Lesotho and the African Mission Episcopal schools therefore the assistance from the church, the government and other donor agencies could be sufficient to cover the basic and specialist facilities.

The high learner-classroom ratio in the Lesotho Evangelical Church and other mission schools could be explained by the fact that, historically, these churches did not have strong financial backing from overseas missions. Regarding the government and community controlled schools, their relatively high learner-classroom ratio could be explained by the fact that they attract large numbers of learners, since they have relatively better facilities, charge cheaper school fees and, in some cases, produce better academic results.

In view of their popularity, most high-performing secondary schools usually have a shortage of classrooms. From his experience as a teacher from 1993 to 1997 and an Education Officer from 1998 to 2001, the researcher found that in Lesotho, some secondary schools, particularly the low-performing ones, have surplus classrooms. This could be interpreted as an indicator of poor planning on the part of the government and the proprietor churches. From this, it could be concluded that government assistance of uneconomical and educationally unviable small schools in infrastructure development is
self-defeating. Furthermore, it could be a factor that motivates the pervasive opening of illegal new secondary schools across the country.

2.5.2 The effect of facilities on teacher morale

In Lesotho, staff turnover or teacher movement is connected to school effects such as the leadership styles of the principals and the availability of resources. As indicated in section 2.5.1, the Catholic schools appear to be adequately provisioned with adequate classrooms, laboratories, educational materials and decent staff housing vis-à-vis the Protestant or non-Catholic schools (Ministry of Education 2003:60-68). All things being equal, a well-provisioned school would have the advantage of achieving relatively better educational outcomes vis-à-vis a school in which educational materials are in short supply. The Department of Education of the United States of America (2000:1) states that good facilities are a precondition for and strong predictors of learner achievement, particularly if other conditions are met. From this, it can be argued that in the context of Lesotho, the Catholic secondary schools, which are better endowed with educational resources, will be more attractive to the majority of learners as well as capable and better qualified teachers. This, in turn, could result in low staff turnover, owing to adequate provision of facilities, which may have a retaining effect. In the light of the above, then, a well-resourced school has high retention power on both teachers and learners, and a high probability of boosting the morale of teachers and learners. Hence, it can be questioned whether the wide inequalities in facilities between secondary schools do not account for differential results in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

2.6 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The involvement and participation of parents and the community in education is crucial to enhancing school performance and improving the educational quality marked by improved learner achievement. Therefore, if parents are only afforded a marginal role or no role at all in school governance, the management of the school and the teaching-learning exercise could be negatively affected.
A metaphor often used to describe the Lesotho education system arrangement is a three-legged pot, representing the government, the church and parents. The traditional arrangement of the education system and the visible roles that the church and the state play in education service dictate that there should be a relatively stronger coupling between the first two legs while the other leg (parents) is not functioning well (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1982:18; UNESCO 2000:30). Traditionally, the Lesotho education system did not have the active participation of parents, even in decision-making processes on educational matters that affected their children (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1978:114; Government of Lesotho and the United Nations Children’s Fund 1997:94). It could be deduced that the perception that parents do not have a central role to play in education machinery has reduced them to being cogs that simply respond to the demands and requests made on them by the schools and the government. It would seem that over the years, not much has been achieved in ensuring a community-inclusive school management. The recent reform in which the communities elect school committees has not worked well mainly because the elected members lacked the necessary competencies in the management of schools (Government of Lesotho and the United Nations Children’s Fund 1997:94; UNESCO 2000:30).

The Education Act 1995 makes provision for the increased representation of parents on the school boards to three members, followed by the proprietor church with two. This innovation underpins the importance the government attaches to the participation of parents in the running of schools. The World Bank (1999:9) reports that the increased participation of parents in the running of schools has facilitated the process of “resolving the church/state conflict over the management of schools.” However, this deliberate attempt by the government to empower parents still has some weaknesses in that the elected members have been reported to lack the required levels of skills (World Bank 1999:9). This condition is a handicap that renders their involvement only nominal and symbolic. By excluding parents, schools push to the periphery, potential resource persons and assisters, who could help them in curriculum-relevant activities, in monitoring learners’ progress and in self-reliance projects. This raises the question of whether the
school boards play their roles sufficiently to promote the effectiveness of secondary schools in Lesotho.

2.7 SCHOOL-BASED GOVERNANCE

Historically, school governance has been the responsibility of the church-appointed school managers supported by members of the management team. These managers were often full-time principals of schools at the same time or priests (Khama 2000:42). This management set-up meant that the managers failed to apply themselves wholly to their managerial work due to their professional exigencies. Moreover, in view of the fact that the school managers were church-appointed, the micro politics of the church interfered with the professional work of teachers. To date, the situation has not improved much since there is still a “manager” mentality and nomenclature.

In terms of the 1995 Education Act the functions of school boards include to develop school policies, to look into aspects that relate to the quality of their schools and related problems, to marshal plans for the improvement of their schools, and to assist in the deployment of resources, teachers and learners in order to mitigate any problems that might arise. A common feature that weakens the school boards and diverts them from discharging their central duties as expected is the conflictive situation characterised by divisions. These conflicts sometimes revolve around the principal, with parties siding for and against him. In some schools, the participation of the school boards in school governance is limited and so is their impact on the functioning of schools. This renders the principals the chief architects in the arenas of school governance and school management. The paradox is that when there are unsettling occurrences in schools, such as learner strikes and conflicts amongst staff, the school boards are called in to resolve the disturbances and normalise the situation. Here the question is what the impact of the school boards’ marginal role is on the running of schools.

The management and governance of government and community schools is similar to that of church schools. However, in these schools there is the Supervisor, who performs
functions analogous to those of the Education Secretaries of the church schools, which include supervising the principals, advising the school boards and organising workshops for them. The government schools seem to have a comparative advantage over other schools because they are fewer in number, which facilitates management. An indication of this is that the Supervisor is able to visit all the government secondary schools in a year (Ministry of Education 1998b:39). This raises the question of what impact the supportive role of the Supervisor of government schools has on their operation.

2.7.1 Local level management

The school board is composed of eight members representing all the role players in a relevant school, namely two from the proprietor, three from the parents, one from the teachers, a principal of the relevant school, and a chief of the area where the school is located. In terms of Section 23 of the 1995 Education Act, the responsibilities of the school board include the supervision of the school under their charge and ensuring that the school is run properly and efficiently. By this Act, the overall managerial powers are vested in the school board hence the onus is on the school board members to create an enabling working environment for educators, and to ensure that they discharge their duties in accordance with the norms and standards prescribed by the Ministry of Education. However, the Act is silent about bringing people with a professional background in teaching or management of schools on board, who can inject their technical knowledge into the functions and tasks of the school under their jurisdiction. In this regard, the question is whether the school boards perform their functions adequately as stipulated in the 1995 Education Act.

2.8 MICRO LEVEL MANAGEMENT

Micro level management refers to the local level management of schools. This level represents the heart of the education system of any country and to determine whether the system is effective or ineffective requires focusing on the school organisation itself. It has been pointed out that a characteristic feature of the Lesotho secondary schools is the
weak system of school management and infrequent inspections, which promote a lack of accountability and executive action to remedy problems of staff discipline, absenteeism and tardiness. The principal is the person strategically positioned to provide supervision and remedy the learner and staff problems in order to improve school effectiveness.

According to Finn (2002:1), nothing matters more to an organisation than the quality of its leadership, particularly the quality of principals in the case of schools. In this regard, Hurley (2001:2) maintains that effective leadership is key to the development of schools in general and the improvement of academic performance in particular, in that an effective principal creates an environment that stimulates an enthusiasm for learning. Accordingly, it could be deduced that the core business of the school principal is to create an environment that stimulates productive, quality teaching and learning. Thus, the success of a principal in this regard could be considered a barometer for measuring his or her effectiveness.

Regarding the significance of the principal to the success of a school, Hechinger (in Theron & Bothma 1990:22) states, “Over the years, as a reporter, I have never seen a good school with a poor principal or a poor school with a good principal. I have seen unsuccessful schools turned around into successful ones and, regrettably, outstanding schools slide rapidly into decline. In each case the rise or the fall could readily be traced to the quality of the principal.” Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:137) maintain that the principal is at the very heart of all the school improvement initiatives and, as such, he or she is a catalyst of school success. In effect, it could be argued that the principal is a person entrusted with the task of effective deployment of different resources in the accomplishment of educational goals. This means that if the principal is not effective, visionary and productive in the discharge of his or her duties, it will be difficult to turn the school around. Here the question is whether principals in Lesotho secondary schools perform their duties effectively to improve the academic performance of their schools.

Another dimension of effective school leadership is the expertise of the school principal in instructional matters. In this regard, Hurley (2001:2) and Clark (1999:1) maintain that
the principal should also serve as an instructional leader and a change agent, who is capable of coaching, teaching and developing teachers in their schools. Hurley (2001:2) contends that principals “must be steeped in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to supervise a continuous improvement process that measures progress in raising student performance.” Thus, it would appear that it is vital that the principal have the necessary expertise in instructional and curricular issues in order to ensure that there is continuous improvement in the achievement levels of learners.

To achieve the goal of quality teaching and learning, Lewis (2001:1) proposes that there should be re-engineering of the work practices in schools, which underscores the fact that there should be “the integration of curriculum and technology; workplace transformation; school culture and globalisation; professionalism and great teaching.” In this sense, it could be deduced that the concept of re-engineering underpins the fact that the work structures and work practices should be redesigned and revolutionised with the objective of achieving improved school performance. The process of re-engineering the school structures and work processes may be obscure for most principals. Hence, Lewis (2001:1) emphasises that to be effective leaders of learners, the school principals should continually “upskill” themselves by examining their leadership styles, and gaining knowledge and skills needed for effective leadership.

The principals of successful schools have certain characteristics in common, including a vision for the school that focuses on improving the achievement of learners, and they communicate or sell this vision to learners and teachers (Seyfarth 1999:18). Seyfarth (1999:18) emphasises that effective school leaders should be able to lead their schools through a labyrinth of uncertainties and change. The ability of a school principal to remain calm and focused in the face of a turbulent institutional environment appears to be a vital attribute for effective school leadership.

Regardless of the internal environment of the school, Betts (2001:1) recommends that the “activities principals engage in should ultimately all improve student learning.” Hence, it can be argued that in spite of the turbulences that may occur at schools, quality teaching
and learning should always form the nucleus of all the school activities. In this sense, Seyfarth (1999:18) stresses that an important job of the principal is to be an advocate of what is best for children in the school. In this way, the principal can be regarded as the defender and promoter of the child’s academic interests. With reference to the problem statement of this study, the question is whether principals in Lesotho secondary schools operate as advocates of the best interests of learners.

In recognition of the significant contribution of the micro level to school improvement initiatives, the fifth Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 1991/92 - 1995/96 aimed to develop the local level capacity by shifting local level management to principals (Ministry of Education 1992:63). Sheppard (1998:103) concurs with this, stating that the “uniqueness of the school in its context and the unique problems a school as a unit has to deal with, suggest that change programmes must be customised for each individual school to be successful.” Since an education system is a loosely coupled system constituted of individual units that are autonomous, it is important that the improvement programmes be devolved to the individual schools where they can be harmonised and coordinated by the principal.

As early as 1979, a study by the Canadian Team of Educators (1979:12-13) concluded that many of the failings of the secondary school system in Lesotho stem from the fact that, among other things, the school principals do not know exactly what duties they are expected to perform and what powers and responsibilities they have. Secondly, they do not receive any specialised training in administration and supervision of instruction. Thirdly, they have heavy schedules, which incapacitate them to perform their duties effectively. Finally, they are subject to external pressure from sources, such as the school boards, the local community and the local politicians. These conclusions still fit the current educational context of Lesotho secondary schools. For example, UNESCO (2000:28) cites ineffective or weak management practices by school principals as a contributory factor to the decline in educational standards and poor performance of schools in the national examinations.
The first point made by the Canadian Team of Educators (1979:12) that the principals do not know exactly what their responsibilities are is disputable. It can be asserted that they know what their remit entails. However, the issue is that they may not have a clear grasp of how vital their purposeful leadership is to the well functioning of the school, and how powerful their sphere of influence is on effective teaching and learning. This is probably linked to a lack of specialised skills development courses for principals. Although their schedules are tight, this can be overcome by delegating some duties to teachers. The practice of exerting constant pressure on principals to perform has hitherto not borne much fruit in respect of the academic performance of secondary schools. Hence, it is probably necessary for the school boards and other external agencies, such as the Ministry of Education, to change this approach by providing support and creating a success-oriented work environment, which would enable the principals to discharge their duties effectively. This raises the question of whether the principals in Lesotho secondary schools have the relevant leadership competencies required to promote the effectiveness of their schools.

In terms of Section 23(3) of the Teaching Service Regulations 2002, the principal’s duties include being in charge of the discipline, organisation and day-to-day running of the school, providing instructional supervision and support to teachers, and ensuring that teachers prepare lesson plans properly and teach effectively. The general management of a school is such an arduous task that a person appointed to this post should have been in the system for some time and developed a tacit knowledge of how the system functions. In this regard, Lewis (2001:2) states that principals should be transformational leaders who should bond their communities together to develop a “shared vision” and build a responsive, people-orientated “collaborative culture” and set the tone for the school climate. Thus, it could be argued that the ultimate goal of setting a positive work-relevant environment is to improve the achievement levels of learners in the academic tests and examinations. In this way, it is important that a principal have a sound professional knowledge base in administrative and pedagogic issues in order to be effective in running a school.
Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:137) describe the importance of the principal to the success of the school as follows: “The key to all improvement is the vision and energy of the principal.” The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (1985:4) states that the principal should provide good leadership to the school and serve as a role model for teachers and learners. In this regard, the ethos, tone and effectiveness of a school, as seen in its achievement in its operations and the good discipline of learners and teachers, are, to some degree, a reflection of the good leadership skills and professional conduct of the principal. Hence, a principal can be regarded as a maestro and a pacesetter of all the school functions. However, in many schools in Lesotho the post of principal is not necessarily acquired through competency since the criteria for appointment are school-specific, with the denomination of an applicant being a strong deciding factor. Frequently, new graduates with no experience have been thrust into the administrative post. This raises the question of whether the principals have the task-relevant administrative and supervisory skills required for improving the effectiveness of their schools.

2.9 TEACHERS AND THEIR SUPPORT

In Lesotho secondary school teachers form what Mintzberg (in Hoy & Miskel 1991:127) terms the “operating core.” The underlying assumption here is that teachers are the lifeblood of the school operations. Hoy and Miskel (1991:127) contend that the operating core consists of “those who perform the basic work, activities related to the production of products and services. The core is the heart of the organisation; it produces the essential output.” Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:146) emphasise that those factors that are “proximal” to the learners, such as the teacher, have greater influence on learner achievement than those that are distant, such as the school or the district. Thus, it could be conjectured that what actually influences improved learner achievement in a school is the availability of quality teachers. In a study in rural Texas, Cawelti (2000:43) found that the main contributory factor to the good academic results of the school was the energetic, committed and motivated teachers who were prepared to make an extra effort individually and collaboratively with at-risk learners.
According to Patten (2001:1), a national survey conducted in the United States of America in 1994 found that the Americans considered “good teachers” to be the key factor that makes some schools successful. In this regard, Patten (2001:1) found that learners who were taught by the most effective or “good” teachers for several years learned more and consequently scored significantly higher on state-wide assessments than those assigned to the ineffective teachers during the same period. This led Patten (2001:1) to conclude that, “nothing can compensate for a poorly trained teacher.” It would seem that a fundamental precondition for enhancing learner achievement is to have well-trained teachers who are knowledgeable in their subject areas and effective in instructional delivery.

In the light of the above, there is a need to ensure that teachers are in a good position where they are professionally and psychologically attuned to provide quality teaching in schools. Quality teaching has been identified as the salient predictive indicator of learner achievement, which accounts for more of the variation in learner achievement than any other factor (Iowa Association of School Boards 2002:3; College of Education and Human Development – University of Minnesota 2001:1). According to the College of Education and Human Development – University of Minnesota (2001:1), the chief determinants of quality teaching are (1) teacher knowledge, (2) level of education and (3) teaching a subject of specialisation. In the context of Lesotho, it would seem that to improve the quality of teaching, there is a need to invest more in improving the professional efficiency or competencies of teachers at all levels and to create opportunities for them to access information and knowledge. This initiative could contribute to the improvement of the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

In Lesotho, the duties of teachers are wide ranging and include the core business of instruction delivery, looking after the welfare of learners, the upkeep of schools, and performing any other duties assigned to them by the principals. In terms of Section 24(2) of the Teaching Service Regulations 2002, a teacher can be assigned to take part in any...
matter affecting the general work and welfare of the school, including extracurricular activities. In view of the core roles they perform, teachers do not want to be pushed to the periphery of school administrative matters. In a study of management problems and possible solutions in state-aided schools in South Africa, Knott (1995:266) found that teachers “are also of the opinion that they should be involved in all areas of school management.” It would appear that a participatory style of management, which ensures that teachers are involved in decision-making, is bi-directionally linked to teacher motivation and effectiveness as it promotes a sense of ownership of the school vision and aims.

2.9.1 Teacher quality indicators

With regard to quality indicators in respect of teacher supply, the proportion of qualified staff has improved significantly from 83.9% in 1998 to 89.3% in 2001 (Ministry of Education 2000b:31; 2003:60). With respect to the policy of localisation of staff, some improvements have been recorded with the percentage of expatriate teachers dropping from 17% in 1996 to 11.4% in 2001 (Ministry of Education 1998a:26; 2003:76). However, a negative development in recent years is the proliferation of illegal private schools, particularly in towns. This development is largely linked to expatriate teachers. This could therefore mean that the drop in expatriate teachers recorded only pertains to public schools for which there is documented data, while in actual fact non-local teachers could still be practising within the secondary system, but in private schools.

An analysis of the 2001 education statistics reveals that out of a total of 3,290 teachers in the secondary sector in 2001, 2,685 (81.6%) were qualified to teach at either junior or senior secondary school level (Ministry of Education 2003:76). Of the teachers, 1,787 (54.3%) held degree qualifications, which normally qualify them to teach at senior secondary level. For a developing, low-income country such as Lesotho, this staff complement is remarkable. In this respect, the general poor performance of schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations cannot conclusively be attributed to a general shortage of qualified teachers. However, of a total of 3,290 teachers, only 529
(16.1%) held degree science qualifications, 406 (12.3%) of whom were local and 123 (3.7%) expatriate; 1,057 (32.1%) local teachers and 201 (6.1%) expatriate teachers held non-science degree qualifications.

In 2001, altogether 898 (27.3%) teachers held the Secondary Teachers’ Certificates or equivalent qualifications, which qualified them to teach at junior secondary level. It should be clarified, however, that teachers with mostly university science diploma qualifications still teach at senior secondary level. Of the 898 junior secondary school level teachers, 227 (6.9%) local teachers and 13 (0.4%) expatriate teachers held science qualifications, while 630 (19.1%) local teachers and 28 (0.9 %) expatriate teachers held non-science qualifications.

The Ministry of Education (2003:76) indicates that in 2001, there were 605 (18.4%) teachers who were unqualified to teach at secondary level. Of these, 192 (5.8%) teachers held the old higher primary certificates and Cambridge Overseas School Certificates only, and these qualified them to teach at primary school. Of the teachers, 413 (12.6%) were classified as unqualified, probably because they possessed the Cambridge Overseas School Certificates only, without any teachers’ qualifications.

Although Lesotho has a large proportion of qualified secondary school teachers, a closer examination reveals that their specialisations are skewed, with a very small fraction in science subjects and a much larger proportion in non-science subjects. It is disturbing that in 2001, only 756 (23%) of the total number of secondary school teachers were qualified local science teachers. This could perhaps explain the poor performance of the vast majority of learners in mathematics and science subjects in the Junior Certificate and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. This raises the question of what the factors are that cause the poor performance of learners in mathematics and science-based subjects in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in Lesotho.
2.9.2 Teacher motivation and effectiveness

In 1992, the Ministry of Education (1992:30) stated that the secondary sector suffered from a high attrition rate. Halliday (1989:96) stressed that the phenomenon of teacher wastage is higher among secondary school teachers, particularly graduates, than primary school teachers. A possible explanation for this is that graduate teachers possess saleable skills. High attrition could be related to some motivational factors that determine of staff morale, staff productivity and output. One strong contributory factor to the poor performance of learners in the examinations in Lesotho is the low teacher morale caused by a lack of supervision, unsettled situations in which teachers work and unsatisfactory remuneration, among other things.

Over the years, the government has tried to improve the service conditions for teachers to equal those of civil servants by revising and restructuring their remuneration packages (Ministry of Education 1998a:35). The salary adjustment and increments introduced in 1994 for public servants favoured teachers, in that their salaries are now higher than their counterparts in the same salary grade in the civil service by a differential of 5% (Ministry of Education 1998a:35). Another development in the improvement of the conditions of service for teachers was the introduction of teachers’ pensions, following the enactment of the Teachers’ Pensions Act in 1994, which came into effect in 1998 (Ministry of Education 1996:14; 2000:39). In the secondary school sector, a major breakthrough was the reorganisation of the career structure, which culminated in the establishment of the post of head of department, a middle management position organised according to a group of subject specialisations (Ministry of Education 1998a:35). The latest development in salary adjustment was the upgrading of all degree holders in the public service, including teachers, from Grade 8 to Grade 10, starting from 1 April 2000 (Ministry of Public Service, Circular Notice No. 8 of 2000).

In the light of the above, teachers’ productivity and motivation and improved Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examination results could be expected to increase. However, the problem of low teacher morale persists. For example, in 2001, the Lesotho
Association of Teachers was engaged in extensive negotiations with the government, demanding a salary increase of 20%, to cushion the rising inflation rate and cost of living (The Sun 24 October 2001:2). Although the teachers’ grievances may be valid, this creates the impression that a good salary is a necessary but not a sufficient motivator. In this regard, strong school leadership capable of creating a positive and stimulating work-relevant environment could be an imperative for boosting the morale of teachers, and improving the academic performance of a school. The problems with teaching, however, include limited chances of career advancement, untenable working conditions, and a lack of fringe benefits enjoyed by the civil servants. It can be deduced that these conditions continue to trigger teacher turnover and attrition. This raises the question of what can be done to boost and sustain teachers’ morale to ensure that they become effective and stay in the teaching service.

2.9.3 School-based professional support to teachers

Over the years the weakness of the Lesotho secondary sector was reported to reside in the lack of a powerful local professional support to teachers. In this regard, the Secondary Schools Project was started in 1986 with the aim of providing professional support to teachers in the core subjects of English, science and mathematics (Ministry of Education 1992:76). According to the Ministry of Education (1998:27), the Secondary Schools Project was phased out in 1993 and succeeded by the Secondary Education Support Project in 1995. Currently (2003), the Secondary Education Support Project is operating fully in the four lowland districts of Leribe, Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale’s Hoek, with one Area Management Advisor in the mountain district of Qacha’s Nek. The Project has been heightened by employing five Area Management Advisors, who provide support to principals and deputy principals in administrative and management issues.

As mentioned earlier, there are no significant improvements in the weak school management, low teacher morale and the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in general and in the core subjects of mathematics, science and English in particular. Hence, it is questionable whether the
Area Management Advisors (school management advisors) and the Area Resource Advisors (subject advisors) really get to the bottom of the administrative and instructional needs of school principals and teachers. The question, then, is whether the support provided by the Area Management Advisors and the Area Resource Advisors has sufficient impact on the work of school principals and teachers.

2.10 SCHOOL-BASED FACTORS THAT AFFECT PERFORMANCE

This section will look specifically at school effects and unpack the practical issues that occur at school level to determine how these affect the teaching-learning activities.

2.10.1 Instructional time use

Among the factors that reduce the teaching-learning time in Lesotho secondary schools are the numerous extracurricular activities, which often interfere with the teaching-learning schedules. These include the sporting activities held at school, interschool, sub-zone, zone and national levels. Numerous tests have also been reported to take a considerable amount of teacher and learner time (Ministry of Education 1998a:27). To date, the extracurricular activities, poor timing of tests, teacher tardiness and teacher absenteeism still constitute significant time wasters, especially given that the system is already hamstrung by the school calendar, which has only 180 working days per year. In this way, time wasting and failure to recognise the value of classroom time can be considered another contributory factor to the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

2.10.2 School admission policies

A frustrating issue in Lesotho is the very strict admission policies of the high-performing schools. Moeletsi oa Basotho (25 February 2001:2) reports that it is disconcerting that many learners who have completed the Primary School Leaving Examinations and Junior Certificate Examinations fail to gain admission to schools. For example, on Parents’ Day
on 21 April 2001 at Lesotho High School, one of the high-performing schools in the
country, the principal reported that they had received 1,040 applications for Form A for
2001, yet were able to admit only 200 learners due to the limited number of places
available. Many of the learners who had been refused admission had obtained good first
class passes.

There is a strong correlation between a school’s admission policy for Form A and Form
D learners and its overall performance in the Junior Certificate and Cambridge Overseas
School Certificate examinations. The schools with stricter admission policies have been
found to show better results in the Junior Certificate and Cambridge Overseas School
Certificate examinations (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture 1984: 17). In their
study, Lefoka and Polaki (1997:7) found that in order to be admitted to Form D of most
high-performing schools, a learner must obtain a first or second class pass. Lefoka and
Polaki (1997:8) maintain that the rush to “good” schools renders some secondary schools
with no option but to admit poor quality learners who could not meet the admission
criteria of the popular schools. Dealing with learners who have been turned down by
many schools must be frustrating to both teachers and learners as they usually fail to meet
the required academic standard. From this, then, it can be concluded that the use of public
examinations as a selection instrument works against learners from disadvantaged
backgrounds, with poor facilities, and social environments that are generally not learner-
friendly. With reference to the problem statement, the question is to what extent a
school’s admission policy affects the quality of its examination results.

2.11 SUMMARY

This chapter probed the history of education in Lesotho and established that since its
introduction in 1838 by the missionaries, the state and church have controlled Western
education in partnership. This joint control remains and it seems unlikely that the
government will take over the church schools in the near future. Excessive school
expansion, driven by competition between the churches and the local communities,
threatens the secondary education system. Currently, the malaise in secondary education
as indicated by the poor performance of the majority of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is linked to weak macro and micro level management, a lack of a strong work ethic amongst teachers, dysfunctional or a lack of mostly specialised facilities, inadequate educational materials and a shortage of science and mathematics teachers. The decoupling in church-state relations is one of the causes of poor education delivery. The literature review led to the conclusion that the government’s acquiescent stance and a lack of firm control over the education system, to some extent, impinge on educational quality and poses other related problems.

The conditions under which secondary education takes place in Lesotho and factors that impact on education service delivery, and subsequently influence the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, were also discussed. Chapter 3 focuses on the international perspective of school effectiveness literature, with particular reference to the school-based factors that influence learner achievement.
CHAPTER 3

A REVIEW OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS LITERATURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been growing interest among educational researchers in the twin research fields of school effectiveness and school improvement, precipitated by the quest to investigate the factors that account for variances in academic performance between learners and schools. The educational community has been concerned with the question of why schools with initially comparable inputs and learner intakes differed in the extent to which they performed in the national examinations.

Wilson and Fergus (1988:56) state that over the years, under the rubric of the Effective-Schools Research Movement, schools have been attempting to answer the question: who should be blamed for the failure of learners in examinations? In trying to answer this question, school principals, teachers, learners and parents have been blamed (Wilson & Fergus 1988:56). Thus, in discussing school effectiveness, the school principals, teachers, learners and parents are considered the units of analysis.

In this chapter the researcher will review literature on school effectiveness, focusing particularly on the issue of school management. The influence of different factors on the effectiveness and efficiency of the school will be assessed, using the input-process-output model. The deconstruction of this model indicates that there is no single factor that exclusively accounts for the between-school variance in learner achievement. Rather, the review demonstrates that the effectiveness of a school is enhanced by multiple factors, which operate at different levels in an interactive framework. In line with the current school effectiveness theory, a case could be made that effective school principals are most instrumental in setting a success-oriented school climate since they operate at the core of the education enterprise.
3.2 WHAT IS SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS?

In recent years, school effectiveness research and discourse have attracted attention from educational researchers, teachers, parents, Ministry of Education officials, politicians and donor agencies such as the World Bank. In view of the different backgrounds, orientations and goals of these divergent groups, it is difficult to arrive at a common and universal definition of the concept *school effectiveness*. There is no consensus on what constitutes school effectiveness and the standard indicators that can be applied universally in measuring the effectiveness of a school or an education system.

Bennett (1997:68) and Scheerens (1999:39) argue that effectiveness measures how well the desired outcomes have been achieved when compared with the initial aims or intentions. Stoll (1996:52) and Cheng (1996:13) define school effectiveness as the capacity of the school to maximise its functions, productivity, or the outcomes when given a fixed amount of inputs. Sweetland and Hoy (2000:711) contend that effective schools promote learning and high achievement levels of learners. It would seem therefore that a school is judged effective if it enhances not only learner productivity, but also teacher productivity. Dimmock (2000:7) maintains that effective schools are effective for all their learners regardless of gender, ethnicity, ability, age or prior achievement. This implies that an effective school is one that provides effective teaching, creates enabling institutional conditions to optimise student learning, and increases the chances of all its learners to experience academic success. The effectiveness of a school could also be judged by its ability to inculcate social values, such as social harmony or good citizenship, democratic principles and humanity or humanness in its learners.

Bennett (1997:68) argues that if one intended to achieve improved results and succeeded in that action, then the action or factors that helped to improve the results “would be effective against that goal.” Effectiveness is thus concerned with the action or the question of “how” the work is done. Thus, the focus of effectiveness is on the mode of system delivery, mechanics, designs and structures used to achieve the organisational goals. In this sense, Creemers (1996:25) and Bot (1999:1) emphasise that school
(educational) effectiveness is seen as an integral theory about the entire education service delivery, which takes into account the inputs, processes and contexts in which education takes place, and assesses how these affect the educational outcomes. Thus, a balanced assessment of school effectiveness should try to determine how the inputs, processes and contexts influence the functioning of the school, how they promote classroom teaching and learning, and eventually affect the learner outcomes.

According to Hoy and Miskel (1991:375) and Harris (1989:71), organisational goals are the desired changes in the organisation, which reflect the intentions of a school as an organisation. Hoy and Miskel (1991:375) argue that goals provide direction and reduce uncertainty for members of an organisation and present standards for assessment of the organisation. Thus, the organisational goals could be interpreted as the desired ends of the organisational process and could also serve as the road map to check whether the school is still on course. The concept organisational goal is also related to the concepts: outputs and outcomes.

Windham (1988:583) and Fitz-Gibbon (1998:154) distinguish between the terms outputs and outcomes. In their view, the outputs are the direct and immediate effects of the educational process such as the examination results, cognitive achievement, attitudinal changes, and behavioural changes. Outcomes, on the other hand, represent the longer-term or less immediate results, such as employment and earnings, job and life satisfaction (Windham 1988:583; Scheerens 1999:38). The organisational goals only represent the intentions of the organisation while the educational outcomes are the actual results of an educational process. The organisational goals are useful in the sense that they guide the educational process or the process of teaching and learning, whilst the educational outcomes are the measures of whether organisational goals have been achieved.

The concept effectiveness is related to efficiency to the extent that in casual talk some lay people use the two interchangeably, although they differ. According to Pennycuick (1998:2), efficiency refers to a ratio between inputs and outputs. In this regard, Windham (1988:577) maintains that efficiency would exist where “the value of all outputs is
maximized for a given cost of all inputs or where the cost of all inputs is minimized for a
given value of all inputs.” Thus, a school could be considered to be efficient if the
resource inputs, such as classrooms, physical facilities, equipment and teachers’ salaries,
are not increased but the examination results improve. If this occurred, it would mean that
there had been an increase in teacher productivity and learner productivity, and an
optimal use of the available resources. Pennycuick (1998:3) stresses that when the
resources available are limited, those resources should be put to the optimal use in
promoting society’s objectives. This implies that teachers should make the most of the
limited educational resources available at their school by using them efficiently and
productively, in order to ensure that quality teaching and learning occur.

school effectiveness underscores the fact that certain factors at different levels, such as
the student, classroom, school and contextual level, influence the educational outcomes.
The context level would relate to the guiding philosophy, national policies and
mechanisms that the government puts in place to ensure that an education system is run
effectively (Creemers et al. 2000:286).

The school level would relate to the management capacity, the local conditions, the
Creemers et al. (2000:286) maintain that the school level factors, such as the school
climate and school leadership, are meaningless if they are not linked to the classroom
factors or the process of teaching and learning. This implies that the school level factors
should create a climate that is conducive to the effective process of teaching and learning.
Thus, the key role of the principal becomes to synchronise different components and
activities of the school, to coordinate the work of different departments, to supervise
teachers so as to ensure that quality teaching and learning go on, and to see to it that there
is enough time or opportunity for learners to learn.

The classroom level would take into consideration the teachers’ abilities in classroom
management, and factors that lead to quality instruction, such as explicitness and clarity
of content, and the giving of corrective instruction to learners, which determine the outcomes of education (Creemers 1996:50; Creemers et al. 2000:286). In this regard, Reynolds and Teddie (2000:146) emphasise that the learning level or classroom level is the most important of all the levels as it determines the quality of school outcomes. By implication, it is vital that a high standard of teacher effectiveness or professional efficiency should be maintained as it is the key imperative for improving the academic achievement of learners.

According to Creemers (1996:50) and Creemers et al. (2000:286), the student level would relate to factors such as the learners’ background, motivation and aptitude to learn, and time on task, which is the time learners actually spend on learning. The central argument is that learner motivation is an imperative for and a driver of improved academic achievement, in the sense that it is the sustained motivation that drives learners to develop a sense of commitment and a sense of urgency in their learning.

3.2.1 Measuring school effectiveness

The traditional method that has been used over the years to measure school effectiveness is to compare high-performing schools with low-performing ones, working in completely different contexts and dealing with learners of different academic abilities and from different backgrounds. Reynolds, Teddie, Creemers, Scheerens and Townsend (2000:4) state that in the past, the examination results or academic achievement on standardised tests were seen as the only yardstick for determining the effectiveness of a school. In 1988 Wilson and Fergus (1988:56) affirmed that the standard indicator used to judge school effectiveness had been the test scores or the examination results.

In recent years, there has been a gradual shift from an examination-oriented criterion towards a value-added qualitative approach, which focuses on the capacity of an individual school to promote learner progress and to add value to the learner’s initial attributes (Creemers 1996:23; Saunders 2001:490). Drever (1991:5) holds that effectiveness can be judged by the product, and the ultimate product of schooling is the
“value added,” which represents what learners have gained from years spent in school. Drever stresses that in cognitive performance, learners should experience high achievement consistent with their potential. Furthermore, Drever (1991:5) contends that schools should also develop other qualities in learners that bridge the cognitive with the affective areas, such as a positive self-image, good self-discipline and problem-solving skills, and produce learners that are adaptable, enterprising and employable. At the core of the value-added approach is the quality of the individual learner that the school has produced. Thus, rather than generalising the academic performance of a school by looking at its aggregate score on the national examinations, the value-added approach particularises academic performance by looking at the value added by the school to the initial ability of the individual learner.

The key tenet of school effectiveness is to take into account the initial intake of learners and seek to establish how much of the “variance” between schools can be attributed directly to the individual school (Harber & Davies 1997:26). Dimmock (2000:108) maintains that the “quality of a school is best judged by the value added by school-related factors to student learning between entry to and exit from school.” This approach tries to determine whether the school factors, such as the quality of teaching, school management and school climate, have added value to the achievement levels of learners from the time when they first joined a school, and the time when they completed. This shift in orientation is the result of the recognition that schools, particularly secondary schools in the context of Lesotho, do not admit or select uniform intakes of learners who have completed the Primary School Leaving Examinations.

Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1997:177), and Teddlie, Stringfield and Reynolds (2000:166) found that some secondary schools select learners with high levels of prior academic achievement in primary schools, living in learner-friendly social environments, and a large proportion of learners who come from higher socio-economic status families while others predominantly admit low-achievers coming from socio-economically disadvantaged family backgrounds and social environments. This implies that, to a large extent, the different performance of schools in the national examinations has already been
predetermined by the unequal social and educational advantages of learners. Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1997:177) argue that in more effective schools learners perform better than expected while in the less effective ones, they perform worse than expected, given their characteristics at intake. In terms of this study, the question is to what extent Lesotho secondary schools improve the achievement levels of their learners admitted in Form A.

Harber and Davies (1997:26) critique the use of “league tables,” similar to those used in ranking football scores, in view of the fact that they rank schools only on academic results. Karsten, Visscher and De Jong (2001:232) point out that in England these tables were used by the Conservative Government to create a “market” or competition in the education system. It was assumed that the publication of the academic results of schools or “league tables” would enhance school choice and subsequently improve the academic performance of all the schools. The rationale for the publication of the examination results was that it would give parents and children an opportunity to choose the high-performing schools and so, to remain in the academic competition for more able learners, schools would have to improve their academic results. Even though the use of “league tables” may be a well-intentioned strategy to heighten the academic competition between schools, it masks the fact that schools differ in respect of the contexts or conditions under which teaching and learning occur, the socio-economic and prior achievement factors of learners. In this regard, Stoll and Mortimore (1997:10) maintain that a comparison of schools which does not take into account the different contexts and different prior achievement levels of learners, is like comparing apples with oranges. Stoll and Mortimore (1997:10) conclude that unless “schools are compared on a ‘like with like’ basis, judgements are neither fair nor valid.”

Saunders (2001:489-490) upholds the use of the national value-added system that was instituted in England in 1998, which reflects the progress of learners of an individual school against the national picture, based on the publication of national examination results. Saunders (2001:490) emphasises that the sole use of the examinations results is not a reliable way of assessing the school’s performance. Dimmock (2000:108) and
Saunders (2001:490) hold that this is because learners’ achievements or their examination results reveal more about the socio-economic background factors and the individual ability of the learners than about the school performance. In this respect, Saunders (2001:489-490) emphasises that the value-added measurement seeks to untangle or discount factors tied into the learners’ achievement, but are unrelated to institutional quality, such as socio-economic status, prior academic attainment and ethnic group. The crux of the argument is that a high academic score on the national examinations cannot be attributed to the effectiveness of an individual school. Instead, learner achievement in the national examinations represents a cumulative effect of several factors, including those outside the school influence, such as the socio-economic status of learners’ families and the prior academic achievement of learners in the lower educational levels. Thus, the main objective of school effectiveness research is to explain the interaction and manipulation of the school inputs and processes as well as how these affect the educational outcomes. In this regard, Windham (1988:629) maintains that by altering inputs and processes, educational outputs can be altered.

3.2.2 Some indicators of school effectiveness

The sole use of the academic performance of learners in the tests or national examinations provides only a fractional picture of the overall school effectiveness. Hence, in order to present a holistic picture, there is a need for a multifaceted, integrated and coordinated approach when determining the effectiveness of a school. Such an integrated approach may include other social goals like the quality of life lived by teachers and learners at school, or the positive interpersonal relations between principals, teachers and learners, the quality of teaching, and the integration of the democratic principles in the operations of a school.

3.2.2.1 Quality of life indicators

Rossman, Corbett and Firestone (1988:139) and Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan (2000:263) maintain that a criterion such as the school’s average score on the national examination
should be used alongside non-achievement outcomes such as citizenship roles that the school prepares its learners for, and the quality-of-life at school. Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan (2000:263) emphasise that “life here-and-now should be at least tolerable and its quality should not always be sacrificed to the attainment of distant goals.” This underpins the fact that creating and sustaining good and effective working relations at school amongst both teachers and learners is a fundamental condition and an imperative for effective teaching and learning. This implies that unless a congenial school climate prevails, teaching may not be effective and learning may become a dull and unexciting experience for learners.

Rossman et al. (1988:139) contend that the use of a quality-of-life criterion, which focuses on how decent, harmonious and productive relations are between principals, teachers and learners in their daily interactions, is a crucial indicator of school effectiveness. Since principals, teachers and learners spend a great deal of their time working together at school, the expectation is that their relationships should be congenial and amenable to effective school management, effective teaching and effective learning.

The concept of the quality-of-life discussed above is related to Erasmus and Van der Westhuizen’s (1996:225) concept of the quality of working life. According to Erasmus and Van der Westhuizen (1996:225), the quality of working life implies that there should be the humanisation and democratisation of work in order to enhance the involvement and participation of all the members of the organisation in the decisions that concern their work. It is contended that this co-involvement promotes a sense of co-ownership, responsibility and respect, and, by implication, enhances the motivation and productivity of teachers. With reference to the problem statement of this study, the question is what the impact of the positive or negative interpersonal relations between principals, teachers and learners is on the effective functioning of secondary schools in Lesotho.
3.2.2.2 Teaching quality

Another factor that should be taken as a general criterion of school effectiveness is the quality of teaching, which should be good, creative, and responsive according to Rossman et al. (1988:139) and Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob (1993:13). Creative teaching helps to foster a learning-conducive climate requisite for effective learning as well as promote an ethos of respect for everyone in the school (Rossman et al. 1988:139; Creemers 1996:42). A high level of professionalism creates a stimulating, vibrant work environment for teachers and learners (Rossman et al. 1988:139; Mortimore et al. 1993:13). This indicator highlights the view that quality teaching rests on effective teachers who know how to create a non-threatening classroom atmosphere that is conducive to effective learning. By implication, this underscores the fact that successful learning hinges on the effectiveness and quality of teachers who have the necessary professional qualifications and experience. Thus, a case could be made that no matter how effective the school principal is, if teachers are not effective, student learning will not be successful. In this regard, it can be argued that as much as pre-service training is imperative for teacher efficiency, the school principal can also play a central role in improving the competencies of teachers by providing professional support and supervision.

3.2.2.3 Integration of democratic principles

Another major goal of effective schools is currently to promote and consolidate the principles of democracy amongst learners. This is in keeping with global trends, which emphasise the need for recognition and respect for human rights and the involvement of all the stakeholders in decision-making and work processes. The key argument here is that learners should be afforded an opportunity to take responsibility for their learning and other extracurricular activities of the school, by making choices and incorporating these in the rules of the school. In this respect, Harber and Trafford (1999:45) highlight the importance of democratic principles in enhancing school effectiveness, and argue that in effective schools, learners are involved in the life of the school. This implies that in
effective schools where democratic principles have been integrated, learners are involved in the structures that deal with the administration of their academic and social affairs, such as monitoring study, the oversight of sports and entertainment, cleaning, and maintenance of order and discipline.

In schools where learners take full responsibility for their learning and welfare, the chances are that their academic achievement will be enhanced because they are the ones who determine what is in their best interests at a given time. Heystek (2001:209) and Harber and Muthukrishna (2000:426) argue that the representation and participation of learners on the school governing bodies and in the general life of the school is intended to integrate the democratic principles, which are a precondition for an ordered life at school. By implication, the prevalence of a culture of democracy, characterised by respect for the rights of others, tolerance and humanness, provides an ideal institutional milieu requisite for cohesion amongst principals, teachers and learners. In the same vein, this school climate is ideal for promoting teacher and learner productivity.

According to Harber and Trafford (1999:45), effective schools use individualised and cooperative learning strategies that are learner-centred. Harber and Trafford (1999:45) maintain that more effective schools use the core democratic principles of tolerance, inclusiveness, cooperation, respect for the rights of others, freedom of expression of views, valuing equity and equality, and the opportunity for learners to make their judgments and choices. It could be argued that a culture of human rights in schools provides a free and congenial school climate that enables productive learning and optimises the academic school success. With reference to the problem statement of this study, the question is to what extent the integration of the democratic principles would contribute to the improvement of the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in Lesotho secondary schools.
3.2.3 Some models used in school effectiveness

In researching school effectiveness, Cameron (1984) developed several school-based models to determine school effectiveness, which were adapted by Cheng (1996:18-27). These models are an attempt to locate the discussion and analysis of school effectiveness in the proper perspective. They could be regarded as the different lenses through which school effectiveness can be viewed. The models state that school effectiveness exists if certain given criteria have been satisfied. According to Cheng (1996:18-25), all the models discussed below were developed in 1984 by Cameron.

3.2.3.1 The goal model

According to this model, a school can be considered effective if it is able to achieve its stated goals with the available resources (Cheng 1996:20). Cheng (1996:20), Sheppard (1998:79) and Dimmock (2000:111) concur that these goals must be specific, time-bound, realistic, measurable, challenging and achievable. Cheng (1996:20) holds that although the organisational goals in a school may be as wide and divergent as the constituencies, namely teachers, learners, parents and employers, the achievement of learners in the public examinations is still a common denominator or common “currency” for measuring school effectiveness. According to Dimmock (2000:2), this is because the main enterprise or the core business of schools is to teach and to ensure that learners learn, therefore the quality of a school can best be judged by the quality of teaching and learning.

3.2.3.2 The resource-input model

Cheng (1996:20) and Dimmock (2000:32) contend that the resources like the quality of learner intake, facilities, financial support and the quality of teachers are the fundamental requisites for school functioning, which are critical to the academic success of learners. Therefore, a school is effective to the extent that it is able to competitively acquire these needed scarce and valued resources from diverse sources, such as the government and
other external agencies (Cheng 1996:20). According to Dimmock (2000:32), this is because an adequate distribution of material and financial resources is a necessary condition, which enables teaching and learning goals and outcomes to be achieved.

3.2.3.3 The process model

This model regards a school as an institution where the education production activity takes place therefore a sound and healthy internal functioning, or work-oriented atmosphere at school represents school effectiveness (Cheng 1996:21). Mentz (1996:125-126) states that the maintenance of sound relationships among the principal, teachers, learners and parents in a school enables and enhances the productivity of both teachers and learners. According to Cheng (1996:21), the quality of a school process, namely the school management, teaching process and learning process, determines the quality of output. Cheng (1996:21) goes on to say that in today’s society that is democracy-bent, involvement, communication channels and the creation of a school ethos that recognises human rights, are some of the key indicators of effectiveness.

3.2.3.4 The satisfaction model

The satisfaction model states that a school has multiple powerful constituencies with different expectations, and it is difficult to satisfy all their varied expectations with the school’s limited resources (Cheng 1996:22). Therefore, the minimal satisfaction of the powerful and strategic constituencies, such as principals, teachers, learners, parents and education authorities, is an indicator of the effectiveness of a school (Cheng 1996:22). Cheng (1996:22) argues that currently there is an emphasis on quality education, and this is closely linked to the satisfaction of the customers’ or clients’ needs. Davies and West-Burnham (1997:4) are of the opinion that the customers should be the ones who “dictate what they want, when they want it and how they want it to pay for it.” By implication, the school should customise its “product” or delivery to suit the needs of its “customers,” namely learners and parents, because its survival depends on their continued support.
3.2.3.5 The legitimacy model

This model assumes that the survival of schools is threatened by an increasing number of environmental factors, the competition for scarce resources and the need to respond to the demands for accountability and “value for money” (Cheng 1996:23). Davies and West-Burnham (1997:5) add that due to the intensified competition between organisations, good performers drive out the inferior on the basis of the following factors: the highest quality, the best service, and the lowest prices. Therefore, to enhance their longevity and to avoid being eliminated from the competition, schools have to earn the legitimacy or mandate of the public by showing accountability and meeting the requirements of the community (Cheng 1996:23; Sheppard 1998:80). It would seem, then, that to win the support and legitimacy of the strategic constituencies, such as learners, parents, the state and donor agencies, the school should produce good academic results.

3.2.3.6 The organisational learning model

Cheng (1996:25) states that the organisational learning model assumes that the environmental changes and internal barriers impact on the school functioning, and a school can be considered effective if it can learn how to improve and adapt to its environment and reduce the internal barriers. Morley and Rassool (1999:83) emphasise that the concept of the learning organisation involves seeking to understand the culture, work processes and environment of the organisation so as to identify problems in order to self-correct and change the ways of thinking and acting. In this respect, Norris, Barnett, Basom and Yerkes (2002:27) maintain that learning organisations never “fully arrive,” they keep on learning, searching for new possibilities and opportunities for growth. Morley and Rassool (1999:83) hold that all those within a school should be committed to the goal of lifelong learning because this is critical to the academic performance of schools.

The discussion of these models unpacks and locates the broad and elusive concept of school effectiveness in different perspectives, and provides a framework that guides an
understanding of this concept. These models can be considered the different lenses through which the broad concept of school effectiveness can be viewed. The discussion of these models also sheds light on the analysis of school effectiveness, particularly with reference to the school-based indicators of effectiveness. In addition, the models can assist school principals and teachers to have an expanded view of school effectiveness and as a result to develop comprehensive school improvement strategies that can deal with the multiple goals of the divergent strategic constituencies.

In Lesotho, there is an excessive number of secondary schools and this means that they are confronted with a number of threats and challenges. These threats and challenges include a lack of adequate facilities, a shortage of mathematics and science teachers, a lack of teacher motivation, dealing with a majority of poor quality learners from primary schools, and the public pressure on schools to improve the examination results. These factors require the school principals to be effective and adaptable, and to keep on learning new strategies that would improve the effectiveness of their schools. In the light of this study, the question is to what extent Lesotho secondary school principals meet the academic expectations of the strategic constituencies, such as learners, parents and the government.

3.1.5 The historical analysis of school effectiveness research

The first school effectiveness research was conducted by James Coleman (1966) in the United States (Jansen 1995:181; Reynolds et al. 2000:3). Lee (2002:1) states that Coleman (1966) and his team of researchers surveyed teachers, learners and principals in about 4 000 schools. The physical facilities, staffing characteristics and learner background characteristics of the schools were probed (Jansen 1995:182; Reynolds et al. 2000:3). The Coleman study culminated in a publication, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* otherwise known as the Coleman Report (Cohn & Rossmiller 1987:377; Teddlie 2000:78-79). According to Teddlie (2000:78-79), a similar study was conducted in the United Kingdom, which culminated in the Plowden Report (1967). These two studies, though conducted in different countries, both found that the chief determinant of
learner achievement did not lie within the schools themselves. Instead, the socio-economic background characteristics or home effects were found to have a stronger influence on student learning and academic school success than the school characteristics and to account for the variance in learner achievement (Jansen 1995:182; Lee 2002:1; Reynolds et al. 2000:4). Wilson and Fergus (1988:54) state that the factors outside school, such as the learners’ home background and social environment factors, were considered powerful “determinants of whether or not the child will do well in school.”

Coleman (in Stedman 1985:300) essentially perceived schools as passive conduits that could do little to change the disadvantages of poverty: “For most minority groups, then, and, most particularly the Negro, schools provide no opportunity at all for them to overcome this initial deficiency; in fact, they fall farther behind the white majority in the development of several skills which are critical to making a living and participating fully in modern society.”

In view of the above, it would seem that what was considered to influence educational success and academic achievement most was the dowry that the learner came to school with and not the within-school factors. In this way, the child’s success or failure in school was predetermined by and thus could be traced and connected to his or her socio-economic background factors (Teddle 2000:78-79). Jansen (1995:182) points out that it was research findings such as this, from the late 1960s, that motivated educational researchers to conduct various studies on the question: “Do schools matter?” In the light of the problem statement of this study, the question is what teachers and principals can do to compensate for the academic deficiencies suffered in the learners’ homes. However, considering the home background factors alone as the determinants of the academic success of learners does not give a holistic picture. This also tends to downplay the fact that the core function of the school is to teach and to ensure that all learners experience academic success, which, in turn, is a product of alterable factors such as principals’ strong leadership, teacher effectiveness, a productive school culture and the active involvement of parents in the education of their children.
3.2.5 Why is there an intensified demand for school effectiveness?

According to Fertig (2000:389) and Seyfarth (1996:10), the financiers of education, such as the taxpayers, the state, parents and politicians, and the introduction of structural adjustment programmes in many developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, from 1980 onwards, demand efficiency in the use of the resources allocated to education or “value for money.” Fertig (2000:389) argues that structural adjustment is often identified with the economic policies that attempt to correct imbalances in foreign accounts and government deficits, and the deregulation and privatisation of major sectors of the national economy. Fischman (1998:191) likewise states that the overall aim of structural adjustment programmes is to reduce the size of fiscal deficits and of public expenditure of debtor countries. Thus, structural adjustment can be interpreted as the cost containment mechanism introduced mainly by donor agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to mostly developing countries in order to manage their economies and public services cost-effectively. Ilon (in Fertig 2000:389) maintains that structural adjustment is a process “whereby the national economy is adjusting to a global market.”

Fertig (2000:389) indicates that the increased access to capital offered to countries through structural adjustment programmes often come with externally determined conditions, which tend to displace the national autonomy and control. When such cost-cutting measures are introduced to a country, the education sector is also affected. When principals and teachers operate under such economic austerity, the implication is that their central responsibility should be to provide quality school management and teaching in order to ensure that education yields equitable payoffs to the investments made into it. In this regard, the overriding objective of school principals and teachers should be to meet the expectations of parents, employers, the state and the donor agencies.

In both developed and developing countries, financial investment in secondary education is critical to development as it contributes significantly to economic growth (Pennycuick 1998:2; Lewin & Caillods 2001:62). The argument is that investment in human capital or
in developing people’s knowledge and skills has high economic payoffs since economic skills attained through schooling are positively linked to increased labour productivity. Pennycuick (1998:2) maintains that from the private and public standpoint, the economic and social returns to spending on education are high compared to other investments. Thus, it can be argued that to address the problems of socio-economic inequalities and poverty and to accelerate the rate of socio-economic development, developing countries have to allocate adequate resources to education in order to improve the enrolments and academic achievement of learners in secondary schools. However, Lewin and Caillacds (2001:62) point out that poorly developed countries, such as Lesotho, which face most socio-economic problems and are more in need of socio-economic development, have the lowest enrolment rates in secondary education.

Accountability is another factor that is strongly linked to school effectiveness. If principals and teachers lack accountability, there can be little success in attempts to improve schools. Sweeney (2000:14) and Bush (1994:310) see accountability as the readiness and willingness of the organisational staff to accept responsibility for the outcomes produced, whether those outcomes are satisfactory or disappointing. In this way, accountability places the responsibility for school effectiveness and the academic success or failure of learners on the principals and teachers of an individual school, who should strive to become more productive. At the same time, parents are expected to accept accountability for their children’s education, by taking a keen interest in their learning, motivating them, and assisting them in their studies.

Sweeney (2000:15) states that accountability is largely a local affair, and quotes the superintendent of Sacramento City United School District, California in the United States, who emphasised in meetings with employees and community members: “We are responsible for the results we produce, and we want to be held accountable. There are no excuses. It is never the kids’ fault. If we do not get it done, we should be replaced.” This underscores a serious undertaking as it shifts the blame for failure from learners to teachers, and could serve as the driving force that propels teachers and, by implication, principals to increase their productivity. In this regard, Seyfarth (1999:103) adds that
teachers are accountable to parents and the children entrusted to them, who expect them to do their work in ethical, responsible and responsive ways in order to achieve the schooling outcomes. In the same way, parents should also work in collaboration with teachers in supporting their children’s learning and modelling their behaviour to enhance the learner productivity.

Accountability places a high premium on giving an account of outcomes. According to Bush (1994:310), in its simplest form, accountability advocates that teachers give an account of their work to those who have a legitimate right to know such as parents, the proprietor authorities, the government and society at large. Sweeney (2000:14) maintains that accountability “is a mindset; that mindset drives performance and performance drives results.” It can be concluded that without accountability as a driving force, the school staff could make little effort towards improving their delivery system and academic school outcomes.

Morley and Rassool (2000:169) maintain that teacher accountability shifts the onus for effective teaching to teachers though the state remains responsible for the allocation of resources, regulatory and monitoring roles. It would seem that the understanding is that teachers, as trained professionals, who are in daily interaction with learners, should employ the most effective ways of curriculum delivery and assessment of learners’ progress. In this respect, Harris (2000:87) indicates that the effective way of tackling underachievement is to target particular learners, based on factors such as ability and ethnicity, and to give such learners special academic support. Thus, to be effective in dealing with the problem of underachievement, schools should develop appropriate teaching and learning strategies that focus on the underachievers in an effort to deal with and remedy the issue. This raises the question of whether teachers in Lesotho understand the principles of accountability and are to be held accountable for the results of their schools, and refrain from shifting the blame for failure to learners.

In terms of this argument, the researcher is of the opinion that the crux of the continuing problem of the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School
Certificate examinations in Lesotho is the lack of a culture of accountability from the Ministry of Education down to principals and teachers at the school level, including parents, in some cases. In Lesotho there is a general lack of a strong built-in culture of accountability, characterised by demanding that principals and teachers should give an account of their professional practice, particularly with regard to the examination results. In the researcher’s view, to some degree, this lack of accountability currently contributes to the day-to-day malfunctioning of most secondary schools in Lesotho. Moreover, some parents do not provide academic-relevant support to their children for a variety of reasons, including low levels of parental education, poverty, and cultural or family practices and values that are not centred on education.

3.2.6 A paradigm shift in the search for what matters in schools: new directions

According to Wilson and Fergus (1988:54) and Reynolds et al. (2000:7), the Coleman (1966) findings triggered an upsurge in the quest to establish the correlates of school effectiveness. Wilson and Fergus (1988:54) and Reynolds et al. (2000:7) point out that Weber (1971) challenged Coleman’s assumption that out-of-school factors were the key determinants of school success and argued that schools had the capacity to add value to the initial attributes of learners at intake, or to improve the achievement levels of learners. According to Weber (in Wilson and Fergus 1988:54), an effective “inner-city school” was a non-selective school because it was attended by poor children and scored at the median, and had a low failure rate.

In the same way, Edmonds (1979:15) stated, “I measure our progress as a social order by our willingness to advance the equity interests of the least among us... . Inequity in American education derives first and foremost from our failure to educate the children of the poor.” This brings to the surface another indicator of school effectiveness, namely uplifting the poor or minority groups, to the extent where the variances in achievement caused by social inequalities could be reasonably tackled and reduced. According to Reynolds et al. (2000:10-11), from the equity point of view, school effectiveness is measured by enhancing the achievement levels of the poor children or the socio-
economically disadvantaged groups. With reference to this study, the question is to what extent Lesotho secondary schools are able to close the variances in achievement between the high socio-economic status and low socio-economic status learners, if there are any.

Edmonds (1979:15) upheld the view that “schools matter” and developed the five-factor model based on the following five key characteristics of “effective schools”:

- strong administrative leadership by the principal;
- school climate conducive to learning;
- high expectations for children’s achievement;
- clear instructional objectives for monitoring learner performance; and
- emphasis on basic skills.

Reynolds et al. (2000:10) hold that through the development of these factors, the Edmonds and his colleagues (1979) objective was not only to describe effective schools but also to create effective schools. Cohn and Rossmiller (1987:377) point out that by the mid-1980s, on the basis of these characteristics, researchers had discredited the belief that schools play an insignificant role in improving the achievement of learners.

Clark, Lotto and Astuto (1984:41) maintain that contemporary school effectiveness researchers are more prescriptive in their convictions that not only do schools matter, but that there are certain characteristics, which are associated with successful learner outcomes. In this respect, Stedman (1985:296) emphasised that research indicates that schools can make a difference and do more than simply “carry along” the inequalities of home and neighbourhood. Thus, there is a general belief that the characteristics of instructionally effective schools could be transferred to other contexts and work without much difficulty. In the light of this study, the question is to what degree principals and teachers in Lesotho secondary schools are aware that there are characteristics of effective schools that can be applied to their schools to improve practice.

In his study of Dutch low socio-economic status learners, Van der Werf (1997:432) established that schools with a higher level of achievement are effective schools for all
learners, even after taking into account the background characteristics of learners. This supports the assumption that schools do matter. The second element espoused by Van der Werf (1997:432) in his analysis is that disadvantaged children from low socio-economic status or marginalised ethnic groups, or with low levels of cognitive ability, who attend high-performing schools, perform better on academic outcomes than in low-performing schools. The reason for this could probably be sought in the fact that learners affect one another by their level of achievement, behavioural standards, their own expectations and the expectations of their teachers and parents. However, viewed exclusively from within the context of what makes for effective schools, socio-economically disadvantaged learners achieve badly in comparison with their classmates from favourable and learner-friendly home backgrounds or social environments (Van der Werf 1997:432). In other words, background characteristics do impact on learners’ achievement and schools equally have the internal capacity to improve learner achievement. This raises the question of what the impact of the home background factors is on the academic achievement of learners in Lesotho secondary schools.

The literature review affirms the assumption that learners’ home background has a significant impact on their learning and achievement outcomes. While the home situation undeniably influences school success outcomes, the literature also indicates that schools matter. Thus, it can be argued that while the between-school comparison is necessary in judging the effectiveness of a school, it is not sufficient in presenting a multifarious picture of school effectiveness since it focuses solely on the school’s ranking or score in the national examinations. This is probably so as the way a school is managed, the mechanics involved in a school organisation, and the effective social interactions amongst the school community, all play a significant role in determining the academic achievement of learners.

3.2.7 The main goals of early school effectiveness research

According to Cohn and Rossmiller (1987:377), early effectiveness research focused on three broad elements: clients, subject matter and equity. With regard to the clients or
clientele, the emphasis was on disadvantaged or educationally deprived, poor ethnic minority children, who came to be known as the children at-risk (Cohn & Rossmille 1987:377; Reynolds et al. 2000:11). In this regard, the value orientation was on equity, which emphasised making schools more effective for the socio-economically disadvantaged by instituting effective school management and classroom management (Reynolds et al. 2000:11). The dominant feature of schooling in the United States of America was that the poor ethnic minority children under-performed in academic examinations in comparison with the dominant culture of whites. To address this anomaly, research was undertaken to look at ways of uplifting the achievement levels of the poor ethnic minority children to acceptable levels. In this way, the main concern of school effectiveness seemed to be to raise the achievement levels of the under-performers or learners at risk of failure.

The second element was the subject matter or concentrating on the core subjects of mathematics and reading, or teaching core skills (Cohn & Rossmiller 1987:377; Creemers 1996:27). The focus here was on the effectiveness of curriculum implementation or making sure that learners acquired the necessary skills that matched their educational levels. The third element was equity or ensuring that poor children achieved at the same level as those of the middle class or well-to-do families (Reynolds et al. 2000:10-11). From the equity point of view, it would seem that equality of opportunity is the indicator of school effectiveness, implying that schools should equalise opportunities so that there is some degree of equilibrium in learner achievement across the socio-economic status spectrum. In this respect, a school could be judged to be effective to the extent that it redressed prior inequalities as reflected by the performance of its learners across the broad school activities. This raises the question of the extent to which secondary schools in Lesotho uplift the achievement levels of socio-economically disadvantaged learners.
3.2.8 The key factors that affect the academic achievement of learners

The focal points discussed above are linked to some assumptions of school effectiveness. The first assumption is that schools are fundamentally the places for teaching and learning, and, as such, the quality of a school is best judged by the quality of teaching and learning (Purkey & Smith 1985:355; Dimmock 1995:5; 2000:109). Other aspects such as principal leadership are considered supportive and secondary in importance by comparison (Dimmock 1995:5). Purkey and Smith (1985:355) emphasise that school success is measured by how well a learner masters the skills or knowledge of the subject. According to them, to be successful, schools need to concentrate on the academic outcomes and other activities should be planned around this focal point. In a case study of a successful elementary school in Los Angeles, Beck and Murphy (1998:369-370) found that there was a learning imperative at the school. This implies that the school regarded its fundamental goal as teaching and learning. This formed the axis of the school’s activities and permeated the entire culture of the school. The second assumption, which links to the first, is that the school should provide the general milieu in which instruction and learning takes place (Purkey & Smith 1985:355). With regard to the problem statement in this study, the question is whether the core functions of teaching and learning are given due centrality and pre-eminence over other activities in Lesotho schools.

Clark et al. (1984:48) found that schools differ in levels of effectiveness. These schools matter most to children who are socio-economically disadvantaged and educationally deprived, and have fewer learning opportunities outside school (Clark et al. 1984:48). For those children who come from educationally deprived home and social backgrounds, schools are the sole sources of knowledge. Clark et al. (1984:48) state that there is a general assumption that people matter most in schools. The first assumption is that teachers affect the learners they teach by the expectations they hold for their performance. Purkey and Smith (1985:355) add that the characteristics of effective schools are found in the behaviours of their staff, not in the size of their physical facilities. The second assumption is that learners affect each other by their achievement
levels and behavioural patterns (Clark et al. 1984:48; Van der Werf 1997:432). The third assumption is that the principals affect the schools by setting a climate amenable to teaching and learning and providing support to teachers (Clark et al. 1984:48; Cunningham & Cordeiro 2000:185). Lastly, the officials or administrators at the Ministry of Education affect the school principals by providing professional, material and psychological support (Clark et al. 1984:48).

These assumptions indicate that far more than the non-human resources and organisational structures, people constitute the nucleus of the organisational survival and effectiveness. It would appear that the improvement of the quality of education and outcomes depends on the quality of teaching and learning, the core technology, the interface between learners and teachers and the principal, the determination and effort of both teachers and learners, and the sustained support of parents in the education of their children.

Thus, it can be assumed that if the academic performance of learners is to be improved, there is a need to give priority to skills development and re-engineering of the work patterns and practices of teachers and principals. According to Davies and West-Burnham (1997:8), re-engineering is about redesigning how work is done, tearing up the old ways of doing things and seeking new ones, in order to ensure that there is a dramatic improvement, and not just a marginal or incremental one. In terms of the problem statement in this study, the question is whether teachers and principals in Lesotho secondary schools understand that they have a greater impact on the learning and academic outcomes of learners than other factors such as the learners’ home or social environments. The next section will focus on resources, such as teacher characteristics, facilities and educational materials, and the support rendered to schools by the Ministry of Education.
3.3 FACTORS THAT SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING

This section reviews the influence of the different factors or inputs on enhancing institutional capacity and effectiveness. The factors to be examined include teacher characteristics, facilities and equipment characteristics, educational materials and parental involvement.

3.3.1 Teacher characteristics

Windham (1988:581) defines “characteristics” as “the availability of a resource, its nature and quality, and its manner and rate of utilization.” Teacher characteristics constitute some of the most important inputs in education. Le Roux and Loubser (2000:99) maintain that to be effective, an education system needs good quality teachers since “teachers are indubitably a dominant force in the classroom.” The teacher is regarded as the focus of all the classroom instructional activity. According to Windham (1988:593) and Dalin (1994:xiii), a viable and reliable means of school improvement could be to improve teacher quality through assistance or in-service training, which, in turn, could enhance teacher mastery. Windham (1988:594) states that there is a general assumption that the amount and quality of teacher training influence the teacher’s subject knowledge and ability to transfer that knowledge to learners.

In chapter 2, it was pointed out that the Lesotho secondary school sector suffers a shortage of quality teachers, particularly in the fields of mathematics and science. The situation is compounded by the uneven distribution of teachers, which generally favours the lowlands, especially the urban areas, and a high turnover of mostly qualified teachers, particularly in the rural areas. The shortage of mathematics and science teachers makes it difficult for effective learning to take place. This raises the question of what the impact of the uneven distribution of qualified teachers in Lesotho secondary schools is on effective learning, particularly with regard to the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?
3.3.2 Facilities, equipment and educational materials

The availability of basic facilities, such as self-contained classrooms, and special use facilities, such as laboratories, audio-visual aids and equipment, in schools is still a problem in most developing countries (Windham 1988:59). As indicated in chapter 2, schools in the urban areas in Lesotho have a relatively better supply of facilities and equipment vis-à-vis those in the rural areas. It would appear that favourable accessibility in urban areas and high population density is the main reason why schools in the urban areas have an adequate supply of facilities. The problem statement of this study raises the question to what extent a shortage of educational resources influences the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in Lesotho.

Many primary and secondary schools in Lesotho are critically short of physical facilities and other basic learning materials, such as textbooks (Ministry of Education 2000b:12, 29; 2002:xiv, 24-25; 67-68). In this regard, Heneveld (1994:3) states that even those facilities and educational resources that exist are in a parlous state characterised by dilapidated buildings and insufficient desks. Well-maintained basic facilities provide a learning-conducive environment requisite for effective learning and textbooks are the indispensable primary essentials needed for successful academic learning. Thus, it follows that the critical shortage of textbooks and other basic facilities, such as classrooms and laboratories, could contribute significantly to the decline of educational quality and the learners’ weakness in the academics in secondary school. Heneveld (1994:3) holds that parents do not want to send their children to dysfunctional schools where buildings and equipment are dilapidated as these would have a negative effect on their learning.

Pennycuick (1998:5) points out that a study conducted in 1987 by Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda in Botswana primary schools found that the availability of resources like books, desks and classrooms impacted significantly on the performance of learners in the Standard 7 examinations. Heneveld (1994:33), Pennycuick (1998:6) and Bot (1999:3) conclude that in a developing country such as Lesotho the adequate availability of school
facilities and educational materials, particularly textbooks and other instructional materials, is linked to the effective process of teaching and learning and to the improvement of learner achievement. Riddell (1997:182) states that in several studies carried out in secondary schools in developing countries, textbooks were identified as some of the most significant determinants of achievement. This raises the question of what impact a lack of textbooks and other instructional materials has on the learning outcomes of Lesotho learners. There is also the question of how a lack of textbooks and instructional materials impacts on classroom management and the effective teaching and learning process.

In their research Cohn and Rossmiller (1987:383) concluded that in the American setting, the differences in expenditure per learner did not appear to account for significant differences in learner achievement, thus implying that money is a necessary but not a sufficient resource to improve learner achievement. Instead, the resources purchased with the money account for the differences in learner achievement (Cohn & Rossmiller 1987:383). Cohn and Rossmiller (1987:383) state that in American schools the quality of resources does not seem to influence academic achievement significantly. In the same way, in developing countries where there is an adequate supply of textbooks, the availability of textbooks is no longer a useful indicator of school quality (Windham 1988:602). It would appear that in an education system where the resources and textbooks are distributed equitably across schools, a lack of textbooks for learners ceases to be a cause of poor academic performance and a determinant of between-school variances in learner achievement.

3.3.3 Effective support from the Ministry of Education

Support from the Ministry of Education or the district education office is essential to the enhancement of the school management, school change and staff stability (Purkey & Smith 1985:358). The support the school receives from the external agencies such as the Ministry of Education is not only crucial to the functioning of the whole school, but also to the running of a department. Harris (2000:88) contends that the external expertise and
support that the department in a school receives from the external agencies can help to improve teaching practices and offer alternative ways of teaching and learning. According to Harris (2000:88), isolation and a lack of external support can be detrimental to the functioning of a school or a department. This implies that the school authorities and department should maintain open communication networks and sound and functioning relations with the external agencies, such as the Ministry of Education, in order to improve their academic performance. This could, in turn, lead to increased teacher productivity and improved learner achievement (Zigarelli 1997:104). Purkey and Smith (1985:358) indicate that district recognition of school staff efforts and the provision of necessary resources are essential to the improvement process.

From his experience as a District Education Officer from 1998 to 2000, the researcher found that in Lesotho, the support provided by the Ministry of Education or the District Education Offices to secondary schools is limited. This raises the question of what impact limited support from the Ministry of Education has on the day-to-day running of Lesotho schools and on the performance of secondary schools, particularly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

According to Heneveld (1994:32), the Ministry of Education can provide effective support to individual schools by delegating authority and responsibility for improvement to schools themselves. This implies that schools are given the responsibility and autonomy to chart their own development plans and the routes they want to follow to accomplish their goals. The Ministry of Education could show support to schools by communicating expectations (Heneveld 1994:32). This underpins the fact that the Ministry of Education should exert pressure on the schools to improve their academic results. From his experience as a teacher (1993 to 1995) and District Education Officer (1998 to 2000), the researcher learned that in Lesotho there is minimal communication of high expectations to schools by the Ministry of Education officials and proprietor church authorities to improve their academic performance, particularly that of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.
3.4 CONDITIONS THAT COULD ENHANCE THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SCHOOLS

This section discusses issues such as administrative leadership by the principal, the involvement of the deputy principal, teacher involvement, and school culture in relation to their influence on effective school management, and how they help promote the academic achievement of learners in school.

3.4.1 Strong school leadership

Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1997:90) and Barker (2001:65) studied what constitutes an effective school and the factors that account for the between-school variances in academic achievement and indicated that strong leadership by the principal is a key correlate of effective schools. Hofman (1995:151) describes strong, educationally oriented leadership by the principal as one of the factors of effective management because it can help to strengthen cohesion amongst teachers and stimulate their commitment to their professional work. A lack of strong leadership by the principal could render school activities uncoordinated and splintered.

Dantley (1990:586) maintains that effective leadership requires that the principal be instrumental in setting the ethos of the school, adroit in making decisions on instructional strategies, and efficient in organising and distributing resources. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:138) emphasise that principals should focus on the school’s vision, and develop and motivate staff to work efficiently to achieve optimum student learning. In this way, teachers could show determination and effort in optimising the learners’ chances of academic achievement. In a case study of a high-performing rural elementary school in Texas, Cawelti (2000:42) identified strong leadership by the principal, characterised by visibility in whole-school activities, setting a success-oriented school culture, emphasising that learners should work hard, and liaising with parents, as the ingredients of the academic success of the school.
Effective principal leadership is an enabling condition, in that an effective leader mobilises and acquires adequate resources needed to support teachers and sufficient learning materials for learners to support effective learning (Heneveld 1994:34). Heneveld (1994:34) maintains that the onus is on the principal to keep the entire physical plant or school facilities in good shape, to motivate learners and to sustain their interest. School principals make a difference as they help set a task-relevant climate within the school and support the work of teachers. In terms of this study, the question is how effective Lesotho secondary school principals are in creating a success-oriented school climate.

According to Beare, Caldwell and Millakan (1993:142), “Outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of outstanding schools.” Effective leadership has been identified as a fundamental requisite for initiating and maintaining the school improvement process. Stogdill (in Beare et al. 1993:142) defines leadership as “the process of influencing the activities of an organised group toward goal setting and goal accomplishment.” This definition implies that the strength of a leader is judged by his or her ability to exert a positive influence on his or her group and guide them towards the attainment of the organisational goals. Seyfarth (1999:76) and Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:153) contend that leadership refers to articulating the school vision and mission, motivating staff and learners, giving direction and purpose, ensuring that everything runs smoothly, and seeing to it that things generally get done. In this respect, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:153) state that leadership is doing the right things while management is doing things right. According to Sergiovanni (1990:17), the distinction between management and leadership is underscored by the principle that people “cannot be managed. Inventories can be managed, but people must be led.” This underpins the fact that leaders are expected to transform their organisations to transcend their work.

**3.4.1.1 Transformational leadership**

According to Wilmore and Thomas (2001:116), transformational leadership is a form of facilitative or consensual power demonstrated through and shared with other people
instead of over people. Thus, transformational leadership is intended to empower teachers and learners. Wilmore and Thomas (2001:116) define empowerment as the process through which teachers are enabled to acquire the means to critically appropriate knowledge existing in and outside their environment in order to broaden their understanding of the world around them, and the possibilities for transforming their situations. Norris et al. (2002:85) state that transformational leadership is about a shifting of influence in a manner that allows followers to emerge as leaders while at the same time, the designated leader becomes both leader and follower. Norris et al. (2002:85) also confirm that transformational leadership seeks to empower individuals, who should, in turn, help one another to rise to higher levels of value consciousness.

Cheng and Chan (2000:224) regard transformational leadership as a pivotal force for operationalising or activating self-management in schools. Wilmore and Thomas (2001:115) indicate that the strength of school leadership can be measured by the ability of the principal to create a climate that is amenable to staff productivity, learner productivity and creativity. They go on (2000:116) to describe transformational leaders as values driven and committed to the creation of learning communities. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:185) and Wilmore and Thomas (2001:116) also describe transformational leaders as visionary, change agent and skilful in dealing with complex issues, such as developing staff, mapping new directions, mobilising resources, supporting employees, and responding to work-related challenges. Transformational leaders also demonstrate great care and support for their teachers (Wilmore & Thomas 2001:116). If transformational leadership is appropriately practised, then, it has the potential to transform ineffective schools into effective ones. Hence, if the goal of improved educational quality is to be realised in Lesotho secondary schools, it is imperative that transformational leadership skills be developed in principals.

Du Toit (2001:327) cites Peter Francisco who describes the importance of transformational leadership in managing change as “If you keep doing what you’ve always done, you’ll keep getting what you’ve always got.” This underlines the fact that there is a need to re-engineer the work processes and practices in schools in order to
improve the quality of academic results, or maintain the high standard, in the case of high-performing schools. In this regard, Sergiovanni (1998:38) adds that the goal of better results for all learners will not be achieved unless schools embrace a new conception of leadership, which he terms “pedagogical leadership.” Sergiovanni (1998:38) proposes that a starting point for improving the academic results in schools is to develop social and academic capital for learners and professional capital for teachers. According to Sergiovanni (1998:38), capital is the value of something, which when properly invested, produces more of what is invested, thus increasing the overall value. Pedagogical leadership can be supported by providing capital to enhance student learning and development, teacher training, teacher efficiency and classroom effectiveness (Sergiovanni 1998:38).

Sergiovanni (1998:38) maintains that schools develop social capital by becoming caring communities. Social capital is characterised by norms and trust that are cultivated by relationships of people in a community. Thus, social capital provides support needed for learning. Furthermore, Sergiovanni (1998:39) maintains that schools develop academic capital by becoming focused communities that cultivate a strong culture of teaching and learning. Schools can thus develop the academic capital by developing the rituals, norms and traditions, which motivate and support student learning (Sergiovanni 1998:39). In focused communities there is a strong sense of commitment to academic achievement (Sergiovanni 1998:39). This underscores the fact that in schools with an academic orientation, principals and teachers constantly focus their attention and that of learners on the core functions of the school, namely teaching and learning. This implies that the instructional activities are given priority over extracurricular activities.

Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:185) state that transformational leaders create incentives for people to continuously improve their work practices. In this sense, an atmosphere that is conducive to productive teaching and learning is created. According to Wilmore and Thomas (2001:117), “Without transformational leadership, the school becomes a ship without a sail, a journey without a map, a compass without a pointer.”
Transformational leaders can be understood to be educational reformers or drivers of positive change in schools, who steer the schools towards effective teaching and learning.

Moreover, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:185) argue that the key goals of transformational leadership include to help teachers build and sustain a collaborative and work-oriented school culture, to foster staff development and to help teachers to tackle problems together more effectively. Telford (1996:12) points out that research and the best practice of the 1990s indicate that “no single person alone has the combined capacity to do the job” (original emphasis). It would appear that transformational leaders give direction to staff and teachers, coordinate and synchronise the work performed by different units in the school, develop a work-oriented school climate, and are driven by the desire to continuously improve their work processes.

According to Wilmore and Thomas (2001:116), there are three elements of transformational leadership, namely

- A collaborative shared decision-making, and this underpins the importance of inclusiveness or involving other members of staff in decision-making.
- An emphasis on teacher professionalism and empowerment. Thus, transformational leaders emphasise high levels of professional standards and code of practice to teachers. To achieve this, the leaders could empower teachers through skills development and delegation of authority.
- A clear understanding of change and how to motivate others to work towards it. Once principals have a clear notion of the nature of change their schools should pursue, the task of mobilising the support and commitment of staff should become easier.

With reference to this study, the question is whether principals in Lesotho secondary schools assume the roles of transformational leaders in managing their schools. The three elements outlined above will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The next section discusses the concept transactional leadership, which is the antithesis of transformational leadership.
3.4.1.2 Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership is a traditional form of leadership, which relies on transactions that are made between the leader and the followers based on the accomplishment of the task. In this kind of leadership, the leader seeks to motivate the workers and tries to secure their commitment by surveying their needs and rewarding them accordingly for fulfilling their tasks. According to Cheng (1996:104) and Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:185), transactional leadership is based on the transactional process in which the leader defines needs, assigns clear tasks, and gives some rewards or incentives to followers for congruent behaviour, good performance or satisfactory effort in a task. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:185) are of the opinion that a transactional leader has a command-and-control mentality.

Cheng (1996:104) contends that a transactional leader sets goals for followers on the basis of the effort he or she expects from them, does not expect the followers to go beyond the ordinary limits, and does little to transform the situation or the attitudes, values and norms of the followers. According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:185), in transactional leadership followers repose their trust in the leader to solve their problems. The major weakness of the transactional leadership lies in the lack of collaboration between the principal and teachers and the failure to recognise that teachers have great potential to contribute to the improvement of schools.

3.4.1.3 Purposeful leadership of staff by principal

Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob (1993:11) conclude that purposeful leadership of the staff by the principal is strategic, goal-oriented and directional, where the principal should have a clear purpose or vision stemming from the school mission. An effective, goal-oriented leader should be actively involved in school-wide activities, such as strategic planning, organising and curricular matters. An effective leader should be
proactive, explorative and positive-minded, and should ensure that everybody works diligently so that the school can attain its goals.

Mortimore et al. (1993:11) emphasise that in order to be successful, the school principal should not appear to be domineering and dictatorial, but should rather assume the position of a co-worker. They found that effective principals were adequately involved in and knowledgeable about what went on in the classrooms, knew about the competencies of their teachers, and were able to support and supervise them without interfering in their work (Mortimore et al. 1993:11). From his experience as a teacher and a District Education Officer, the researcher is of the opinion that in many secondary schools in Lesotho, the principals become so enmeshed in administrative duties that they have little opportunity to perform the core functions of instructional supervision. With regard to this study, the question is whether principals in Lesotho secondary schools are adequately involved in whole school activities and whether they provide adequate supervision to teachers to ensure that they become productive.

According to Mortimore et al. (1993:11), there is consensus among researchers in the field of school effectiveness that the principal’s leadership and involvement are central to school improvement. Hoberg (2001:1) points out that the principal occupies a strategic and unique leadership position that allows him or her to exert influence on the structural, operational and instructional matters of the school. According to Hoberg (2001:1), the quality of education offered in the school depends largely on the leadership capacity of the principal to foster organisational commitment among the staff, learners and parents. Thus, the degree to which teachers and learners show organisational commitment to the core functions of teaching and learning could be seen as an outgrowth of the influence exerted on them by the principal.

As early as 1990, Dantley (1990:590) pointed out that the core role of principals includes consistent monitoring of teachers and the instructional delivery system. The principal should also conduct class observations for the purpose of supervising and regulating teachers’ activities. It is questionable if principals in Lesotho secondary schools really
provide pedagogical leadership or instructional supervision to teachers, due to their tight administrative functions and the possible misconception that trained teachers do not need supervision.

3.4.1.4 The role of the principal in instructional leadership and curriculum organisation

The instructional leadership of the school principal is another characteristic of an effective school and is central to improving a school (Gaziel 1992:153). Gaziel (1992:153) holds that leadership in curriculum instruction should pervade the entire school organisation, including the classroom, which is the powerhouse of all the school operations. The responsibility for providing this academic climate rests on the school principal, who, in turn, should support teachers in implementing the school’s academic curriculum. Seyfarth (1999:168) states that it is the principal who should observe the teaching-learning process and provide supervisory support to teachers and students. The principal’s leadership means that academic instruction is a school management priority, hence the staff should be made aware of this and encouraged to use the latest educational curriculum, pedagogy and technology to enhance the academic achievement of all learners (Solórzano & Solórzano 1995:305).

Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:135) state that principals in high-achieving schools are involved in academic matters and visit classrooms, whereas those in low-achieving schools are more involved in administrative matters. Principals in high-achieving schools function more as instructional leaders while those in low-achieving schools act more as administrators and disciplinarians (Reynolds & Teddlie 2000:135). A shift in focus by principals of low-achieving schools from the core functions of teaching and learning to the administrative functions that are peripheral, appears to be the major factor that works against the academic achievement of learners.

In the light of the above discussion, a case could be made that in order to achieve improved academic results, principals need to refocus their attention on the academic
activities of their schools. However, it should be stressed that the principals should try as much as possible to maintain a balance between performing instructional supervision and administrative duties since the latter create an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning. In other words, a principal who is effective in performing administrative duties could avert some potential problems that could disrupt the teaching and learning process.

According to Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:143), instructional leadership underpins the belief that instruction is the central mission of the school. Some of the crucial areas of instructional leadership include developing well-defined goals and communicating them to staff and learners (Reynolds & Teddlie 2000:144). By implication, this suggests that the instructional leader should “sell” his or her instructional goals to staff, learners and parents so that they can collaborate to achieve them. Furthermore, Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:144) contend that principals as instructional leaders should develop an academic learning climate that involves positive expectations for learners, maintain high personal visibility, and provide incentives for learners and teachers. Positive expectations underscore the confidence the leader has in his or her staff to achieve the instructional goals. Moreover, principals should establish a supportive work environment that involves the creation of a safe and orderly environment, which could provide opportunities for the involvement of learners and the development of staff collaboration (Reynolds & Teddlie 2000:144). Moreover, it is clear that effective teaching and learning could take place in a safe environment that is studious in nature.

Heneveld (1994:34) proposes further that the principal should pursue high instructional standards by

- making frequent reference to the school mission, “curricular goals and expected teaching behaviours” and thus inculcate a positive work ethic in teachers;
- expressing in clear terms high expectations for learners and the school’s focus on learning as its central purpose; and
- co-ordinating and managing the learning process.
In terms of this study, the question is whether principals in Lesotho secondary schools understand that instructional leadership forms the core of their administrative work, and whether they sufficiently communicate high expectations for achievement to learners. The next section indicates that the principal as an instructional leader could be instrumental in organising school-based staff development programmes that focus mainly on improving teaching skills and practices.

3.4.2 School-based staff development

Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:150) point out that recent studies indicate that school-based and work-relevant staff development programmes are central to improving schools. According to Sammons et al. (1997:117), the ideal is to have the school-based programmes school-wide and based on the expressed needs of teachers. It remains the responsibility of the principal to organise school-based staff development programmes for teachers, to address their needs, which are identified during classroom observations or in discussion with staff. From his experience as a teacher and District Education Officer, the researcher realised that in many secondary schools in Lesotho, there are currently no school-based staff development programmes that deal with the professional needs of teachers. Most of the staff development programmes are organised and run by external agencies, such as the departments of the Ministry of Education, and other partners in education service, such as the Faculty of Education of the National University of Lesotho. In this regard, Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:150) contend that a one-off presentation by an expert coming from outside the school is not likely to have much impact or to improve the practice. The reason is that it may lack continuity as it may not constitute the immediate needs of the school staff. This study raises the question of what should be done to institutionalise school-based staff development programmes in Lesotho secondary schools.
3.4.3 Involvement of the deputy principal

According to Mortimore et al. (1993:12) and Creemers (1996: 41), the involvement of the deputy principal in school management is beneficial to the school organisation in general and learners in particular. In cases where the deputy principal was absent for protracted periods, learners’ progress was negatively affected (Mortimore et al. 1993:12). Effectiveness can be enhanced when the deputy principal is empowered in a collaborative effort to share responsibilities with the principal. According to Mortimore et al. (1993:12), “Where the head generally involved the deputy in policy decisions, it was beneficial to the pupils. This was particularly true in terms of allocating teachers to classes.”

In the researcher’s view, at a number of secondary schools in Lesotho the duties of deputy principals are not clearly delineated. This lack of clarity about the duties of the deputy principals could cause ambivalence and equivocation in the performance of their duties. This is compounded by the fact that even Education Act of 1995 and Teaching Service Regulations 2002 do not stipulate the duties of the deputy principal. The duties of the deputy principal are, however, delineated in the Lesotho Government Gazette Extraordinary of 1988, Part IV, No. 15 (1988:844). These are contained in two general statements as follows:

- A deputy principal shall perform such duties as are assigned to him by the headmaster.
- In the absence of the principal, the deputy principal shall be in charge of the school and shall perform the duties of the principal.

These two statements lack clarity and specificity as to the roles to be performed by the deputy principal. This lack of a separation of roles between the principal and the deputy principal may give the principal, as an executive of the school, the latitude to assign duties to the deputy principal as he or she deems fit. In this case, the deputy principal may be overloaded with work. This raises the question of how a lack of clear delineation of the roles of the principal impacts on the day-to-day running of secondary schools in Lesotho.
3.4.4 Involvement of teachers in school management

Teachers are regarded as the operating core of the school, the actual implementers of the curriculum, and the actors in the education system who are in daily contact with learners. Visscher (1999:6) indicates that the operating core is the domain of teachers, in the sense that it constitutes that part of the organisation where the actual work for which the organisation has been formed is carried out. By implication, teachers are better placed to deal with the needs of learners than the Ministry of Education officials at policy-making level.

Bohte (2001:92) maintains that in America’s public schools, principals are removed from the day-to-day classroom experiences and, as such, it is difficult for them to measure the learner academic performance. According to him (2001:92), “Because education is based largely on student-teacher interactions, administrators add little value to the core task of teaching.” In this respect, the involvement of teachers in school management is vital for the enhancement of school effectiveness.

At institutional level, teachers should be involved in curriculum planning and developing their own curriculum guidelines. In their research, Mortimore et al. (1993:12) found that there was a correlation between teacher involvement and school effectiveness: “It appears that schools in which teachers were consulted on issues affecting school policy, as well as those affecting them directly, were more likely to be successful.” Collaboration and inclusiveness are surely the key concepts to enhance teacher productivity.

Participative management constitutes one of the major characteristics of effective leadership. This implies shared decision-making and the sharing of relevant leadership responsibilities with staff across the organisational structure. Participative management is typically inclusive, thus power is not concentrated in one person, but distributed throughout the organisational structure. It could be inferred that distributive power could
occur in a context where there are effective power relations between the principal and teachers, which are characterised by reciprocal relations and respect for one another.

According to Cheng (1996:80), participative decision-making may help to foster a sense of ownership and community amongst staff. A sense of co-ownership of the school implies that teachers could evaluate themselves as stakeholders who may voice their input in school management and a constituency whose views are represented in the process of decision-making. A sense of co-ownership may help to motivate teachers to develop a sense of commitment to the core task of teaching. In this regard, Rosenholtz (1985:374) concludes that the “achievement of students seems to suffer at the hands of teachers who are not committed to the program they are teaching.” A sense of commitment seems to increase in a situation where there are reciprocal and supportive relationships amongst staff, and between staff and learners. This raises the question of whether teachers are currently adequately involved in the management of secondary schools in Lesotho.

Participative management and school-site management are two sides of the same coin as they advocate shared decision-making, which is modelled on democratic principles (Purkey & Smith 1985:358). Purkey and Smith (1985:358) state that school-site management implies that power, responsibility and authority are delegated to the school level staff to determine how they can efficiently perform their work with the ultimate goal of improving their productivity and the academic performance, in consequence. This implies that staff should be allowed more authority over curricular and instructional decisions and the allocation of resources (Purkey & Smith 1985:358). This raises the question of what impact teacher involvement in school management has on the academic performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in Lesotho secondary schools.
3.4.5 Teaching stability and consistency

The stability of the administrative staff and the teaching force at school are considered to impact significantly on improving the effectiveness of the school. This implies that the lesser the staff turnover, the more amenable to improvement the school should become. In this regard, Heneveld (1994:35) argues that stability implies that the majority of teachers have taught together in the same school for a considerable length of time, and that low teacher turnover is generally an indicator of positive teacher morale or relative satisfaction with the school conditions. The school principal should play a key role in setting a positive school ethos that would ensure staff retention.

Every effort should be made to encourage stability and continuity at school as it promotes staff cohesion and controls an unwarrantable staff turnover (Cohn & Rossminer 1987:381; Mortimore et al. 1993:10). To a large extent, this lies within the professional capacity of the principal, which implies that he or she can help to stem staff turnover. Purkey and Smith (1985:358) maintain that frequent “transfers are likely to retard ... the growth of a coherent and ongoing school personality, especially in early phases of the change process.” A further point to consider is to avoid the change of class teacher or subject teacher during the course of the year as this may have an adverse effect on learners (Mortimore et al. 1993:10). This implies that if a change of teachers occurs during the course of the year, there should be a smooth handover to the next teacher in order to mitigate the impact of such a change on learners. The question is what the impact of frequent change of teachers is on student learning.

3.4.6 School culture

According to Castetter and Young (2000:28), culture is a set of interrelated behaviours, values, norms, expectations and ideals shared by members of a group of an organisation. Castetter and Young (2000:28) state that norms serve functions such as

- establishing standards and shared expectations and a set of acceptable behaviours for group members; and
• providing ways of socialising new individuals to fit into the group.

Owens (1991:171) argues that organisational culture can be regarded as solutions to internal and external problems that have worked reliably for a long time for a group, and are therefore taught to new members of an organisation as the correct way to deal with those problems. According to Owens (1991:171), “culture can be defined as the shared philosophies, ideologies, values, assumptions, beliefs, expectations, attitudes, and norms that knit a community together.”

Culture also dictates how people should behave, treat one another and non-members, and act in given situations (Bennet 1998:159; Seyfarth 1999:121; Dimmock 2000:266). Deal (1985:605) describes the term culture as “the way we do things around here.” Deal (1985:605) maintains that the core values within an organisation are shared and shape the behaviours of group members. In this respect, Deal (1985:611) states that for any school “to perform effectively, shared values must keep various subgroups pulling in roughly the same direction.” In this sense, the effective academic performance of a school is linked to the cooperation and collaboration among teachers in doing their work. From the above, it can be deduced that culture constitutes the collective patterns of behaviours and norms of doing things within a particular institution, which distinguish it from others of its type. Thus, culture could be regarded as glue that holds members of an organisation together and provides a working milieu amenable to productivity.

Cheng (2000:211) emphasises that school culture is another variable that has been found to correlate strongly with academic achievement. Teacher productivity and effectiveness depend largely on a strong cohesive culture inside an institution, which tends to motivate and shape behaviour and inspire commitment and loyalty from customers and clients (Deal 1985:605; Seyfarth 1999:121). It would seem that a positive school culture provides a stimulating atmosphere that motivates teachers and learners to work hard.

School climate is another concept closely related to school culture. In everyday talk, lay people often use the two as though they are synonymous, yet they differ. Owens
(1991:167) refers to Renato Tagiuri’s definition of *climate* as the characteristics of the total environment in a school. Gilmer (in Hoy and Miskel 1991:221) defines organisational climate as those characteristics that distinguish an organisation from others of its type and influence the behaviour of organisational members. Sweetland and Hoy (2000:705) define climate as a concept used to describe the basic and enduring quality of school life. They add that school climate is a stable set of characteristics that show the distinctive tone, ethos and atmosphere of a school, and state that climate is to an organisation as personality is to the individual (Sweetland & Hoy 2000:705). Thus, a school climate can be understood as a distinguishing body of characteristics that are unique to a school and give it a distinct image. In the light of the above, it can be argued that culture is action-oriented and thus amenable to change, since it is concerned with the way members do things within an organisation. At the same time, school climate is a dormant character or personality of an institution and tends to be more enduring.

Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:147) stress that effective schools possess a vision or “mission” that is shared by staff. Thus, the school vision or philosophy serves as a guiding principle to staff in their professional work and in other activities of the school. In this way, a positive school culture promotes a sense of community or cooperation between staff (Reynolds & Teddlie 2000:147). According to Wilmore and Thomas (2001:118), a positive school climate is crucial to creating a results-oriented, productive school. This is because the school ethos sets the ambience or tone for what happens at school and shapes the relationships between learners and teachers (Carter 2002:28, 32).

Allder (1993:59) maintains that a common feature of effective schools is effective leadership and a positive climate that is conducive to productive teaching and learning. Rossman *et al.* (1988:7-8) emphasise that what distinguishes a good school from a mediocre one is its ethos, or its tone; a “feel” or climate one gets from being in it. According to Purkey and Smith (1985:356), “Student academic performance is strongly affected by school culture.” It would seem that a learner-centred culture that is success-oriented is an imperative that enhances school effectiveness and a key to academic excellence. According to Deal (1985:608), “Behind effective schools, like
high-performing businesses, there is a strong culture that encourages productivity, high morale, confidence and commitment. Making schools more effective requires building and reshaping the hidden, taken-for-granted rules that govern day-to-day behavior.” Strong school culture seems to be a factor that induces the school staff to put a lot of effort into living up to the school’s cultural values, academic standards and expectations.

Purkey and Smith (1985:362) argue that if change is to be effected, the first step is to change the school culture: “the school is the focus of change; its culture, the ultimate policy target.” It would seem that the creation of a task-oriented school culture by the school principal is imperative for improving the academic performance of schools. Allder (1993:66-67) points out the school ethos is a man-made environment, characterised by a pervasive atmosphere, ambience or mood that is experienced by those who detect it in their social interactions. An ethos is shaped by the events that have occurred in the past, norms and values that define and distinguish a school and, in turn, a school ethos shapes the human activities and enterprises (Allder 1993:67). With reference to this study, the question is whether secondary schools in Lesotho have strong built-in cultures that are success-oriented. Another pertinent question is whether principals in Lesotho secondary schools effectively perform their leadership role of initiating a positive school culture conducive to learning and the optimal self-actualisation of learners.

3.4.7 Lessons from the Japanese work practices

alike.” Morley and Rassool (2000:176) and the Kaizen Institute (2000:1) state that kaizen is a philosophical concept that permeates all spheres of the Japanese life and underscores the fact that our working, social or home life should be constantly improved. Thus, the strong work ethic of the Japanese seems to have been shaped by the philosophical principles of kaizen.

In the light of the above discussion, it would seem that the concept of kaizen underpins the fact that in life there is never a time that we can say that we have reached a saturation point with regard to improvement; there is always room for improvement in all fields of life. This underscores the fact that teachers should continuously seek ways of improving their work. According to the SkyMark Corporation (2002:1), “In contrast to the usual emphasis on revolutionary, innovative change on an occasional basis, Kaizen looks for uninterrupted, ongoing incremental change.” This underlines the fact that successful change or improvement is not an event or a radical revolution, but an ongoing process that has to be pursued with sustained determination and effort.

According to Jones (2002:1), another philosophical concept that inspires the Japanese workers is ‘ganbare,’ or ‘gambare’ as it is spelt by Sergiovanni (1990:5, 9), which means to hold out, persevere, persist and continue to try without giving in to tiredness or despair. Jones (2002:1) states that Japanese workers are described as being very disciplined and methodical in their work, following policy and procedures precisely, and not rushing to get the job done. The main point here is that what brings success and profitability to an organisation is not only perseverance in performing one’s tasks, but also maintaining high standards and precision. According to Jones (2002:2), “Japanese are perfectionists with the goal of achieving perfection not for profitability, but because it is the right thing to do… . They are unwilling to trade quality for short-term savings and convenience.”

In terms of education and schooling, Sergiovanni (1990:5) maintains that there is complacency in American schooling with respect to effort, and a lack of sustained effort and perseverance, and self-centredness with regard to goals. It is contended that this can be turned around by adding value-added leadership, which can help to rekindle the spirit
of “gambare” in schools and society at large. According to Sergiovanni (1990:9), “gambare” is a Japanese philosophical concept, which means “to persevere; to do one’s best; to be persistent; to stick to one’s purposes; to never give up until the job is done and done well”. This underpins that school principals and teachers should have sustained commitment and determination in their work, a winning spirit, be positive-minded, and stick to their academic goals even in the face of debilitating work circumstances until the work is accomplished. Once they have embraced and adopted this philosophy to work, it could successfully be inculcated in the learners. Sergiovanni (1990:9) constitutes that in the Japanese culture, one must aim to attain “gambare” in all that one does, meaning that one should be willing to struggle, to sacrifice and to work hard to achieve one’s goals.

Another key concept that models the Japanese work culture is ‘companyism’ or kaisha (Morley & Rassool 2000:177). This refers to a set of rules, company beliefs, behaviours, procedures and expectations through which workers are incorporated or socialised into the organizational culture (Morley & Rassool 2000:177). Accordingly, the workers are expected to pay allegiance to the ideologies or philosophical principles of the company that involve cooperative teamwork, adaptability or flexibility in changing jobs (Morley & Rassool 2000:177).

In the light of the above discussion, it could be deduced that if the philosophical principles of “kaizen”, “ganbare” or “gambare” and “kaisha” about work could be implemented in the Lesotho education system, many schools could experience continuous improvement in terms of teacher productivity and academic achievement of learners. In respect of this study, the question is whether teachers in Lesotho secondary schools are doing enough to ensure that their work is continuously improved, particularly with regard to the academic performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In the next section the focus will be on the teaching-learning process, and some school and classroom factors linked to school effectiveness will be probed.
3.5 TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

This section examines the school and classroom level factors that affect teaching and learning process. The researcher will critically explore how factors, such as the teachers’ high expectations for students’ learning, order and discipline, parental involvement, and maximisation of learning time, affect the process of teaching and learning, and eventually influence the academic achievement of learners.

3.5.1 The effect of high expectations on learner achievement

High expectations for the learners’ academic achievement by parents, teachers and even learners themselves are generally believed to be a prominent characteristic of unusually effective schools. In 1979, Edmonds (1979:22) and others maintained that high expectations underpinned the belief that all learners had potentialities to acquire the minimum basic skills. High expectations represent the school staff’s optimism and positive attitudes that learners can and will do well. In other words, every learner is assumed to have sufficient intellectual ability to learn minimum basic skills. Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:148) argue that teachers affect student learning by expectations they hold for learner academic performance and for their own teaching performance. Holding high expectations for student learning necessitates that teachers as well should do all in their power to translate these expectations into practical effect, by working hard to ensure that every learner attains high scholastic achievement.

Harris (2000:88) contends that principals should reinforce values by striving to raise even higher expectations for teachers and learners, and these should be well defined and communicated explicitly. Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:148) maintain that unless high expectations of learners are communicated by the behaviours and the verbal reinforcement of teachers, they are unlikely to have positive effects. Harris (2000:88) adds that achievement should be recognised and a reward system instituted, so as to motivate staff and ignite the enthusiasm of learners. This raises the question of whether the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
examinations is not caused by the low expectations that teachers have for student learning and academic achievement, among other things.

The task of goal-setting, and operationalising high expectations falls squarely on the principal, whose major responsibility is to give direction to teachers and learners, and to mobilise their commitment to the core functions of teaching and learning. According to Levine (1990:580), “High operationalized expectations and requirements” centre on how teachers and administrators act to make sure that they turn high expectations into reality. This implies that they should provide adequate support and motivation to learners to satisfy high expectations. In his analysis, Levine (1990:580) maintains that the staff may have high expectations, but if there are no proper arrangements for presenting instruction, learner achievement may not increase.

Once the academic goals have been set collaboratively by the principal and teachers, the onus is on the principal to explain the goals to teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders. The expectations could be operationalised if the principal and teachers create an instructional milieu that is intellectually challenging in order to match these expectations. In this regard, Sammons et al. (1997:106) maintain that low expectations of certain groups of learners, such as the economically disadvantaged or minority, cause underachievement.

High expectations could have higher payoffs, if the principal and teachers communicate to learners that they expect them to work hard in their studies and to strive to achieve high academically. The staff should inculcate a sense of commitment to duty in learners by being exemplars, and promoting their self-esteem by means of frequently expressing confidence in the learners’ abilities. In order to sustain this confidence, teachers have to give sufficient assignments to learners, which should also match their cognitive level. Sammons et al. (1997:107) argue that high expectations have an uplifting effect on learners, in that they serve as motivators to them to live up to the expectations held about them. Another way of operationalising high expectations could be promoting the learners’ enthusiasm and motivation by publicly offering rewards and incentives to those
who have excelled scholastically or shown improvement on their previous work (Heneveld 1994:38). With reference to this study, the question is whether teachers in Lesotho have high expectations for all the learners, and communicate to them that they have the potential to learn successfully, and achieve well academically.

The concept of high expectations for student learning is related to the concept of *value-added leadership* espoused by Sergiovanni (1990:10). Sergiovanni (1990:10) points out that where value-added leadership is practised, followers respond with passion and commitment and their performance goes beyond that expected of subordinates. According to Sergiovanni (1990:10), successful leaders are deeply committed to the ideas and ideals they hold to be important, and they inspire others to hold the course, to persevere and to keep trying hard in pursuit of one’s convictions. “They communicate to others that good enough is okay for today but not good enough for tomorrow” (Sergiovanni 1990:10).

### 3.5.2 Order, discipline and safe school environment

Sammons *et al.* (1997:98) argue that the maintenance of order and discipline rather than chaos is another key correlate of successful schools. Without order, discipline and social control, it would be difficult to obtain the attention of learners and to ensure that they actively engage in academic learning during the instruction (Reynolds & Teddlie 2000:148; Sammons *et al.* 1997:98). The existence of order and discipline is a precondition for learner academic success. According to Pink (1984:92), effective schools “have an orderly rule-bound atmosphere which emphasizes instruction.” In order to improve the effectiveness of schools and to enhance the learners’ success of learning, it is vital to create and maintain a task-oriented and learning-conducive climate in schools. The question is whether there are serious disciplinary problems in Lesotho secondary schools that threaten the smooth running of the schools in general and classrooms in particular, in terms of a classroom and school climate conducive to learning.
An orderly atmosphere is indubitably a precondition for effective teaching and learning and the overall functioning of the school. In this regard, Rossman et al. (1988:139) state that to run properly, schools need to maintain order, but warn that this should not “be oppressive and stultifying.” The ideal would be to cultivate mutual respect between teachers and learners. In this regard, Rossman et al. (1988:139) state that, “unfortunately, in many high schools across the land, teachers degrade and humiliate students, often unwittingly. In our conception of an effective school, they would not do so.” The dominance-submission relationship between the teacher and the learner appears to be detrimental to the process of effective teaching and learning, as it typically blocks the open two-way communication between the two parties. In the wake of increasing global awareness and sensitisation about a culture of human rights, principals and teachers need to adapt and remodel the learner-teacher relationships in a manner that would ensure that learners are treated with human dignity.

Safe and orderly environments are necessary conditions that set a positive, work-relevant climate. The assumption is that in a state where security and safety are threatened, the concentration and focus of both teachers and learners shift from the academic work to non-academic areas, and this can seriously retard learning and adversely affect the learner outcomes (Solórzano & Solórzano 1995:307). Townsend (1997:316) likewise emphasises that a safe and orderly environment is a precondition for effective teaching and learning as learners feel safe from physical harm, and know the school discipline policy, and the enforcement of rules will be fair and consistent.

3.5.3 Maximisation of teaching-learning time

Sammons et al. (1997:99), Cawelti (2000:43) and others found that strong correlations between time-use in schools and student learning, and learner behaviour and outcomes. Although time maximisation means the extension of academic learning time, it also involves time optimisation, which implies making the most of the time allocated. According to Caroll (in Sammons et al. 1997:99), “Time is not what counts, but what happens during that time, nonetheless academic learning time and time-on-task remain
powerful predictors of achievement." The crux of the argument is that extended time-on-task may not be useful unless it is accompanied by high rates of successful learning and productivity. Purkey and Smith (1985:354) emphasise that if instruction is inefficient or inappropriate, the time spent on teaching or learning may be unproductive. In a case study of a high-performing school in rural Texas, Cawelti (2000:43) found that the reason for the school’s success was the extended time spent on teaching and learning.

Seyfarth (1999:173) argues that time and how it is used are key factors that determine how much learners learn. The number of working school days in a school year and the length of the school day are the indicators of time made available for teaching and learning. According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:245), there are three levels of time: allocated time, engaged time and academic learning time. Allocated time designates the actual time allocated to a class or subject. Engaged time is the amount of time learners spend actively engaged in a learning activity. Academic learning time is the quality of learning time (Cunningham & Cordeiro 2000:245). Seyfarth (1999:173) and Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:245) maintain that learning can be enhanced by increasing academic learning time, or time in which learners are engaged in learning, which is at the appropriate level of difficulty where most learners are successful.

The researcher is of the opinion that in the majority of secondary schools in Lesotho, learners have less academic learning time, in view of the fact that teachers fail to adjust the level of difficulty of the subject matter to suit the learners’ cognitive levels. This may hamper their engagement in the learning process and their success rates. In this regard, Seyfarth (1999:173) contends that academic learning time can be optimised by adjusting the level of difficulty of the content. Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:135) indicate that in high-achieving schools learners were found engaged in active learning with teachers involved in instruction, while in low-achieving schools learners were found to be learning on their own. In this respect, the way time is used is the variable that explains differential achievement levels between the high-performing and low-performing schools.
The maximised learning time refers to the situation where more of the school day and more of the class periods are devoted to active learning activities in academic areas, characterised by a high rate of success. This also implies that class periods are free from interruptions and disruption (Purkey & Smith 1985:358). Learning time could be optimised by scheduling school events like sport, debates and other extra curricular activities, in such a way that they would not disrupt the learning time for learners. From his experience as a teacher and District Education Officer, the researcher realised that effective time management is one of the critical aspects lacking in many secondary schools in Lesotho. In many schools, teachers lack a sense of urgency and an understanding that every moment in student learning matters. Somehow, during certain seasons there is a tendency to shift the focus from the academics to extramural activities. Hence, in relation to this study, the question is how conscious teachers in Lesotho secondary schools are of the value of maximised time in increasing the achievement levels of learners?

In a study assessing the quality of education in sub-Saharan Africa, Heneveld (1994:43) established that a distinctive feature in most secondary schools was that some teachers did not pitch up for lessons, a phenomenon, which reduces the learning time. This phenomenon is suspected to be widespread in Lesotho, and could well be one of the contributory factors to learners’ poor academic achievement. In a study on the differences between highly effective and average schools, Van der Werf (1997:446) established that in highly effective schools time is spent much more efficiently and the focus is on quality instruction vis-à-vis the average schools. In this sense, effective time management or efficient time use appears to be a distinguishing factor between highly effective and average schools.

In general, teachers in highly effective schools seem to have a sense of urgency with regard to time use and focus on basic or core skills in their teaching. This could be attributed to the strong and effective leadership by the principal. According to Sergiovanni (1990:10), “The behavior of successful leaders is often driven by a deep commitment to ideas and ideals they believe to be important. They speak often of the
importance of perseverance and persistence – to hold the course, to keep trying, to try again, to try harder in pursuit of one’s convictions… . They are constantly pushing themselves and others forward by their words, behavior, and deeds.” With reference to this study, the question is to what extent Lesotho secondary school principals persevere and persist, and inspire their teachers and learners to do the same, and never to give up in pursuit of the academic goals.

3.5.4 Structuring the learning sessions

Mortimore et al. (1993:12) found that effectiveness is increased when teachers develop a framework within which learners do their work, which will ensure that they accomplish certain tasks following a programme designed by the teacher. Sammons et al. (1997:104) maintain that even the style of structuring questions should be in such a way that learners’ attention is focused on “the key elements of the lessons.” The bulk of the classroom activity should be work-related as this has been found to have positive effects on learner progress.

There was effective learning and progress when learners were supervised and guided into areas of study or exploration by the teacher (Mortimore et al. 1993:12). Mortimore et al. (1993:12) maintain that learners should be “taught the skills necessary for independently managing their work.” These authors (1993:12) found that teachers who emerged successful were those who granted learners the freedom and a certain degree of independence to do their work within a given structure. Giving learners the freedom and independence to manage their academic work can promote effective learning, in the sense that it helps them to explore, problem find and discover facts on their own. Another advantage of the learners’ self-guidance and self-supervision is that it allows the teacher wider latitude to do other more important things.
3.5.5 Challenging and constructivist teaching approach

Creating an atmosphere that appeals to the intellect of learners can be pedagogically productive. According to Sammons et al. (1997:108), “In those classes where pupils were stimulated and challenged, progress was greatest... Progress was encouraged where teachers used more higher-order questions and statements, when they encouraged pupils to use their creative imagination and powers of problem-solving.” Fostering high expectations defined in terms of creating a stimulating teaching-learning interaction promotes the learners’ enthusiasm to learn.

Sammons et al. (1997:108) indicate that underachievement is sometimes caused by failure to create lessons that challenge learners intellectually. Dull lessons depress the learners’ intellect and stultify their cognitive development. Sammons et al. (1997:108) contend that creating an intellectually challenging learning environment is linked to the issue of holding high expectations for learners’ ability as teachers will align or customise the curriculum to conform to their expectations. In terms of this study, the question is whether teachers in Lesotho secondary schools create an academically challenging teaching that stimulates learners to learn.

The emphasis on creating an intellectually challenging environment ties in with the concept of constructivist approach to learning, which has currently provoked much debate amongst educational researchers, teachers, politicians and the public. It is generally assumed that a constructivist approach grants learners greater latitude and free play in manipulating, exploring, dissecting and constructing knowledge. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:225) hold that a constructivist theory represents a shift from the behaviourist theory, which emphasised sequenced, systematic learning and the belief that the amount of learning that learners have received can be measured by change in behavioural terms. In contrast, constructivism underpins the belief that learners learn best through active learning, manipulation, exploration and construction of knowledge, rather than when they receive it. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:225) point out that it is assumed that people construct knowledge from the interaction between the existing
knowledge and new ideas or situations, or comparing new information with what they already know and from that forming new understandings. In this regard, Weil-Barais (2001:194) states that the constructivist approach emphasises that learners should be given the freedom to express their own ways of thinking, and in this case the teacher as a fount of knowledge, serves only as a guide in working together with the learner to construct knowledge.

In view of the above, it could be deduced that constructivism promotes learner-directed learning and discourages teachers from compartmentalising or restricting the process of knowledge acquisition. Within the context of a proposed curriculum change, Curriculum 2005, in South Africa, Moll (2002:6) argues that in a constructivist classroom, questioning by learners is highly valued as learners are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories and new forms of knowledge acquired in the changing environments. In other words, learners are regarded as carriers of ideas and knowledge gained from the social environments and, as such, are deemed to have the potential to contribute to the evolution of academic knowledge.

3.5.6 Focusing on the basic skills and concentrating on teaching and learning

According to Solórzano and Solórzano (1995:305-306), schools that stress an academic programme, have clear academic goals, are committed to reaching those goals, create an environment in which the goals can be reached and take responsibility for meeting those goals are more successful than those without these characteristics. In this regard, Townsend (1997:316) adds that the curriculum and instruction should be aligned to the basic academic goals that learners are expected to accomplish. It would appear that a clear academic focus, or concentrating on the academic, is a characterising feature of high-performing schools. This raises the question of to what extent teachers in Lesotho secondary schools concentrate on the academic and align their teaching to the acquisition of basic skills needed in their subjects.
The fundamental purpose of schools is to provide teaching and learning. Thus, this should form the focal point of all the schooling processes, and other activities should just be adjunct. Instructional activities constitute the teacher’s most complex task and should therefore receive the greatest proportion of time (Windham 1988:610). It has been found that there is a link between the focus on teaching and learning and school and teacher effectiveness. By implication, if the school focuses its staff and learners on its core functions of teaching and learning, the performance of the school in general and that of teachers in particular, could increase. This study raises the question of whether teachers in Lesotho secondary schools really concentrate on the core function of teaching, and other instruction-related activities.

3.5.7 Impact of parental involvement on promoting effectiveness and learning

Does parental involvement play a significant role in enhancing the overall school effectiveness and the achievement levels of learners in particular? According to Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:151), “Literature from North America indicates that parents’ direct involvement in school work has particularly beneficial effects, while involvement in extracurricular activities had little effect.” Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:151) and others maintain that the active involvement of parents in the learning of their children is crucial to literacy development, acquisition of basic skills and the improvement of learner achievement. Chrispeels (1996:298) and Seyfarth (1999:29) emphasise that if enhanced academic achievement of learners is to be realised in schools, there is a need to build strong parent-school partnerships or home-school relations. This implies that there should be a two-way communication network between school and home, and personalised interaction among principals, teachers and parents so as to feed back information on learner progress and problems to school. The central contention is that supportive relations and cooperation are necessary conditions for the effective day-to-day functioning of schools and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Sammons et al. (1997:114) state that principals should have an “open door policy.” This implies that they should be open and welcoming to parents, learners and other role-
players such as the Ministry of Education officials and the school board members. Parents involved in school could help to monitor and reinforce the work of the teacher, by assisting with homework and, as such, could affect their children’s education (Solórzano & Solórzano 1995:307; Seyfarth 1999:29). Zigarelli (1997:104) is of the opinion that high parental involvement should be pursued if the educational experiences and academic achievement of learners are to be improved. It would seem that the success of learners in school does not lie in schools alone, but can also be enhanced by a network of other supportive structures, particularly parental participation.

Chrispeels (1996:308) maintains that the home-school-community roles “form a scaffolding on which to build partnership programs.” The thrust of the argument is that one-off support provided by parents may not be efficacious in increasing the achievement levels of learners and therefore there is a need for mutual collaboration in order to sustain the motivation of learners. Lemmer (2000:64) argues for school-like families and family-like schools. She contends that a family-like school treats each child as a unique individual and makes him or her feel special and loved. At the same time, a school-like family recognises that each child is also a learner and creates an opportunity for doing schoolwork and reinforces academic pursuits and aspirations for academic success (Lemmer 2000:64). Reynolds and Teddie (2000:151) maintain that parental involvement ensures that parents synchronise school and home demands on learners. In other words, there is a need for stronger coupling between the school and home in order to enhance the cognitive abilities of learners and to create an advantageous condition for learning.

3.5.8 Possible negative side of some effective schools

Stedman (1984:312) claims that although there are many good things about effective schools, some have undesirable practices, which include a strong orientation to drill and practice. In other words, some effective schools focus on academic performance objectives and teach to the test. Teaching to the test implies that curricula of these schools “were often broken up into small teachable chunks of skills and students were frequently tested on the specified objectives... . Schools became effective by reorganising their
instruction around the systematic evaluation of students” (Stedman 1984:312). Teaching to the test implies that teaching is tailored to the mastery of those basic skills required by tests and examinations. Setoi (1996:64) critiques some teachers and policy-makers for placing excessive emphasis on having learners study for the examinations rather than other social factors. The excessive pressure placed on teachers and learners to achieve high in the national examinations may cause teachers to drill learners, using past examinations papers, and this practice may displace the fundamental goal of teaching, which is to provide knowledge. The next section concentrates on the local management of schools and discusses how school-based management can help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of schools.

3.6 LOCAL-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

School effectiveness researchers and other role-players involved in education service delivery are currently arguing for school-based management. The rationale is that school-based management increases teacher productivity, teacher efficiency and learner productivity, better management of resources, effective school management and, above all, improved academic performance. According to Gaziel (1998:320), the essence of school-based management is to get “the decisions about how to run the firm down to the people who know best what needs to be done.”

3.6.1 School-based management: its origins and how it functions

The school reform movement started in the early 1980s (Seyfarth 1996: ix; Cheng & Chan, 2000:206). Seyfarth (1996:4) states that the educational reform movement was introduced out of a desire to change the schools’ operation and output. Seyfarth (1996:4) points out that in response to the perceived falling standards and poor-quality schooling that threatened the United States, the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) suggested that districts needed to adopt new instructional goals, promotion policies, teacher evaluation procedures, and to introduce a planning process and to review
and to revise the curriculum. Decentralisation and participation were seen to be at the core of the reform efforts (Seyfarth 1996:4).

School-based management represents a paradigm shift in school governance and management toward decentralisation, devolution and greater school autonomy for the purpose of enhancing school effectiveness and ensuring education quality (Seyfarth 1996.ix; Gaziel 1998:320; Cheng & Chan 2000:206). Heystek (2001:210) argues for decentralisation of decision-making in view of the fact that principals and teachers at the school level know their needs and local conditions best, and therefore can make the best decisions. In this sense, decentralisation is seen as an innovation that could afford learners an opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process (Heystek 2001:210).

School-based management emphasises institutional capacity building and empowerment of the school-level staff by shifting decision-making to schools. Seyfarth (1996.ix) holds that this scenario will make it possible for teachers to have greater influence on learning. Cheng and Chan (2000:206) state that in a traditional management setting, it is difficult to improve education quality because schools are tightly bound and become passive and inefficient in using particularly human resources to solve their site-level problems. It would seem that the central objective of school-based management is to improve the effectiveness of schools by empowering staff at an individual school to assume more responsibilities in areas such as curriculum review and adaptation, acquisition and allocation of resources, and setting high standards. According to Sergiovanni (1990:21), “The key to making things better is to enable teachers – to give them the discretion, the support, the preparation, and the guidance necessary to get the job done.” In this respect, the central argument is that enabling or empowering teachers is part of value-added leadership, which is an indispensable requirement for successful school-based management.

Different countries use different terms to describe a decentralised management system of schools (Gaziel 1998:320). Canada and the United States of America use the term
“school-based management,” Britain uses “local management of schools,” Australia uses “self-managing schools” and Israel uses “autonomous schools” (Gaziel 1998:320). According to Gaziel (1998:320) and Cheng and Chan (2000:206), regardless of the term used, school-based management underpins a system of education in which the autonomy of members at the local level has been enhanced in order to create advantageous conditions that encourage participation, accountability, improvement and continuous professional growth.

In the researcher’s view, if improved education service delivery and improved academic performance of learners are to be realised in Lesotho secondary schools, then school-based management is the route to take. This is because school-based management gives principals and teachers at an individual school, more professional autonomy and thus increases professionalism and accountability. There is, however, a need for strong built-in administrative and institutional capacity in schools to ensure success. For example, even if a school-based management system were to be instituted in Lesotho secondary schools, there would still be a need for a centrally determined framework of the core functions to guide teachers.

3.6.2 Rationale for school-based management

Structurally, secondary schools are more complex than primary schools because they have more physical facilities and equipment, a wider school curriculum, with subjects divided into departments, and teachers teaching their specialisations. Hence, it stands to reason that there is a stronger need to give secondary school teachers professional autonomy, characterised by the devolution of some leadership responsibilities to lower levels, such as heads of department, senior teachers and even teachers in general. In this way, work becomes easy and manageable and the school becomes amenable to efficiency and effectiveness.

Bush and West-Burnham (1994:3) contend that self-management can be an engine for change if the local-level management of a school devolves powers such as resource
mobilisation and resource utilisation throughout the individual school, and management ceases to be the exclusive domain of the principal. Gaziel (1998:321) states that the need for decentralisation pivots around the “mechanistic” and “organic” forms of organisations. Schools as loosely coupled systems require an organic form of leadership or collaborative leadership, which emphasises the need for heightened teamwork, participative decision-making processes, promotion of teacher autonomy and supportive forms of school management (Gaziel 1998:320). It is argued that a dispersed management system usually leads to improved school practice, education quality and outcomes for the school and learners. Cheng (1999:1) and Wyman (2000:255) maintain that this is because school-based management brings together different local level role-players and empowers them with increased administrative authority in managing and governing their schools.

3.6.2.1 Teacher empowerment

The concept teacher empowerment implies giving teachers more power and the necessary skills and knowledge to run their own professional affairs and to utilize the school resources within a determined policy framework. According to Sweetland and Hoy (2000:709), “Empowerment is the process by which administrators share power and help others use it in constructive ways to make decisions affecting themselves and their work.” Norris et al (2002:12) argue that the term empowerment is closely related to the idea of self-actualisation and define it as “a sense of having control or influence over one’s own life and circumstances and over the decisions that affect one’s life.” At the core of this definition is the notion of self-determination, self-motivation and self-direction in pursuit of the organisational goals. Thus, teacher empowerment could be interpreted as a deliberate process of power-sharing between the principal and teachers, and the building of the professional capacity of teachers by the principal, so that they can embrace the values of the school and fervently pursue its goals.

According to Cunningham and Cordeiro (2000:104), “Empowerment requires members of the school community to take active roles, whether at local or national level.” This
underpins the fact that teachers need to be actively involved in school-wide decision-making processes and activities, such as school curriculum review, budgeting, evaluation and monitoring of school programmes, and the development of the school admission and promotion policies.

Wong, Sharpe and McCormick (1998:68) and Sweetland and Hoy (2000:725) found that teacher empowerment by the principal and the state-mandated policy framework in classroom and instructional matters is an important factor that can enhance learner academic performance and school effectiveness. Wong et al. (1998:68) argue that this is because the self-managing schools are expected to be more responsive, flexible and adaptable in dealing with the changing professional, administrative and pedagogical circumstances. It would seem that an important building block of school-based management and, by implication, teacher effectiveness is empowering teachers or providing them with the necessary professional skills that will make them adaptable and responsive to the immediate challenges of their work.

In a study on the impact of bureaucracy on the academic performance of learners, Bohte (2001:92) found that a market-based approach to education improves educational quality. The reason for this could be that teacher empowerment encourages professionalism rather than bureaucratic control (Sweetland & Hoy 2000:725). In this respect, Bohte (2001:92) contends that system-level bureaucrats add little value to the day-to-day process of teaching and learning as opposed to teachers, who are in daily interaction with learners. Thus, it would be a cost-effective strategy to invest in the empowerment and skills development of teachers as they have greater opportunities to add more value to the educational process.

3.6.2.2 Political, economic and educational argument for decentralisation

The political argument put forward for decentralization is that the closer school management is to its “clients,” the more responsive to the “customer” needs and demands it will be (Gaziel 1998:320). This underlines the fact that it is important to ensure that
there is “customer” (parents’ and learners’) satisfaction with the services provided by the system. The *economic argument* for decentralisation is that decentralised units foster competition, and thus effectiveness and efficiency increase in the process (Gaziel 1998:320). Gaziel (1998:320) stresses that self-managing schools are likely to provide services in line with the preferences or desires of the “customers.”

The *educational argument* for decentralisation is that bureaucratic control is incompatible with the teacher’s professional autonomy and interactive approach required for effective teaching, smothers initiative and innovation, and is detrimental to teacher morale and to enhancing a sense of teacher commitment (Gaziel 1998:320). Thus, it can be asserted that school-based management invests in professional growth and capacity building of teachers, in the sense that it is in the process of active participation in the school-based management activities that teachers develop skills and knowledge.

**3.6.2.3 Teacher sense of efficacy, commitment and community**

Gaziel (1998:323) established that there is a connection between perceived school autonomy and affective outcomes. In this regard, he found out that autonomous schools are more effective than their non-autonomous schools in the following ways: teacher sense of efficacy: teachers who are autonomous, and not under constant external control tend to develop a sense of professionalism, and a sense of personal mastery or believing in their ability to deliver effectively and foster change in learners (Gaziel 1998:323; Louis 1998:4). It could be inferred that the community expectations and the success-oriented culture that prevails in self-managing schools somehow propel staff to work diligently to improve their professionalism and effectiveness. A teacher’s sense of self-efficacy is enhanced by well-organised work environments, characterised by respect, and is linked to productivity and job satisfaction (Louis 1998:4).

Gaziel (1998:323) states that teachers in autonomous schools develop a sense of commitment. Teachers in autonomous schools have been reported to be more committed as they take part in the formulation and adoption of school policies (Gaziel 1998:323).
Louis (1998:3) adds that a sense of commitment underpins the fact that teachers invest their time, effort and knowledge in their schools and their goals. This suggests that they develop a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to their schools and the profession. This could be linked to the fact that they identify with their schools and feel obliged to make a meaningful contribution to improve them. A teacher sense of commitment could be indicated by expressed job satisfaction and low absenteeism.

Teachers in self-managing schools develop a sense of community (Gaziel 1998:323). School-based management fosters organic interaction amongst staff members, which implies that teachers tend to develop cooperation and teamwork and help one another in solving problems. In a case study of a successful elementary school in the United States of America, Beck and Murphy (1998:371) found that there was a sense of interpersonal relations and care amongst the inhabitants of the school, which emphasised the contribution of a sense of community to the academic performance of schools. There also tends to be achievement orientation in schools that have adopted the school-based management approach. This could be linked to the fact that autonomous schools are expected by the Ministry of Education, the public and other stakeholders to be more effective and do better in examinations.

3.7 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher traced the evolution of school effectiveness research in the literature from Coleman (1966) to the present day where it is generally held that schools have the internal capacities to promote learning and enhance the academic achievement of learners. Coleman and his associates (1966) indicated that children’s academic success in school could be traced and connected to the effects of their home background. This pessimism triggered an upsurge amongst the effective schools investigators, culminating in the search for in-school factors that influence the learners’ academic performance, and the pursuit to authenticate the belief that schools matter. It was found that schools are not passive conduits that could do little in the promotion of learners’ progress. In fact, the latter studies assumed a prescriptive tone that not only did schools matter, but that there
are identifiable characteristics of instructionally effective schools, which could be applied to other schools to improve their effectiveness. For example, strong and purposeful leadership, the involvement of the deputy, the involvement of teachers or participative management, high expectations, time maximisation and parental involvement are some of the characteristics found to be powerful determinants of school effectiveness in terms of the academic outcomes of learners. By means of an in-depth literature study, the researcher attempted to demonstrate that these variables do not work independently to improve the academic performance of a school, but rather work in an interrelated network.

In the developed countries such as the United States of America, Canada and Britain, physical facilities, textbooks and other educational materials have ceased to be significant determinants of academic achievement of learners. Conversely, within the context of developing countries, particularly in the sub-Saharan African region, these resources are still powerful determinants of academic achievement of learners. An inference has been made that this is largely due to the dire shortage of the physical facilities in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in low-income countries, such as Lesotho. School management, teaching and learning processes have been identified as very important because they constitute the core functions of the school, therefore if these three dimensions are effective, the overall school effectiveness will improve, particularly the academic achievement of learners.

This chapter indicated that the principal is the most strategically placed person, who can set the climate for effective change and guide the entire school institution to experience improvement in terms of performance in the national examinations, learner productivity, teacher productivity and infrastructure development. It was emphasised that teachers are the lifeblood of a school and that their quality and commitment are central to the good running of schools and effective student learning and academic success.
Chapter 4 discusses the empirical research that will be undertaken and describes the quantitative research methodology to be followed. The use of survey and sampling procedures and the data-gathering instruments will also be discussed.
CHAPTER 4

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 outlined the problem statement, aims, methodology and structure of the thesis, and provided the theoretical and conceptual framework that guided the investigation of the research problem. Chapter 2 presented an overview of the Lesotho education system and explained how the system functions with reference to governance, management and administration issues. In chapter 3 school effectiveness literature was reviewed, with special attention to selected indicators of school effectiveness related to school-based management. This chapter discusses the empirical research that will be undertaken. In view of the nature of the problem statement of this study, a quantitative research methodology will be adopted.

In this chapter the researcher will also discuss the development and administration of the data-collection tools, sampling procedures, data analysis, reliability, validity and limitations of the study. Basic descriptive statistics, mainly frequency distributions, will be used to analyse data and to establish trends, relationships and dissimilarities. Both open-ended and closed questions as well as structured and semi-structured interviews will be used to obtain information. In view of this, data will be presented in two forms, namely quantitative and qualitative.

The researcher deems it necessary to use both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to generate research results that portray the whole picture and a balanced perspective of the problem of poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In other words, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods is intended to yield findings that complement each other. The quantitative method is regarded as scientific and objective in the sense that it uses the scientific principles from the design of mostly closed questionnaires, the selection of the study sample, and the presentation of the research results, mainly in the
form of summarised numbers or statistics. At the same time, it is argued that the qualitative method provides a vivid picture of the life-world of the respondents as they provide in-depth responses to open-ended questions in an open-ended questionnaire, and a semi-structured or unstructured interview.

The closed questions will be presented in quantitative form, using frequency counts or percentages of respondents who cited a certain variable. At the same time, the patterns of responses to closed questions, expressed in percentages will be discussed. The open-ended questions will be presented in qualitative form, using the text form to describe the opinions or views of the respondents in respect of the frequency counts or percentages of particular responses. The next section discusses the salient differences between quantitative and qualitative methods.

4.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE METHODS

Quantitative and qualitative methods are two different approaches to research. Each has identifiable and distinct characteristics. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:14) state that the primary distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is that the quantitative method uses statistics to present data while the qualitative method presents facts in a narration using words.

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:14) contend that quantitative research is based on “logical positivist” philosophy, which takes the position that there are social facts with a single objective reality, which is free from personal prejudice and biases. Thus, quantitative research emphasises that scientific principles should be applied at all stages of the research, from the design of the research methodology, sampling procedures, and data analysis.

It is argued that quantitative research attempts to establish relationships between the variables and explain causes of changes in measured facts (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:15). Moreover, in the quantitative approach, the researcher remains detached from
the study or the situation being studied (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:15). Charles (1996:124) explains that quantitative research investigators try to keep themselves apart from the subjects because they fear that their involvement or presence may cause the subjects to behave differently and thereby contaminate the study. In this sense, it can be argued that the main objective of quantitative researchers is to try to keep the behaviour of those being studied to remain the same and unaffected by the presence of the researcher. This is linked to another objective of quantitative research, namely to establish context-free generalisations (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:15). This underpins the fact that generalisations made in quantitative research are not only restricted to the context or sample of the study, but can also be applied to the entire population from which the sample was taken, provided that the research participants were truly representative of the entire population. In the light of the above, during the empirical research, the researcher will try to maintain the activities of the school according to their usual course, in order to avoid influencing the behaviour of the research subjects in any way. The researcher will also emphasise to the respondents and informants that they should answer the questions as candidly as possible.

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:14) argue that, in contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research is based on a “naturalistic-phenomenological” philosophy, which assumes that there are “multiple realities” which are socially constructed by individuals and groups of people in their settings. Burrell and Morgan (in Cohen & Manion 1998:8) contend that qualitative research aims to gain understanding and to present explanations about the situation that are unique and particular to the individual or a group rather than what is general. Thus, it can be deduced that the main concern of qualitative research is to understand the phenomena from the life-world of the participants, as they would interpret it from their personal experiences. Under-girding qualitative methodology is the assumption that quality research can be achieved by interaction with and observation of the situation or the subjects being studied in their settings over an extended period.

The underpinning philosophy of qualitative research methodology is that during the process of data collection, the researchers or ethnographers should become “immersed”
in the situation they study, or with those they are studying, and record observations and interviews with participants (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:15). Charles (1996:123) adds that the main interest of qualitative research is in the contexts, emotions, values and social realities that shape human interaction and human behaviour, and thus the ideal strategy that should be adopted in data collection is close and sustained interaction with those groups or individuals being observed. In view of this, Schumacher and McMillan (1993:15) conclude that qualitative research makes context-bound generalisations.

In terms of data-collection methods, quantitative research uses the established set of procedures that guide the process of data collection, such as questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (Cohen & Manion 1998:83; Welman & Kruger 1999:151, 165-167). In this respect, quantitative researchers choose the data-collection strategies before going to the field to conduct the empirical study. In qualitative research, there is flexibility with respect to the methods used during the data-collection process, since the researcher does not, of necessity, go to the field with a set of questions prepared in advance. In effect, Scott (1996:61) notes that the qualitative method uses the qualitative interview, which “is unstructured, allows the agenda to be set by the interviewee and is primarily concerned with the interviewee’s views and opinions on a range of phenomena that relate to past and present events.”

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:15) argue that many “of (the) distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research are not absolute when one conducts research or reads a completed study. Experienced researchers can and do combine both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study in order to investigate a particular problem.” Scott (1996:59) concurs, stating that although there are differences between the quantitative and qualitative methods, the two “do not belong within separate research paradigms and thus can sensibly be used within the same investigation.” In this respect, he argues that the quantitative method uses questionnaires, which may have closed and open-ended questions (Scott 1996:59). Scott (1996:59) draws the similarities between the quantitative and qualitative methods by indicating that the open-ended questions, which are usually asked in questionnaires, are similar to the interview, a data-collection device
traditionally used in qualitative research, in that they allow the respondents to express their views. In the light of the above, many open-ended questions will be asked in this study in all the different sets of questionnaires for learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members and Ministry of Education officials. In addition, interviews will be held with all the denominational Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of government and community controlled schools. Hence, the research results will be reported in an explanatory manner using basic descriptive statistics.

4.3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research method has been selected for this study as it is considered to be more appropriate in view of the fact that it uses a survey in collecting data, which covers a wider area and a much larger population than the qualitative method, which adopts an ethnographic approach or a case study, using a relatively smaller sample. In view of this, the researcher considers the quantitative method more apt for this study as it would provide a broader picture of the problem of poor performance of most of the Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. It is also argued that quantitative research method is premised on the assumption that the use of scientific principles is the most appropriate way of obtaining information that is accurate, free from personal prejudice and uncontaminated by the sustained interaction of the researcher with the phenomena or individuals being studied.

4.4 SURVEY

In keeping with the fundamental tradition of quantitative methodology, the researcher will use a survey method to collect data from selected Form E learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members from each of the twenty-five secondary schools selected in the district of Maseru, and the selected Ministry of Education officials. In addition, the interview guide will be used to obtain information from the Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of government and community controlled schools. According to Dyer (1997:88), a survey “is a way of collecting
information from a large and dispersed group of people rather than from the very small number which can be accommodated in a case study.” In this way, it can be asserted that another advantage of a survey is that it is relatively economical in the use of time and resources, since it covers a much wider area in a shorter time.

Anderson (1990:195) argues that while it may be desirable to collect data from all the members of the target population, this is not practical and, in fact, may not be desirable since a sample that belongs to the target population can be selected, studied, and yield research findings that mirror the attributes of the whole population. In this regard, Anderson (1990:195) states that “surveys are sometimes more effective in that it would take too long and require too many researchers to contact the whole population. It would be better to do a thorough job with a representative sample, than do a poor job with everyone.” The crux of the argument is that a survey is economical and cost-effective.

As early as 1978, Walizer and Wienir (1978:265) emphasised that in a survey, unlike in an experiment, an investigator does not try to control or manipulate the situation, but instead poses questions to the respondents that they have knowledge of from experience. Dyer (1997:88) and Rasool (2000:130) agree that a survey is an appropriate method if the investigator intends to collect the sort of information that can be collected by questionnaires and interviews.

A basic principle that should be borne in mind is that whenever a survey is called for, the sample size should be reasonably large enough to allow generalisation of the research findings to the larger population from which the sample was drawn. Dyer (1997:89) contends that when it is not possible to gather information from every member of the group because it is too large, then a sampling technique should be used to select a sample that will represent or mirror the attributes of the larger population from which it was taken. Dyer (1997:89) argues further that although researchers use samples in their investigations, their focus is not on the sample per se, but on the message that it tells about the population from which it was drawn.
4.5 RATIONALE FOR CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY

In Lesotho, the problem of poor results in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is pervasive and cuts across all the denominational and topographical spectra. In effect, it could be said that the performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is currently in a state of crisis. For instance, the Examinations Council of Lesotho (2003:ii) reports that of the total of 7,131 candidates who sat for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in 2002, only 208 (2.9%) obtained first class passes, 1,138 (16.0%) obtained second class passes, and 2,233 (31.3%) obtained third class passes.

A total of 3,467 (48.7%) candidates obtained the General Certificate of Education, which indicates that they failed to meet the requirements for a pass. As indicated in chapter one to obtain the General Certificate of Education, a candidate must pass at least one subject. A total of 85 (1.2%) candidates failed the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in 2000, because they did not pass any of the subjects. Closer examination of the 2002 Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results reveals that the majority of candidates who obtained second class passes failed to obtain credits in English, and thus could not qualify for direct admission to the National University of Lesotho.

The picture painted above indicates that most learners and, by implication, most Lesotho secondary schools perform poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this regard, the researcher considers a quantitative research method, which uses a survey to collect data from a larger sample spread over a wider geographical area more appropriate in order to get a broader view of the extent of the problem of poor academic performance of most secondary schools in Lesotho. The researcher is of the opinion that by adopting the quantitative method, it will be possible to elicit the views of the learner, teacher, principal, deputy principal, school board member and Ministry of Education official respondents on the causes of poor performance of the majority of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.
Moreover, the opinions of the respondents on the strategies that can be employed to tackle the problem of poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations will also be probed. A survey is considered more appropriate in the context of this study, in view of the fact that a large sample has to be drawn from a large population scattered over a wide geographical area, with some schools situated in the ragged, mountainous areas, where transport is scarce. Dyer (1997:88) and Anderson (1990:195) maintain that a survey is ideal in a case where data are collected from a large population that is dispersed over a large geographical area.

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:103) and Charles (1996:12) emphasise that the advantage of a quantitative method is that it is based on the principle of generalisability, which represents the ability to produce results that can be generalised or applied to the larger population with similar attributes. In this respect, Charles (1996:12) argues in favour of quantitative research that if research is to have maximum value, the findings should help explain the behaviour of the larger population with similar attributes from which the sample was drawn.

Furthermore, Rasool (2000:136) holds that the analysis of quantitative data is comparatively easier since patterns, relationships, contrasts and points of agreement or disagreement can easily be established. In this sense, a survey was found to be more suitable in order to analyse and view the pervasive problem of poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations from different angles.

4.6 REPRESENTATIVENESS OF THE SAMPLE

The question of whether a study sample is representative is complex, as there are conflicting views as to what constitutes a sample that is representative of the target population. Prior to selecting the sample, the researcher familiarised himself with the principles and procedures that guide sample selection and representativeness. According to Welman and Kruger (1999:49), representativeness refers to the sample that “has the
exact properties in the exact same proportions as the population from which it was drawn but in smaller numbers. Consequently, a representative sample is a miniature image, or likeness, of the population.” Thus, if carefully selected, a representative sample will mirror the attributes of the larger population from which it is taken. At the same time, the findings from a representative sample will provide a basis for exploring the possible strategies that can be employed to address the problem being investigated. From the literature reviewed, it can be deduced that the first step towards building a sample that is representative is to identify and delineate the target population. Anderson (1990:196) states briefly that the target population is the group of interest that the researcher wants to study. He maintains that the target population should be clearly defined by the researcher and its boundaries understood (Anderson 1990:196).

Anderson (1990:196) states that it is vitally important that the sample be representative of the target population. Anderson (1990:196) and Charles (1996:12) agree that the sample that is large enough relative to the target population is ideal for generating research results that are generalisable. According to Anderson (1990:196), “The larger the sample, the more alike on average it will be to other such samples that could be drawn.” Charles (1996:12) contends that another predictor of generalisability is the random selection of the sample or research subjects. The central contention of these authors is that for it to be representative, a sample should be large enough relative to the target population and selected randomly.

Moreover, Anderson (1990:200) maintains that researchers can build a sample that is representative by means of adopting a statistical technique called the level of confidence of .05 or .01, which signifies that “the sample characteristics will not differ from the population characteristics more than 5 percent or 1 percent of the time”. To achieve this, Anderson (1990:200) proposes the following samples for the corresponding target population indicated below, at a confidence level of 95 per cent.
Table 4.1 Theoretical sample sizes for different sizes of population and 95 percent level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Required sample for tolerable error</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>4%</th>
<th>3%</th>
<th>2%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
<td>217</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>277</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>356</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>1,622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>381</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>2,290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Anderson (1990:202)

In the light of the foregoing and Table 4.1, the researcher obtained *Education Statistics 2001* from the Planning Unit Office of the Ministry of Education, which shows the statistics of all the registered schools in Lesotho. In addition, a computer list of all the school candidates who had registered for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations was obtained from the Examinations Council of Lesotho in May, 2001. These sources indicated that in 2001, the total number of Form E learners was 8,002 in all the 131 registered secondary schools in Lesotho. In the Maseru district, where the study was undertaken, the total number of Form E learners was 2,188, while that of senior secondary schools was 34 in 2001. In the light of the sample size recommended by Anderson (1990:202) for a corresponding population as reflected in table 4.1, the initial learner sample of 610, which the researcher selected from the target population of 2,188 Form E learners in the district of Maseru, was representative.

The Ministry of Education (2003:69) reports that the total number of teachers employed in both junior secondary and senior secondary schools of Lesotho in 2001 was 3,198. This implies that some of the teachers, who were included in the national total, were teaching in junior secondary schools and these were outside the scope of this study. *Education Statistics 2001*, compiled by the Ministry of Education (2003:59), reflects that
in 2001, the total number of both junior and senior secondary schools was 217. The Examinations Council of Lesotho (2002:vii-ix) indicates that in 2001, the total number of senior secondary schools that presented candidates for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations was 131. Thus, it can be deduced that in 2001, the total number of junior secondary schools in Lesotho was 86. In the district of Maseru, where the study was conducted, the total number of senior secondary schools was 34, while that of junior secondary schools was 12.

In view of the above information and the fact that this study focused on the senior secondary schools of the Maseru district, it can be inferred that if disaggregated, the number of teachers teaching in senior secondary schools only, in 2001 was smaller than the total number of 3,198 teachers indicated in *Education Statistics 2001*. In the district of Maseru, where the empirical research was conducted, the total number of teachers in both junior and senior secondary schools in 2001 was 919 (Ministry of Education 2003:69). Hence, it can be deduced that the total number of teachers who were teaching in senior secondary schools only, in the district of Maseru, was less than 919. In view of this, the original sample size of 220 teachers selected in the district of Maseru met the sample of 217 for a population that ranges between 500 and 999, proposed by Anderson (1990:202), at the tolerable level of 5 percent, as indicated in Table 4.1 above.

In Lesotho, the total number of principals, deputy principals and chairpersons of the school boards in secondary schools is usually equivalent to the total number of secondary schools, since there is only one office bearer serving in each of these capacities, respectively. Thus, the total number of principals, deputy principals and chairpersons of the school boards, respectively, corresponded with the total number of 131 senior secondary schools in the country in 2001. In the same way, the number of principals, deputy principals and chairpersons of the school boards in the district of Maseru in 2001, respectively, was equal to the total of 34 senior secondary schools in the district. Hence, a sample of 25 participants selected from each of the aforementioned groups in the district of Maseru, was representative of the population of each of these particular respondent groups. In this respect, the sample of 45 additional secondary schools selected in the
districts of Leribe, Berea, Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek and Qacha’s Nek for each of the aforementioned respondent groups, was representative of secondary schools in the whole country. Similarly, all four Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of government and community controlled schools were interviewed as research participants.

In 2001, the total number of Ministry of Education officials working in the secondary school sector, namely, in the inspectorial services and advisory services, was 27. This comprised 10 Inspectors of the Central Inspectorate and 14 Area Resource Advisors and 3 Area Management Advisors in the Advisory Services section. Hence, the collective sample of 20 Ministry of Education officials selected from the combined population of 27 was representative of the entire group.

4.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The concept representativeness is related to the concepts reliability and validity. Best and Kahn (1993:208) define reliability as “the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedure demonstrates: Whatever it is measuring it does so consistently.” Walizer and Wienir (1978:401) maintain that if “a measure is reliable, we should get the same score for each unit measured every time we make an observation of the characteristic if the unit being observed does not change in value during the time we are measuring it.” By implication, a measure can be considered to be reliable if it consistently produces the same or similar research results each time it is used, with the same procedures applied in collecting data from the same population over time.

Walizer and Wienir (1978:408-409) explain that validity can be ensured by examining the instrument or measurement device and procedure, and using common sense to judge whether it adequately measures what it means to measure. Validity refers to that quality of the data collection instrument or procedure, which enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure (Best & Kahn 1993:208; Thomas 1996:116). In the light of the above descriptions, it can be argued that validity can be ensured by reviewing the data-collection instruments in terms of clarity, wording and sequence of questions.
4.8 PRINCIPLES AND ETHICS GUIDING RESEARCH

When undertaking the empirical research, the researcher will endeavour to adhere to the ethical principles and standards guiding research. This involves being open to and honest with the research subjects, and disclosing fully what the purpose of the research is. Moreover, if the research subjects ask questions or seek clarification regarding the questionnaire questions, the researcher will answer them to ensure that there is clarity with the requirements of the questions.

The researcher will solicit the informed consent of the research subjects to participate in the study. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:182) argue that one of the principles researchers should adhere to during empirical research is to have informed consent of the subjects. Diener and Crandall (in Cohen & Manion 1998:350) define informed consent as “the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions.” Schumacher and McMillan (1993:182) add that informed consent involves clarifying to the respondents that they are at liberty to terminate their participation at any time without threat or pressure, and giving full disclosures of any risks that may be associated with the study. In keeping with this principle, the researcher will give the respondents the assurance that their opinions will be treated confidentially, and therefore they will not be required to write their names on the questionnaires.

Charles (1996:10) and Walizer and Wienir (1978:162-163) emphasise that the individuals selected to be respondents should receive assurance that they will be protected from any kind of discomfort, risk or violation of their right to privacy. In other words, the respondents should be assured that their names or identity will be kept confidential and their opinions treated anonymously. According to Walizer and Wienir (1978:162-163), the purpose of keeping the identity of respondents confidential is to safeguard that no information supplied by the respondents is used against them.
4.9 SAMPLING OF THE SCHOOLS

In this study, twenty-five senior secondary schools from the total of 131 registered senior secondary schools in Lesotho will be selected to participate in the study. These schools will be selected by means of *stratified random sampling* to ensure that they are representative of the proprietors. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:162) and Charles (1996:97) are of the opinion that in stratified sampling, the population is divided into subgroups, based on the variables identified by the researcher, to ensure that all the subgroups within the population are represented proportionally in the sample. In line with this view, the researcher will consider the following variables in stratifying the sample of the schools: the ownership or proprietor of the school, the location of the school, in terms of rural, urban and peri-urban areas, and the level of school effectiveness in terms of high, average and low effective schools. Consistency in performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations over the period of three years, as reflected in the pass lists, will be used as the determining factor in classifying the schools. As proposed by Schumacher and McMillan (1993:162), having selected the schools by stratified sampling, the subjects will be selected by *random sampling*. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:162) maintain that *random sampling* is the best technique to use in selecting a sample that is unbiased and representative. This is because in random sampling every member of the population is guaranteed an equal chance of being selected to be in the sample (Welman & Kruger 1999:54; Charles 1996:97).

4.10 SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The research participants of this study will include the following school-level respondents selected from twenty-five secondary schools in the district of Maseru, the Ministry of Education officials and the Education Secretaries:

- **Group A:** Twenty-five Form E learners
- **Group B:** Ten secondary school teachers
- **Group C:** One principal
- **Group D:** One deputy principal
Group E: One school board member
Group F: Twenty Ministry of Education officials (Central Inspectors/Area Resource Advisors and Area Management Advisors)
Group G: Five Education Secretaries/Supervisor of government- and community-controlled schools

Welman and Kruger (1999:54) refer to the members of the population as the units of analysis. This implies that they are the sources of information about the phenomenon being studied and, as such, the analysis and discussion of the empirical data revolves around them. In the same way, in this study, the analysis and discussion of the empirical data will revolve around the respondent groups listed above.

In order to gain a deeper understanding and capture a broader picture of the problem of poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, 45 secondary schools in addition to the original 25 secondary schools selected in the district of Maseru will be purposively selected in the districts of Leribe, Berea, Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek and Qacha’s Nek exclusively for the principal, deputy principal and one school board member samples. The purposive selection method will be used because it is envisaged that it will be difficult to find these respondents, especially the school board members, who usually live or work in places far from the schools under their control. Welman and Kruger (1999:63) state that in purposive sampling, researchers “rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population.”

When selecting learners and teachers, the researcher will use the simple random sample. A simple random sampling technique will be adopted by means of labelling numbers on small pieces of paper as follows: 1, 2, 3… in that order, up to the last number that corresponds with the number of learners in a class. These numbers will be put in a box and learners will be requested to draw one piece of paper from the box. Those who pick
the first twenty-five even numbers will be used as the study subjects. The same sampling technique will be adopted for teachers and Ministry of Education officials.

4.10.1 Data-collection procedures

The researcher will seek a covering letter from the Chief Inspector of the Central Inspectorate, in charge of the secondary schools’ inspectoral services, to communicate to the principals the importance of the study and request their support in the whole process of administering the questionnaires to learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals and school board members in their schools. In some cases, the researcher will contact the school principals by telephone to make arrangements for the administration or collection of the questionnaires. To maximise the response rate, follow-up visits will be made to the concerned respondent groups or schools.

The study sample will be as follows:

**Sample group**

Group A: Form E learners  
Group B: Teachers  
Group C: Principals  
Group D: Deputy principals  
Group E: School board members  
Group F: Ministry of Education officials (Central Inspectors/Area Resource Advisors and Area Management Advisors)  
Group G: Education Secretaries/Supervisor

In the researcher’s opinion the findings from these diverse respondents, who are expected to total about 1,050, will to a large extent mirror similar attributes of secondary schools in the district of Maseru, such as learner commitment, teacher productivity, school culture and school management. The researcher is of the opinion that the research findings will also help to shed light on the conditions of other secondary schools in Lesotho,
particularly with respect to the factors that cause most of them to perform poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this respect, Charles (1996:97) contends that if “the sample is large enough... the sample tends to correspond fairly closely to the population.” In other words, a sample size that is large enough relative to the target population is the determining factor of the applicability or generalisability of the research results to a similar population in similar contexts.

The key instruments that will be used to collect data will be copies of questionnaires, which will be distributed to each of the following first six respondent groups:

- Form E learners
- teachers
- principals
- deputy principals
- school board members
- Ministry of Education officials (Central Inspectors/Area Resource Advisors and Area Management Advisors)
- Education Secretaries/Supervisor of government and community controlled schools

In addition, copies of an interview guide will be used to interview the Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of the government and community controlled schools. Copies of the questionnaires and an interview guide distributed to each of the above respondent groups are attached to this study as appendices A, B, C D, E, F and G, respectively.

The purpose of having diverse respondent groups is to establish whether there are any similarities or dissimilarities between the perceptions of learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members, Ministry of Education officials and Education Secretaries in respect of the causes of poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. It is assumed that the participation of these diverse respondent groups in this study will help to generate findings that complement each other to bear light on the problem statement of the study, which is to investigate
why most Lesotho secondary schools perform poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

Some sections in questionnaires A, B, C, D, E and F, and the interview guide G, will ask questions specific to each of these respondent groups. At the same time, some sections in all six sets of questionnaires and the interview guide will ask questions common to all the respondent groups. The purpose of this is to gain a deeper understanding of the problem of poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations from a cross-section of seven respondent groups involved in this study. The second purpose of using diverse respondent groups is to elicit their views on possible strategies that can be employed to deal with (and eliminate) the problem of poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this regard, the researcher will examine whether there are points of convergence or divergence between the views of the respondent groups: learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members, Ministry of Education officials and Education Secretaries. In this way, the problem statement of this study will be addressed as a cross-section of perspectives will be obtained from the respondent groups.

Dyer (1997:113) states that during data collection, a researcher should ensure that the respondents adequately understand the questions. In this respect, the onus is on the researcher to ensure that the questionnaires are sufficiently complete, with clear and concise answers (Dyer 1997:113). Thus, in order to achieve this, during the development of the questions, the researcher will try to be meticulous in the wording of each question. In the same way, during the administration of the questionnaires, the researcher will endeavour to make sure that the respondents understand the questions clearly.
4.10.2 Method of gathering data

The researcher will distribute the questionnaires A, B, C, D, E and F to the learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members and Ministry of Education officials, respectively. In most schools the learner questionnaire will be administered personally by the researcher, while in some schools, it is expected that the school principals will elect to assign teachers to administer them at convenient times. On each occasion, a thorough explanation of the purpose of the study will be outlined clearly to the respondents and their permission to take part in the study will be solicited. In cases where the learner questionnaires are administered by a teacher assigned by the principal, the researcher will explain and give guidelines on the sampling procedures and conduct of the administration as outlined earlier.

4.10.3 Questionnaires

Six different questionnaires will be developed for the corresponding six respondent groups, namely the learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members and Ministry of Education officials. This means that a different questionnaire will be developed for each of the six respondent groups. The researcher’s choice of these six respondent groups is based on an understanding that they perform different, but complementary roles that are integral to the education of learners. In addition, a semi-structured interview guide will be developed to interview four Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of the government and community controlled schools face-to-face. This implies that an interview guide will have both structured and unstructured questions. It is the researcher’s view that different perspectives reflected in the responses of the respondent groups will offer a helpful cross-section of opinions.

The questionnaires appended to the study as appendices A, B, C, D, E and F will be the major data-collection tools in this study. An interview guide appended to this study as appendix G will be used only in interviewing the denominational Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of the government and community controlled schools. All six
questionnaires and the interview guide will contain open-ended and closed questions. The researcher will use both forms of questions because the information sought from the respondents requires open-ended and closed answers. The closed questions will require direct and objective answers from the respondents while the open-ended questions will give the respondents an opportunity to express their views or opinions.

Dyer (1997:117) states that closed questions are ones in which the range of possible answers to a question are provided or determined by the investigator or questionnaire designer where the respondents are simply required to select an appropriate answer from a range of possible responses. Another format is the open-ended questions, which are open and do not limit the responses, but allow the respondents to state the facts or express their views. In open-ended questions, spaces are often provided where respondents can answer in their own words (Dyer 1997:116). According to Dyer (1997:117), one of the advantages of open-ended questions is that they are precise in that they enable the respondents to answer entirely in their own words, thus they can provide an accurate picture of the reality of their life-world. However, Dyer (1997:117) and Walizer and Wienir (1978:271) contend that a disadvantage of open-ended questions is that their analysis is cumbersome and time-consuming since the respondents answer in their own words and, as such, there can be a number of possible responses.

As indicated by Schumacher and McMillan (1993:240-242) and Dyer (1997:123), the researcher will pay attention to the following general principles when designing the questionnaire:

1. Using language that is simple and clear, that can be interpreted easily by all the respondents;
2. Phrasing questions that are short and comprehensible to all the relevant respondents;
3. Avoiding double-barrelled questions that could possibly confuse the respondents.
(Schumacher and McMillan (1993:240) state that a question should be limited to one idea or concept.)
4. Asking questions relevant to the respondent group, about which they have information.
4.10.4 Interviews

In this study, interviews will be conducted with the Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of government and community controlled schools. The use of interviews as data-collection tools is intended to be complementary to the questionnaires, which are usually used in the quantitative research. Cohen and Manion (1998:271) maintain that as a research technique, the interview is regarded as one of a range of survey methods. The researcher will use the interview to obtain information specifically from four Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of government and community controlled schools because there are only a few of them and, as such, an interview would be efficient and cost-effective and obtain information that is rich and well substantiated. Cannell and Kahn (in Cohen & Manion 1998:271) define the research interview as “a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation.” Thus, the interaction or two-way communication between the interviewer and interviewee, initiated by the former in seeking research-relevant information from the latter, appears to be the defining feature of an interview.

Patton (in Best & Kahn 1993:199) points out that the purpose of interviewing “is to find out what is in or on someone else’s mind. The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone’s mind.” Best and Kahn (1993:199) state that too often the interviewees provide the information that they think the interviewer wants to hear. These authors caution that the interviewer should clarify to the interviewees that he or she does not hold any preconceived ideas (Best & Kahn 1993:199). In this regard, the interviewer should not try to impose his or her own preconceived ideas on the interviewees, but should rather try to access their perspectives or elicit their views and opinions on the phenomenon being investigated.
Cohen and Manion (1998:272) argue that one advantage of a research interview is that it allows for greater depth than other methods of data collection. This could be linked to the fact that an interview, unlike closed questions, allows the interviewer to probe some questions in order to obtain deeper meaning from the interviewee. However, a disadvantage of the interview is that it is prone to the subjectivity and bias of the interviewer because of the relative freedom and flexibility that the interviewer has in posing the questions (Cohen & Manion 1998:272). In part, this could probably be attributed to the freedom that the interviewee has in responding to questions, which renders both the interviewer and interviewee prone to deviation from the central theme of the question.

From the literature reviewed, three types of interview are identified, namely the structured, unstructured and semi-structured interview (Cohen & Manion 1998:273-292; Flick 1998:82-85; Welman & Kruger 1999:166-167). In the *structured* interview, the precise form, sequence of questions, wording and direction of questioning are determined by the interviewer in advance of meeting the interviewee (Dyer 1997:58; Cohen & Manion 1998:273). In contrast, the *unstructured* interview is an open situation, in which the interviewer does not have a prepared list of questions but has the central question or themes on which the questions will be asked (Dyer 1997:58; Cohen & Manion 1998:273). The sequence and form of questions are determined by the information that the respondent gives out. Thus, in an unstructured interview, the interviewer has the freedom and flexibility to pose the questions that he or she deems relevant depending on the theme explored in the course of the interview. Dyer (1997:59) and Welman and Kruger (1999:167) describe a *semi-structured* interview as a combination of the structured and unstructured interview. Dyer (1997:59) points out that in a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a list of prepared questions and at the same time, he or she allows the interviewees the freedom and flexibility to expand answers and pursue their lines of thinking.
4.10.4.1 Guidelines for interviewing

When conducting the interviews, the researcher will pay attention to the following guidelines proposed by Walizer and Wienir (1978:286) and Cohen and Manion (1998:275) for successful interviewing:

- **Establish good rapport with the interviewee.** Cohen and Manion (1998:275) emphasise that the interviewer should try to build a relationship with the interviewee that transcends the research, and promotes a bond of friendship and a feeling of togetherness.

- **Be unobtrusive.** Cohen and Manion (1998:275) state that in order to obtain the information that is untainted by their presence and actions, the interviewers should be unobtrusive, but should only witness events as they are.

- **Follow the interview schedule exactly.** Walizer and Wienir (1978:286) indicate that the interviewer should follow the interview schedule exactly during the interview. This implies that the interviewer should not invent or add more questions that were not in the initial schedule or guide.

- **Be friendly and neutral.** Walizer and Wienir (1978:287) stress that the interviewer should not take positions or issue, but should rather be neutral and friendly.

4.11 QUANTITATIVE DATA-ANALYSIS STRATEGIES: RATIONALE FOR CHOICE OF DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:191) point out that quantitative research “relies heavily on numbers in reporting results, sampling, and in providing estimates of instrument reliability and validity.” Thus, the use of numbers or statistics in sampling, data reduction, data analysis and reporting of research findings appears to be a distinguishing feature of the quantitative research method. It can be inferred that the use of statistics is intended to ensure that the samples selected for the study are representative of the target population so as to eliminate errors in the reduction and analysis of data. This, in turn, is intended to ensure that the research results are uncontaminated by human error and that
the results are reported in an objective manner that reflects a true picture of the situation being studied.

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:191) define statistics as the “methods of organizing and analyzing quantitative data. These methods are tools designed to help the researcher organize and interpret numbers derived from measuring a trait or variable.” Thus, the use of statistics can help the researcher to organise and give meaning to the numbers derived from measuring the variable such as the differences in achievement levels in Mathematics between male and female learners in secondary schools.

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:192) state that there are two categories of statistical techniques, namely descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics transform a set of numbers into indices that describe the data (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:192). Descriptive statistics, also known as summary statistics, are used to summarise, organise and reduce large numbers of observations (Schumacher & McMillan 1993:192). Dyer (1997:282) adds that descriptive statistics reduce large numbers down to a single statistic that is easy to understand and will represent a particular feature, or relationship between variables. Schumacher and McMillan (1993:192) and Dyer (1997:282) explain that descriptive statistics form the basis for summarising quantitative data and interpreting the results. In view of the above, it can be deduced that descriptive statistics are an organised or summarised numerical version of data that can be used to represent variables, patterns or relationships, which will be of interest to the researcher.

In contrast, Schumacher and McMillan (1993:192) state that inferential statistics “are used to make inferences or predictions about the similarity of a sample to the population from which the sample is drawn…. Inferential statistics depend on descriptive statistics. Without a complete understanding of descriptive statistics, therefore, inferential statistics make very little sense.” In other words, descriptive statistics form the basis on which inferential statistics are developed. Moreover, it can be inferred that the purpose of inferential statistics is to indicate the similarities between the sample and the population from which the sample is drawn. In this respect, it can be argued that the use of
inferential statistics is intended to statistically generalise the research findings to the target population or to explain the status of the larger population in respect of the variables being studied and to arrive at conclusions. It is, however, argued that inferential statistics are quite technical and sophisticated as they are characterised by the use of means and standard deviations (Dyer 1997:329). In view of this, it can be concluded that inferential statistics are inaccessible to the majority of the stakeholder groups mentioned above.

In the light of the above and the nature of the problem investigated, namely, the causes of poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, the researcher will use descriptive statistics, mainly frequency counts. In the context of this study, descriptive statistics are found to be more appropriate because they use language that is accessible to teachers, policy makers at the Ministry of Education and school level, Education Secretaries and other relevant stakeholders engaged in the education enterprise. Another advantage of descriptive statistics lies in the use of frequency tables and histograms, which provide a pictorial representation of the data presented.

In 1988, Casley and Kumar (1988:6) stated that the use of complicated and advanced statistical techniques may be unnecessary in data analysis. According to them, “Often these techniques go beyond what is required, are misapplied to data that do not meet the statistical conditions, and result in coefficients that the user does not understand.” In view of this, Casley and Kumar (1988:6) maintain that simple exploratory analysis and tables should be used in data analysis. In line with this observation, the researcher will use simple descriptive statistics and text form in presenting the research results.

4.12 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Compared to quantitative data, qualitative data are difficult to capture and analyse because open-ended questions in a questionnaire or a semi-structured or unstructured interview allow the respondents to provide multiple possible responses. In this respect,
Mouton (2001:108) acknowledges that textual data “are rich in meaning (sometimes “multiple meanings” or “surplus” meaning) and are difficult to capture in a short and structured manner.” Mouton (2001:108) points out that quantitative or numeric data, on the other hand, are “easy to capture but not as rich in meaning as textual data.”

Anderson (1990:153) and Mouton (2001:108) agree that qualitative data are difficult to analyse, but contend that this can be facilitated by coding data, entering the codes into an appropriate software program or spreadsheet format, and sorting them out electronically. According to Walizer and Wienir (1978:98), “Coding refers to any modification of data from the way it was originally recorded.” The essence of coding is to facilitate the translation of data into frequency counts. The main purpose of frequency counts is to indicate the number of respondents who cited a certain variable, or what Welman and Kruger (1999:201) refer to as “the recurring themes in qualitative research.”

In the light of the above, the researcher will capture qualitative or textual data by means of coding the open-ended responses and entering the codes into the computer program, Access. This will facilitate the process of manipulating data or filtering the entries into the format desired by the researcher and making the frequency counts. Welman and Kruger (1999:201) maintain that in qualitative data analysis, there is still a need “to record the relative incidence (frequencies) of themes and of the ways in which these themes are portrayed.” In addition, the respondents’ views will be synthesised and presented in textual form. In order to elucidate the analysis of qualitative of data, in some instances, the unedited comments of the respondents will be presented and discussed.

4.13 DATA PROCESSING

The researcher will undertake the exercise of cleaning data. The term “cleaning data” means identifying and eliminating all errors deriving from the questions, which could be misinterpreted by the respondents and other associated inaccuracies. In this sense, the researcher will ensure that there is uniformity amongst the respondents in terms of interpreting the instructions. The next step will be coding or data reduction, which refers
to translating both closed and open-ended answers into numbers (Walizer & Wienir 1978:265). This will enable the researcher to capture data using Microsoft Access 2000. Microsoft Access 2000 is an updated version of a database program in which data are entered into cells. Once data have been entered into the cells, the entries or grouped records can be sorted, filtered or manipulated according to the specific needs of the user (Quadrant Training 1997:2). In turn, filtering the records or data facilitates the process of preparing frequency distributions. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative section of the research will be discussed in chapter 5.

### 4.14 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher explained the rationale for the choice of quantitative research methodology and outlined the procedures that will be followed in conducting the empirical research. The principles and ethics that guide a survey were discussed and the sampling procedures and sample size explained. Moreover, it was highlighted that the questionnaires for groups A, B, C, D, E and F appended to this study will be used as the prime instruments in gathering data from the learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members and Ministry of Education officials. It was also pointed out that the interview guide for group G will be used to abstract information from four Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of government and community controlled schools. Open-ended and closed questions were also discussed. The researcher explained that, in view of the pervasive problem of poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, a survey is found to be more appropriate since it can be used in a relatively short period, covering a wide geographical area. Finally, the procedures of data collection, data reduction and data analysis were explained. Chapter 5 deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the survey and interviews as the themes that prompt further comment and discussion emerge.
CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 discussed the research methodology and design of the investigation. The rationale for the choice of quantitative methodology was given, and the techniques used in data reduction and data analysis explained. In this chapter, the data obtained from the empirical study will be analysed and interpreted. An integrated approach is adopted in presenting data and discussing the research results from the seven respondent groups: learners, teachers, deputy principals, principals, school board members, Ministry of Education officials and Education Secretaries, especially where common questions were asked. The purpose of using an integrated approach is to identify the similarities and differences in the perceptions of these respondent groups with reference to the problem of poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In some cases, the correlation between the research findings and the literature will be pointed out.

5.2 RESPONSE RATE AND STRUCTURE OF DATA-COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The number of respondents who returned usable questionnaires were as follows: 575 Form E learners, 110 teachers, 40 deputy principals, 43 principals, 17 school board members, 12 Ministry of Education officials and 5 Education Secretaries, making a total of 802 respondents. On the whole, the questionnaires distributed to the teacher, principal, deputy principal and school board member respondents were adequately answered. However, some questions in the learner questionnaire were left unanswered, despite the researcher’s requests prior to the administration of the questionnaire that the respondents should endeavour to answer all the questions. Nevertheless, the number of unanswered questions was not significant to compromise the reliability of the questionnaires. In presenting the research results for each question, the number of respondents who responded to the particular question is indicated.
Each of the six questionnaires developed for learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school boards members and Ministry of Education officials, and the interview guide for the Education Secretaries had a different number of items designed to investigate the problem of poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. The number of items differed because in some cases each questionnaire sought information that was only relevant and specific to each of the seven groups. For example, there were 30 items in the learners’ questionnaire, 15 in the teachers’ questionnaire, 19 in the principals’ questionnaire, 21 in the deputy principals’ questionnaire, 13 in the school board members’ questionnaire and 8 in the Ministry of Education officials’ questionnaire. The interview guide for the Education Secretaries and the Supervisor of government and community controlled schools had 7 items.

There were three sections in all the questionnaires while the interview guide had two sections. Section A covered the biographical or personal information of the respondents. Section B covered the school factors. These included, among other things, the respondents’ evaluation of the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, the reasons that contributed to this performance, and the factors that, in their opinion, could improve the academic performance of schools in this regard. Section C focused on the satisfaction of the learner, teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents with their teachers and principals, with reference to the performance of their duties. The teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents were asked to indicate their satisfaction levels with their jobs. The learner respondents were also asked to indicate their satisfaction with the way they were treated at school, with regard to a culture of human rights.

In order to avoid generalisation when presenting the empirical results, comparisons are made between the high, average and low effective schools on the questions that deal with certain salient effectiveness indicators. The Cambridge Overseas School Certificate pass lists of previous years were used to classify the schools into the three broad categories of
high, average and low effective. In this regard, consistency in academic performance over a period of three years was used as a guiding principle in classifying the schools. In isolated cases, comparisons are made between the urban, peri-urban and rural schools in dealing with selected effectiveness indicators.

5.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LEARNERS’ DATA

In addition to the general common questions that were posed to all the respondent groups, the learner questionnaires contained learner specific questions such as the age of learners, repetition rate, home background factors, opportunity to study at home, and prior achievement in primary schools. This section presents the research findings generated from the learner specific questions.

5.3.1 Age of learners as an indicator of effectiveness

One of the indicators commonly used to determine the effectiveness of an education system is the age appropriateness of learners relative to an educational level. The assumption is that an education system can be judged to be effective if a large proportion of learners who entered an education cycle, such as a seven-year primary school cycle, complete successfully without repeating. In the Technical Guidelines intended to guide the member states in assessing their progress towards the universal goal of Education for All by the year 2000, UNESCO (1998:12) emphasised that in order to achieve the target of universal primary education, the number of under-age and over-age learners should be reduced. This principle can equally be used to assess the internal efficiency of secondary schools.

In Lesotho, the official age at which children should start primary school is six. Hence, in accordance with this norm, all or at least the majority of learners should have completed the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate or the five-year secondary school cycle by the age of 17, after twelve years of continuous schooling from Standard 1. In the case of this survey, which was conducted in 2001, the majority of the Cambridge Overseas School
Certificate completers were those born in 1984, when the age norm of the Ministry of Education is applied. However, the information abstracted from the learner respondents about their dates of birth indicates that the majority were over-age, as depicted in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1 Dates of birth of learner respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>High No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Overall No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982 and before</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>56.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: *High*: High effective school; *Average*: Average effective school; *Low*: Low effective school

**Table 5.2 Summarised dates of birth of learner respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summarised learner ages</th>
<th>High No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Overall No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-age</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate age</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: *High*: High effective school; *Average*: Average effective school; *Low*: Low effective school

Table 5.2 reflects that, overall, a large proportion of learner respondents were over-age in terms of completing Cambridge Overseas School Certificate at the official age of 17. Of
the 551 learner respondents who indicated their dates of birth, 441 (80%) were over-age. This implies that they were either born in 1983 or earlier. In this group, the ages of learners ranged from 18 to 31. Altogether only 109 (19.8%) learner respondents were the appropriate age. This implies that they were either born in 1984 or 1985, or aged 16 or 17 as of 2001. Only 1 (0.1%) learner respondent was under-age with respect to completing Cambridge Overseas School Certificate at the official age of 17. The under-age respondent was born in 1986 or aged 15.

A closer examination of the high, average and low effective schools reveals variances in respect of the ages at which the learner respondents completed Form E or Cambridge Overseas School Certificate, in these three categories of schools. The average age at which the learner respondents completed Form E in high effective schools was 18; in average effective schools it was 19, and 20 in low effective schools.

From Table 5.2, it is evident that compared to the average and low effective schools, a larger proportion of learner respondents (41%) attending the high effective secondary schools completed Form E or Cambridge Overseas School Certificate at an appropriate age of 17. A possible explanation for this could be that high effective schools select good applicants, who obtained good quality results or first class passes in the Primary School Leaving Examinations. More often than not, a large proportion of the first class candidates are high achievers, who tend to experience lower repetition rates than the second and third class learners in both primary and secondary schools. In other words, the progression rate of learners in high effective schools is comparatively higher than in average and low effective schools. It is also possible that high effective schools consider age appropriateness as well when selecting applicants for Form A.

As indicated above, the majority of learner respondents in average and low effective secondary schools completed Form E or Cambridge Overseas School Certificate at the average ages of 19 and 20, respectively. One possible explanation for this could be that these schools tend to admit a substantial number of learners who are older than the official age of 13 in Form A. Another contributory factor could be that the repetition rates
of learners in low- and average-performing schools is high, particularly given that they do not have the first choice advantage of selecting good applicants like the high-performing schools.

Overall, the majority of learner respondents (80%) who completed the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate in 2001 were older than the official age of 17 and this could be considered an indicator that the Lesotho education system is ineffective in this regard. This section of the data indicates that, on average, the learner respondents took longer than the official period of twelve years needed to complete both primary and secondary education. This implies that more years of investment by the state and individual families are required to produce one high school graduate.

5.3.2 Home background factors

It is often said that the socio-economic status of parents and parental education level exert a great influence on the academic achievement of a learner. Reynolds and Teddlie (2000:151) and Van Wyk (2001:115) concur that parental involvement in the education of a learner, characterised mainly by parents assisting their children with homework, has a positive effect on the academic achievement of learners. In view of this, the learner respondents were asked to indicate the occupations of their parents.

A large proportion of learner respondents indicated that their parents were unemployed and it was also deduced that another substantial proportion of parents were in low status occupations. For instance, of the 367 learner respondents who indicated the occupations of their mothers, 170 (46%) reported that their mothers were unemployed while 39 (11%) reported that their mothers were self-employed, and these were largely in small-scale entrepreneurship, such as knitting, subsistence farming and sewing. A total of 146 (40%) mothers were reported to be employed in professional occupations. However, when examined more closely, it could be discerned that a large number of them were in low status administrative posts, such as secretaries and clerks. Finally, 12 (3%) mothers were reported to be in un/semiskilled occupations, such as factory workers.
Of the 319 learner respondents who responded in respect of their fathers, 108 (34%) indicated that their fathers were professionals, such as teachers, policemen or soldiers; 35 (11%) reported that their fathers were unemployed; 82 (26%) fathers were reported to be self-employed, and these were largely subsistence farmers. Thus, they could be considered to be unemployed as they were not engaged in any form of organised economic activity that generated a substantial, regular income for their families. A further 94 (29%) fathers were reported to be in un/semiskilled occupations, and these included miners or casual workers in factories.

On the whole, it could be discerned that a large proportion of parents were unemployed and this implies that most learner respondents were from low socio-economic status families. Thus, it could be deduced that a high proportion of learner respondents whose parents were unemployed or were in the low socio-economic status category, were positively correlated with the general poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In a similar study on the effect of the socio-economic disadvantage on the achievement of learners in London, Demie, Butler and Taplin (2002:101) established that there is a strong relationship between the socio-economic disadvantage of learners and their success in the examinations. In this respect, they found that schools with a larger number of learners from socio-economically disadvantaged families tend to do less well in the examinations than those with a small proportion of learners coming from the disadvantaged families (Demie et al. 2002:101).

5.3.3 Environmental factors

The respondents were asked to tick from the following list, the materials available at their homes: (a) educational books, (b) television, (c) radio, (d) telephone, (e) computer, (f) none. The purpose of this question was to assess whether there were any differences in the materials that enriched learning available at the homes of learners attending the high, average and low effective schools, and whether such differences corresponded with the
achievement levels of learners or the performance of schools in the Cambridge Overseas Schools Certificate examinations. According to the researcher’s delineation, to be judged as coming from a high socio-economic status family, a learner respondent ought to tick at least three items from the following list: (a) educational books, (b) television set, (c) radio, (d) telephone, (e) computer, (f) none.

Table 5.3 Materials available at the learners’ homes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials available</th>
<th>High</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Average</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more materials</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or two materials</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: High: High effective school; Average: Average effective school; Low: Low effective school

Of the 569 learner respondents who answered this question, 262 (46%) ticked either one or two items available at their homes; 32 (6%) ticked none to indicate that none of the materials listed were available at their homes. This indicates that they were the worst off with regard to living at homes that were poorly endowed with the materials that could enrich their learning. Altogether 294 (52%) learner respondents could be considered to be living in deprived home environments. In this sense, the general deprived home environments in which the learner respondents lived could be regarded as another contributory factor to the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. Only 275 (48%) learner respondents indicated that they were living in homes that could be considered relatively well endowed with resources that could enhance their learning.

Table 5.3 indicates that 43 (66%) learner respondents in high effective, 160 (52%) in average effective and 72 (36.5%) in low effective schools lived in homes where three or
more materials were available. According to the benchmark set for this study, these homes could be considered educationally favourable. Relatively speaking, a larger proportion of learner respondents in high effective schools appeared to be living in homes that could be considered educationally more advantageous. Thus, the learner-friendly home environments that are endowed with the materials that enrich learning appear to be one possible contributory factor to the relatively better achievement of learners in the high-performing schools vis-à-vis their counterparts in the average- and low-performing schools, who indicated that, in the main, they lived in educationally deprived homes.

5.3.4 Parental support

To the question of whether they received any assistance with their schoolwork from their parents or older siblings, 563 learner respondents answered this question. Of the 563 learner respondents, 449 (80%) indicated that they received assistance from their parents, and 114 (20%) indicated that they did not receive any assistance from their parents related to their schoolwork. It was, however, learned in the open-ended follow-up question that the assistance that the learner respondents indicated they received from their parents was not necessarily in their schoolwork, but was wide-ranging. The learner respondents indicated that the assistance provided by their parents included, among other things, morale support or motivation, provision of materials that enriched their English vocabulary, such as magazines and newspapers, payment of fees for additional private classes and the inspection of their exercise and note books after school.

The fact that parents pay high fees towards their children’s education from their hard-earned money justifies the learners’ claims that their parents motivated them to work hard or assisted them in their studies. In this context, it can be deduced that a high level of parental support was driven more by the sentiments of safeguarding the family’s resources. In other words, it can be inferred that parents motivated their children to work hard at their studies in order to ensure that they made the most of the educational opportunities or services that they had paid for. The rewards or benefits that would accrue later on from the educational attainment of the child might then serve as a long-term goal.
5.3.5 Opportunity to study at home

Lemmer (2000:64) and Chrispeels 1996:300) maintain that an opportunity to study at home, created by parents or school-like family practices, is a critical factor that can enhance the academic achievement of learners. Consistent with this notion, the learner respondents were asked if they were afforded sufficient opportunity to study at home. Of the 552 learner respondents who answered the question of whether they were afforded sufficient opportunity to study at home, 293 (53%) said yes, 257 (47%) said no and he remaining 2 (0.3 %) learner respondents indicated that sometimes they did and at other times they did not get sufficient opportunity to study at home. Given that a large proportion of learner respondents (47%) indicated that they did not get adequate opportunity to study at home, it would be legitimate to consider a lack of sufficient opportunity to study at home another contributory factor in the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

5.3.5.1 Evidence given by the learner respondents as to whether they were afforded sufficient opportunity to study at home

Of the learner respondents, 262 (47%) of those who indicated that they did get adequate opportunity to study at home reported that their parents understood that they were learners and, as such, did not assign them many time-consuming family chores after school. Some reported that their parents even created a learning-conducive environment for them to study comfortably. This finding is in line with Lemmer’s (2000:64) contention that a school-like family recognises that each child is also a learner and reinforces the importance of learning by creating an opportunity to do homework and other academic activities that can enhance the learner’s academic success.

Of the 257 (47%) who indicated that they did not have sufficient opportunity to study at home, 153 (28%) reported that they lacked enough opportunity to study at home because their parents gave them family chores to perform after school and on weekends. Some
learner respondents stated that they did not get adequate opportunity to study at home because they were from poor families and had to struggle to make ends meet after school by means of some sort of work in order to sustain their families. The following statement made by one learner respondent of a low-performing rural school is a typical example of the harsh conditions under which some learners study in Lesotho:

*My parents are not kind to me as a student. They do not give me time to read or work on my homework. After school I attend to the family chores, and when I go to bed, to read, they say there is no money for the light; I have to save it.*

Seventy-six (14%) learner respondents reported that there were no suitable facilities, such as electricity, study tables and conducive rooms, for them to study comfortably. The task of studying under such harsh conditions as indicated above becomes uninspiring and discomforting to learners.

Twenty-one (4%) learner respondents indicated that they did not get adequate opportunity to study at home because they wasted time watching television or on other forms of entertainment such as playing with friends; 13 (2%) reported that they walked long distances to and from school and could not work on their studies when they arrived at home because they were tired.

**5.3.6 Prior school factors and prior achievement**

The first objective of this section was to obtain information that would shed light on the academic quality of learners enrolled in secondary schools by tracing factors such as the progression rate, repetition rate, and completion rate of the learner respondents in primary schools. The second objective was to obtain an overview of whether the learners’ prior achievement in primary schools was positively related to their academic success in secondary schools.
Table 5.4 The class in which the learner respondents passed Standard 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class obtained in PSLE</th>
<th>High No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Overall No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First class</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second class</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: *High*: High effective school; *Average*: Average effective school; *Low*: Low effective school

Of the 560 learner respondents who responded to this question, 255 (46%) indicated that they passed in first class, 198 (35%) in second class, and 107 (19%) in third class. On the surface, these figures could give the impression that the majority of learners enrolled in secondary schools passed the Primary School Leaving examinations in first class. However, a review of the past Primary School Leaving examinations results shows that the third-class candidates constitute the majority.

From Table 5.4 it can be seen that the majority of learners who had the highest survival rate from Form A through to Form E were the ones who passed the Primary School Leaving School Examinations in first class, followed by those who passed in second class. Generally speaking, the third-class candidates appear to experience the lowest survival rate in secondary schools, meaning that they experience more academic problems than the first and second-class learners. In other words, before they reach Form E, the majority of learners who passed the Primary School Leaving Examinations in third class seem to experience higher repetition rates than the first and second-class learners. Thus, this indicates that in Lesotho there is a positive relationship between the prior academic achievement of learners in primary schools and their achievement in secondary school. Murphy and Alexander (2002:13) explain this as follows: “Prior knowledge predicts future learning.” Similarly, in a study on the factors that contribute to the academic performance of learners in secondary schools in Flanders region of Belgium,
Van Damme, De Fraine, Van Landeghem, Opdenakker and Onghena (2002:385) established that prior achievement was by far the best predictor of the learners' achievement in secondary school. According to Van Damme et al. (2000:385), “About 56% of the variance in the final position reached in secondary education could be explained in terms of intake characteristics.”

Table 5.4 indicates that a large proportion of learner respondents (78%) in high effective schools reported that they had obtained first class passes in the Primary School Leaving examinations, 20% indicated that they had passed in second class, and 2% in third class. Regarding the average effective schools, 46% learner respondents reported that they had obtained first class passes in the Primary School Leaving Examinations, whilst 36% obtained second class, and 17% third class. The low effective schools appear to have admitted the smallest fraction of the first class passes (33%), with some 38% second class passes, and 28% third class passes.

From the above findings, it can be deduced that the good performance of the high effective schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is in part due to the fact that they are attended mostly by the learners who obtained first class passes in the Primary School Leaving examinations. Furthermore, Table 5.4 reflects that low effective schools had a relatively small proportion of learner respondents in Form E (28.9%), who had passed the Primary School Leaving Examinations in third class. This is indicative of the fact that the survival rate of the third-class calibre learners is low in secondary schools, particularly because the low effective schools normally admit the highest proportion of the third-class applicants in Form A.
Table 5.5 The year in which the learner respondents completed Standard 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year in which sat for PSLE.</th>
<th>High No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Overall No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1994</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: High: High effective school; Average: Average effective school; Low: Low effective school

PSLE – Primary School Leaving Examinations

Table 5.5 shows that 57 (87%) learner respondents in high effective schools who completed Standard 7 in 1996 and started Form A in 1997 were completing Form E in 2001, after five official years, whereas the remaining 13% took longer than five years. This suggests that the majority of learners who attend high effective schools survive through to Form E. As for the average effective schools, only 194 (65%) learner respondents of those who started Form A in 1997 were completing Form E in 2001, while the remaining 35% took longer than five official years to complete Form E. Regarding the low effective schools, only 99 (50%) of those who started Form A in 1997 were doing Form E in 2001, while the remaining 50% took longer than five official years to complete Form E. This information illustrates that the repetition rate in low effective schools is higher than in high and average effective schools. A possible explanation for this high repetition rate in low effective schools is that they have an open admission policy. This means that they tend to admit a large proportion of low ability learners from primary schools, and those who have been shed by other secondary schools, mainly by the high and average effective schools.
5.3.7 Location or type of primary school attended by learner respondents

To determine whether there were any differences between the high, average and low effective schools in terms of the location or type of primary schools from which they drew their learners, the learner respondents were asked to write the names and locations of the primary schools they attended. As reflected in Table 5.6, the schools were classified into three broad categories of rural school, urban school and English medium primary school. In this context, the terms “rural” and “urban” schools are used to denote the ordinary church, community or government primary schools attended by the largest percentage of the nation’s children. These children are mostly from poor and working class families. At the same time, the English medium primary schools are the elite schools known for academic excellence and success in immersing learners in the English language and these are predominantly located in the urban areas. Due to the high fees that they charge, the English medium primary schools are mostly attended by children of well-off parents.

Table 5.6 Location or type of primary school attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of primary school attended</th>
<th>High No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Overall No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural school</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban school</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English medium</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: High: High effective school; Average: Average effective school; Low: Low effective school

It is generally assumed that the location or quality of a primary school attended by a learner has a strong influence on the learner’s academic success in secondary school. In Lesotho, most urban schools have institutional environments that are more learner-friendly than rural schools. This can be attributed to the fact that in the main, they are
well endowed with educational resources, and are mostly staffed by well-qualified and stable teachers. Moreover, it can be conjectured that the concentration of educated people in the urban areas and the relative abundance of materials that enrich learning, such as television sets and reading materials, create social environments that are academically advantageous for learners.

Table 5.6 reflects that 53% of the learner respondents in high-performing schools reported that they had attended urban primary schools; 32% reported that they had attended English medium primary schools, and only 15% of the learner respondents in high-performing schools reported that they had attended rural primary schools. To the contrary, a large proportion of learner respondents in average effective (42%) and low effective (67%) schools indicated that they had attended rural primary schools. Moreover, the study found that the average and low effective schools had the smallest proportion of learner respondents who attended English medium primary schools, namely 10% and 8%, respectively.

In view of the above findings, it can be asserted that the relatively good performance of the high-performing secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is, in part, due to the good pool of primary schools from which they select the largest proportion of their first class applicants. Thus, a selection of good quality applicants who attended English medium primary schools and urban primary schools appears to be a key factor that gives the high-performing secondary schools a competitive advantage over other schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. This could be linked to the relatively good foundation laid by teachers in urban primary schools and English medium primary schools, particularly in English. In a study conducted in London, Demie et al. (2002:102) found that “children who are not fluent in English tend to do less well in all key stages than those pupils fluent in English.”
5.3.8 How many times did you repeat classes in primary school?

In order to obtain an overview of the quality of learners attending the different categories of secondary schools, namely the high, average and low effective schools, the learner respondents were asked to indicate the number of times they had repeated classes in primary schools. The results of this question are presented in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Number of times learner respondents repeated in primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times repeated</th>
<th>High %</th>
<th>Average No %</th>
<th>Low No %</th>
<th>Overall No %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never repeated</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 564 learner respondents who responded to this question, 341 (60.5%) reported that they had never repeated any classes in primary schools and 223 (39.5%) indicated that they did repeat classes in primary schools. From the responses of the learner respondents, it is evident that the repetition rates are high in Standards 1 to 3, followed by Standard 5. A probable explanation for this could be that the majority of learners lack school readiness when they start primary school. This could be linked to the fact that, historically, there were no early childhood care and development centres in Lesotho, which prepared preschool children for school. It is only in recent years that these centres have been introduced, mostly in the urban communities, through community initiatives.

A comparison between the high, average and low effective schools reveals that a large proportion of learner respondents (74%) in high effective schools indicated that they never repeated classes in primary schools, while 61% in average effective and 56% in
low effective schools had repeated classes. Thus, the high effective schools appear to be better off in terms of attracting learners who have repeated fewer times in primary schools. If the low repetition rate in primary school is considered an indicator of the individual ability of the learner or of a good quality of primary education received, then it can be deduced that high effective schools are mostly attended by learners who are academically more able or who received good quality primary education.

An overall proportion of 40% of the learner respondents who reported that they repeated some classes in primary schools, represents a high wastage rate, and points to the fact that the Lesotho primary schools are generally ineffective. In a paper that reviewed the secondary education reform in a global context, Maclean (2001:40) found that in Latin America almost a third of learners repeated a grade, and argued that this phenomenon constitutes a waste of valuable human and financial resources.

5.3.9 Secondary school factors

This section presents the findings related to the secondary school level factors, such as the number of secondary schools that the learner respondents attended, and the reasons that caused them to transfer to their latter schools.

5.3.9.1 How many secondary/high schools have you attended so far?

The purpose of this question was to find out whether the phenomenon of changing secondary schools is common, and to check whether there were any differences in the patterns of transfers between the high, average and low effective schools. Demie et al. (2002:102) found that the mobility or transfer of learners can disrupt learning and the academic performance of learners if schools experience learner changes and new admissions after the academic year has started.
Table 5.8 Number of secondary schools attended by learner respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of high schools attended</th>
<th>High No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Overall No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5.8 it is evident that a large proportion of learner respondents in high effective schools (89%) remain in the same high school for the entire five-year secondary school cycle, and that only a small fraction of their learners transferred from other secondary schools. The high retention power of the high-performing schools could be attributed to their selective admission policy, which affords them an opportunity to select good applicants from primary schools. Another contributory factor could be a long history and a firmly embedded culture of academic excellence, which enable them to attract, retain and develop the majority of learners who meet their academic standards from Form A to Form E. Table 5.8 also reflects that the practice of transferring from one secondary school to another is more common in the average and low effective schools. For example, altogether 113 (37%) learner respondents in average effective and 69 (35%) in low effective schools reported that they had transferred from other secondary schools. The factors that caused learners to transfer from their former secondary schools are explored below.

5.3.9.2 Why did you leave your former high school, if you attended another high school before?

The purpose of this question was to elicit the reasons that caused the learner respondents to transfer to other schools, and to determine whether such reasons would shed light on the investigation of the factors that caused the poor performance of most secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.
5.3.9.2.1 I was not re-admitted due to poor academic performance in Form C

In a follow-up question that sought the respondents’ reasons for leaving their former high schools, a total of 173 of the 198 learner respondents who transferred from other secondary schools provided reasons for their transfers. Of these, 40 (23%) stated that they left their former high schools after doing Form C because they did not pass well and, as such, were disallowed to complete Form D at those schools. Thus, poor academic performance or weak scholarship appears to be a major factor that causes some learners to change schools after doing Form C. This highlights the “push-out” strategy practised mostly by the principals of the high-performing secondary schools, who reject their own learners who are academically less able. It can be conjectured that the rationale for using this strategy is to remain with the “cream of the crop” or those learners who will better represent the schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. To some degree, this practice is driven by the academic competition between secondary schools and the public pressure exerted on the principals and teachers to improve the examination results of their schools.

5.3.9.2.2 Lack of good teaching in the former high school

The second major reason provided by 38 (22%) learner respondents who transferred from other high schools was that there was no good teaching at their former high schools. In this regard, some respondents stated that their former high schools had shifted from the core functions of teaching and learning, and were unduly focusing on sports. Some cited the poor performance of their former secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations as the reason that caused them to transfer to their latter schools. One learner respondent stated: “I left my former high school because it was committed to sports, and the study time was used for sports practice.” In this context, it would seem that the learner transfers were driven mainly by the search for better quality education. Similarly, 10 (6%) learner respondents reported that they had transferred to their latter schools because there were no educational facilities, such as laboratories and
libraries, in their former schools. Two (1%) learner respondents cited the issue of a ‘bad’ or narrow curriculum offered in their previous secondary schools, which did not meet their academic expectations, as the reason for their transfer.

5.3.9.2.3 Exorbitant school fees in the former high schools

Thirty-three (19%) learner respondents reported that they had transferred to their latter secondary schools because their parents could not afford the high fees in their former secondary schools. They indicated that they had opted for their latter secondary schools because the fees were cheaper. A further 17 (10%) learner respondents stated that they had transferred from their former high schools because their parents could not afford the transport costs of travelling to and from school daily. In the light of these findings, it can be inferred that poverty, which is a widespread problem in Lesotho, impinges on student learning and, in some cases, is a determining factor of the quality of primary and secondary school that a learner attends. The effects of poverty on student learning were confirmed by many teacher and principal respondents, who reported that many parents could barely afford the educational costs, such as paying school fees and buying textbooks for their children.

5.3.10 The number of textbooks that the learner respondents had

The results presented below represent the number of textbooks that the learner respondents indicated that they had on a six-point Likert-type scale question: (a) all, (b) most, (c) many, (d) few, (e) very few and (f) none.

Of the 513 learner respondents who answered this question, only 205 (40%) reported that they had all the prescribed textbooks; 155 (30%) had most of the required books; 65 (13%) had many; 60 (12%) had a few; 22 (4%) had very few, and 5 (1%) had none of the prescribed textbooks. It should be clarified that these figures may look favourable because most of the schools involved in the study were in the urban areas, where many parents are relatively well off and the purchasing of textbooks may not be a big expense
for them. However, the fact that only 40 percent of the respondents, drawn mainly from the urban secondary schools, reported that they had all the prescribed textbooks highlights that a lack of textbooks remains a problem that negatively affects the quality of learning and teaching.

5.2.11 Have you ever been sent home due to a lack of textbooks?

Of the 528 learner respondents who answered the question of whether they had ever been sent back home due to a lack of textbooks, 171 (32%) indicated that they had been sent back home sometimes and 357 (68%) indicated that they had never been sent back home due to a lack of textbooks. The fact that 32% of the learner respondents indicated that they had been sent back home due to a lack of textbooks highlights that a lack of textbooks and, by implication, poverty impinges on the academic learning time as learners spend a considerable time out of school.

From the respondents’ responses, it would seem that the procurement system of textbooks in secondary schools differs from school to school, and this affects the number of textbooks that learners have in different schools. In some schools, the respondents reported that it is mandatory that learners should pay book fees and the school subsequently assumes the responsibility of procuring textbooks for learners from the publishers. However, it could be deduced that in some schools, the principals simply provide a list of textbooks to learners or parents and they struggle on their own to acquire the prescribed textbooks.

The school-by-school analysis reveals that in the schools where learners were left on their own to acquire textbooks, there was a high incidence of a lack of prescribed books. Moreover, in such schools there were more cases of book theft reported by the learner and teacher respondents. In some cases, the respondents reported that there was a rampant problem of stolen book exchange network between schools, where the textbooks stolen by learners in their schools would be exchanged with those stolen by other learners in their schools.
5.2.13 An indication of whether learner respondents had been sent back home for a long time due to failure to pay fees

Table 5.9 Have you ever been sent back home for a long time due to failure to pay school fees on time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>High No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Overall No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9 reflects that a small percentage of learner respondents (13%) in high effective schools indicated that at some point they had been sent back home for a long time due to failure to pay school fees on time. However, more learner respondents in average (34%) and low effective schools (31%) reported that at some point they had been sent back home for a long time due to failure to pay school fees on time. This highlights that on the whole, learners in high effective schools tend to use the time allocated to academic learning to the maximum, while those in average and low effective schools experience more disruptions from school due to failure to pay fees on time. To some extent, this finding reinforces a finding discussed earlier that high effective schools are attended mostly by learners from high socio-economic status families vis-à-vis the average and low effective schools, which are predominantly attended by learners from low socio-economic status families.

Overall, a total of 166 (30.3%) learner respondents indicated that at some point they had been sent back home for a long time because they had failed to pay school fees on time. This constitutes another significant time waster many secondary schools are grappling with in Lesotho. This is directly related to the widespread problem of poverty facing
many families in Lesotho and the weak economy of the country (Ministry of Development Planning 2000:7).

5.3 AN INTEGRATED ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF ALL THE RESPONDENTS’ DATA

5.3.1 Current school factors

Different respondent groups: learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members, Ministry of Education officials and Education Secretaries were asked to rate the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, on a Likert-type scale question with the following options provided: (a) excellent, (b) very good, (c) good, (d) fair, (e) poor, (f) very poor. The officials of the Ministry of Education were asked to rate the overall performance of secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in the country on the same scale. The results of the ratings from the different respondent groups are represented in Table 5.10 below.

Table 5.10 How would you rate the performance of your school (schools) in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
<th>Boards</th>
<th>Education Secretaries</th>
<th>Education Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclassified</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: Unclassif – unclassifiable
Table 5.10 indicates that most school-level respondents: 143 (35%) learner respondents, 58 (54%) teacher respondents, 23 (55%) principal respondents, 22 (55%) deputy principal respondents and 9 (60%) school board member respondents rated the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations as average. On the other hand, only 91 (22.5%) learner respondents, 19 (18%) teacher respondents, 9 (21%) principal respondents, 9 (23%) deputy principal respondents, and 2 (13.3%) school board member respondents rated their schools as good, and 1 (8.3%) Ministry of Education official rated it as good.

It should be noted that a substantial proportion of learner respondents, 76 (19%), rated the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations as poor and 49 (12%) rated it as very poor. This implies that, on the whole, a total of 125 (30.5%) learner respondents judged their schools to be performing below average or poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

The majority of respondents outside school: 8 (66.7%) Ministry of Education officials and 3 (60%) Education Secretaries rated the performance of secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations as poor. This highlights the fact that there were differences of opinion about the academic performance of schools between the school-level respondents, namely learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals and school board members, and the respondents outside school, namely Ministry of Education officials and Education Secretaries. While a large proportion of the school-level respondents generally considered the performance of their schools as average, the respondents outside school considered the performance of schools as poor in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

There are two possible explanations for these differences of opinion between the school-level respondents and the respondents outside school regarding the performance of schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. On the one hand, there is a possibility that the majority of the school-level respondents rated the academic performance of their schools as average in comparison with other secondary schools in
the country. On the other hand, it can be inferred that the majority of the Ministry of Education officials and Education Secretaries rated the performance of schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations as poor because they were looking at the total picture in the entire country.

The above discussion highlights the fact that there is a lot of subjectivity involved in rating the performance of schools in the national examinations. This notion was supported by the Education Secretary of the Catholic schools, who stated: “In comparison with other proprietors, our schools perform better than others in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, but of, and in itself, the academic performance of our schools is poor, given the fact that the majority of candidates still fail to obtain good passes.” The central argument here is that evaluating the academic performance of a school is a relative construct as there are a number of factors that influence the performance of a school in the national examinations. The Education Secretary at issue stressed that the performance of a school in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is influenced by several and unconnected factors, such as the quality of teachers who taught learners in primary school, in terms of professional qualifications and professional efficiency, the home background of learners, and other factors in secondary schools such as the school culture and the effectiveness of both the school principals and teachers.

Table 5.10 reflects that, on the whole, the majority of respondents across all the groups rated the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations between very poor and average. In effect, this rating could be interpreted to designate the fact that the performance of most secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in Lesotho is unsatisfactory.
5.3.2 What do you think are the factors that contribute to the performance of your school in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

The purpose of this question, which was posed as a follow-up question to the one posed in 5.3.1, was to identify the possible factors that contribute to either poor or good performance of schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. From the respondents’ responses, the following major themes emerged as the major contributory factors.

(a) Reasons offered by respondents who were negative about the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations

5.3.2.1 Learners are not serious about their studies

The majority of learner respondents, 165 (46%), stated that their schools did not perform well in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations because learners were not serious about their studies. This factor was reported by 37 (35%) teacher respondents, 16 (38%) principal respondents, 11 (28%) deputy principal respondents, 3 (18%) school board member respondents and 5 (41.7%) Ministry of Education officials.

There was a general feeling among most respondents that learners were unmotivated, playful and lethargic. The teacher respondents indicated that learners lacked a sense of purpose as to why they were at school. They indicated that learners lacked determination and a sense of urgency in their studies. Most respondents emphasised that learners did not realise the fact that their determination or sustained effort was a key to academic success and to improving their achievement levels. In this regard, Murphy and Alexander (2002: 13) argue that intrinsic “motivation and personal interest lead to greater achievement.”

To underscore the fact that learners were unmotivated, one learner respondent of a low-performing school stated: “Students do not work hard. Once a student comes to this school, he or she believes that life has defeated him or her, and they take advantage of the
fact that most people know that the academic performance of this school has always been poor, ever since the school was established.” This quotation highlights a lack of drive amongst the learners. Moreover, this statement underlines the fact that the public image or a reputation of a school, which is fashioned by the school’s performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, and a strong built-in culture of academic success have a strong influence on the effort that learners are prepared to put into their work.

The learner respondents reported that there was a high incidence of learner absenteeism in schools or a bad practice by some learners not to attend classes. In this respect, one learner respondent of an average-performing school stated: “The level of levity in this school is extreme. The performance (academic) could improve if we could be serious.” Two forms of learner absenteeism were identified. The first was general absenteeism, where some learners would just have a bad habit of not attending classes. The second form was subject-specific, where some learners would only avoid attending the lessons for certain subjects, such as mathematics and science.

Some learner respondents stated that learners usually become serious about their studies when examination time approaches. It could be deduced from the responses of the learner respondents that there is a failure on the part of principals and teachers to constantly exert pressure on the learners to work hard at their studies throughout the year. It would appear that the main contributory factor to the learners’ lack of sustained effort in their studies is related to a lack of a strong organisational culture of success or an academic ambience. This, in turn, could be linked to a lack of strong, transformational leadership that is able to give direction and to set a success-oriented academic environment in schools. Telford (1996:27) upholds the view that transformational leadership or collaborative leadership is a vital factor that can facilitate in developing and maintaining a culture that can change the school into one of success.

Similarly, the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents stated that learners lacked the motivation and drive to learn. As one teacher respondent put it: “Students are
not very keen to do their work, no matter how hard teachers try.’ On the whole, different respondent groups reported that learners were generally lethargic, and highlighted that some learners lacked discipline, did not attend classes regularly, and loved fun more than their studies. Some teacher respondents ascribed the learners’ lack of motivation to the fact that they did not see the value of education in their present and future lives.

A school-by-school analysis revealed that the practice of learner absenteeism was more prevalent in the low and average effective schools. It could be deduced that some of the factors that caused learners to avoid attending classes include poor scholarship or the weakness of learners in the academics, unhealthy or severed relations between learners and teachers, poor class management by teachers, and ineffective school management by the principal.

5.3.2.2 Lack of a sense of commitment among teachers

The second reason reported by a substantial number of learner respondents, 102 (28%), for the poor performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations was that their teachers were not serious about their work. Similarly, 13 (31%) principal respondents, 8 (21%) deputy principal respondents and 4 (25%) school board member respondents reported that teachers at their schools were not committed to their work. Eight (66.7%) Ministry of Education officials also attributed the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations to the fact that teachers lacked motivation and determination in their work and had negative attitudes towards work and learners. This pattern of responses reflects that there was a meeting of minds between these different respondent groups that a lack of teacher commitment was another contributing factor to the poor performance of most secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. On the contrary, the smallest percentage of teacher respondents (5%) mentioned the issue of a lack of teacher commitment, as a factor that contributed to the poor performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. It is not surprising that the issue of
a lack of teacher commitment was the least cited by the teacher respondents because this concerned them.

The learner respondents emphasised that teachers were not committed to ensuring that learners grasped their subjects. In this respect, some learner respondents reported that even though some teachers did attend classes, they did not teach effectively so that all the learners could grasp their lessons fully. Another dimension of a lack of teacher commitment, which was cited mostly by the learner respondents, was the practice of teacher absenteeism. They reported that the teachers’ habit of “dodging” or not attending classes was rife in their schools. Ostensibly, the problems of teacher absenteeism and tardiness are not unique to Lesotho, but affect other African countries as well. According to Harber and Davies (1997:53), research conducted in Nigeria and Tanzania found that the problems of absenteeism and lateness of teachers and learners were widespread in schools. Harber and Davies (1997:53) stated that surprise visits by government officials to schools revealed that teachers were frequently late or absent without reason.

Furthermore, there were anecdotal reports of unprofessional conduct of some teachers. In this respect, some learner respondents stated that some teachers discouraged learners in their academic efforts. Some also reported that some teachers did not devote their total time and wholehearted commitment to the profession. There was a feeling among some learner respondents that some teachers tended to shrug off their professional responsibility of developing the total person once they were outside the classroom, particularly with regard to moral development. As one learner respondent put it: “Some teachers believe that their job is to teach only, and not to care about our learning and moral development.”

The fact that the Ministry of Education officials constituted the highest percentage of respondents (66.7%) who reported that teachers were not committed to their work could be based on the findings that they usually make in schools when conducting inspections or during the official visits to schools. The Ministry of Education officials indicated that teachers lacked a sense of commitment to their work and to the profession as a whole.
One Inspector linked the teachers’ low morale to the unsettled conditions under which they worked: “... teachers are demotivated by a number of factors ranging from the unsatisfactory pecuniary rewards to unfavourable working environment.” Another Inspector articulated the problem of a lack of teacher commitment as follows: “There is general lassitude – pervasive throughout all the structures of the school, and a low teacher morale, or a lack of enthusiasm to teach by, even some trained teachers.” In this regard, it can be speculated that the perceptions of the Ministry of Education officials were influenced by their professional orientation or jobs, which involve monitoring curriculum implementation and supervising the work of schools.

5.3.2.3 Learners do not speak English at school

Forty-nine (14%) learner respondents, 12 (11%) teacher respondents, 7 (18%) deputy principal respondents, 3 (18%) school board member respondents, 3 (33.3%) Ministry of Education official respondents and 3 (60%) Education Secretary informants cited the fact that learners do not speak English or “refuse to speak English” at school as another contributory factor to the poor performance of most schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. With the exception of the learner respondents, all the respondent groups attributed the learners’ weakness in English and reluctance to speak it to the poor preparation or weak foundation laid in English language in primary schools.

Some respondents linked the learners’ weakness in English language to the fact that most of them grow up in home backgrounds and social environments where there is limited English spoken. This English language deficit, which is carried over to secondary school, was regarded as a serious handicap to the process of effective learning. As one teacher respondent stated: “Students come into a secondary school environment speaking very little English, when they are expected to be much more fluent.” In a similar vein, one Ministry of Education official respondent reported: “The majority of our students are exposed to very little English, even at school.”
5.3.2.4 Lack of a selective admission policy

A lack of a selective admission policy was cited as another contributory factor to the poor performance of most secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. However, the perceptions of the learner respondents, on the one hand, and those of other school-level respondents: teachers, principals and deputy principals, on the other, appeared to differ on this issue. For example, only 12 (3%) learner respondents indicated that a lack of selectivity was a cause of poor academic performance of their schools while this was reported by 40 (38%) teacher respondents, 22 (52%) principal respondents, 17 (44%) deputy principal respondents, 7 (44%) school board member respondents. It should be noted that none of the Ministry of Education official respondents cited a lack of a selective admission policy as a cause of poor performance of most secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. This is probably because they considered the school factors such as teacher commitment, effective school leadership and learner determination to have a strong influence on the performance of learners in the national examinations.

Two possible explanations can be offered for the asymmetrical perceptions of the learner respondents and the other school-level respondents, namely teachers, principals and deputy principals, of the influence of a selective admission policy on the achievement of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. On the one hand, this could be attributed to the fact that learners do not see their own academic deficiencies. On the other hand, a case could be made that the perceptions of teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents were informed by their teaching experience that the poor quality of learners admitted mostly in Form A, was the major factor that worked against the academic performance of their schools. In effect, the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents stressed that the poor preparation of learners in primary schools was a major factor that incapacitated them to handle the secondary school curriculum successfully. On the whole, there was congruence across all the respondent groups that there is a causal relationship between the admission policy of a
school and the performance of its learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

As outlined above, a substantial proportion of teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents, mostly from the average and low effective schools, reported that the majority of learners admitted to their schools were of a low quality, who had obtained third class passes in the Primary School Leaving Examinations. One teacher respondent who sounded disillusioned stated: “The school admits rejects from other schools, and the third class applicants at Form A and Form D levels; no first class and second class candidates register for Form A and Form D here. Even when they have passed in first class or second class in Form C, they opt for other schools to continue with their Form D.”

In the light of the above results, a case could be made that in Lesotho there is a direct relationship between the admission policy of a school and its academic and promotion standards. To some degree, this is necessitated by the fact that the performance of the majority of low calibre or third-class learners in the academic tests and examinations tends to cluster around the low grades. This may force teachers of mostly low-performing secondary schools to lower their academic standards or to adjust their promotion standards in order to cater for the majority of their learners who are mostly of a low calibre, and thus keep the school operational. The following statement made by the principal respondent of a low-performing school captures the essence of the argument and succinctly portrays the effect of non-selectivity on the low-performing secondary schools: “Our intake is very bad because all students admitted in Forms A and D are rejects from other schools, and those who have performed badly, in order to increase the roll required by the Ministry of Education.” This statement underlines the fact that to some degree, the school’s focus has somehow shifted from pursuing academic excellence to struggling to stay operational.

Some principal respondents of the low-performing schools reported that they even admitted applicants who had failed English in the Primary School Leaving examinations.
In terms of the policy of the Ministry of Education with respect to the Primary School Leaving Examinations, a candidate may still obtain a third class pass, even if he or she fails English, but manages to pass other subjects with an aggregate pass of 40 percent. The paradox is that in the Junior Certificate and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, a pass in English language is a prerequisite for obtaining an overall pass, or at least a third-class pass. This inconsistency highlights the serious problems that teachers of the low-performing secondary schools should be experiencing with the learners who are academically weak in Form A.

5.3.2.5 Poverty of parents and its effects

Poverty of parents was also cited by 30 (29%) teacher respondents, 15 (36%) principal respondents, 10 (26%) deputy principal respondents, and only 2 (12%) school board member respondents as one of the causes of poor performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. From the learners’ side, poverty of parents was barely reported as a contributory factor to the poor academic performance; only 3 (1%) learner respondents mentioned this factor. From this pattern of responses, it can be deduced that it is mainly the school-level respondents or educators: teachers, principals and deputy principals as people who are in daily interaction with learners, who are aware of the effects of poverty on student learning.

The respondents reported that poverty of parents affected learners directly in two ways: (1) they lacked the basic study materials, mainly the prescribed textbooks, and (2) they were frequently sent back home by the school authorities, sometimes for protracted periods of time, because of failure to pay fees on time. Some respondents attributed the learners’ lack of textbooks to the fact that their cost is so high that the majority of parents can hardly afford them. With respect to the school fees problem, some respondents expressed concern that this interfered with and thus reduced the teaching and learning time. As one teacher respondent stated: “Most parents do not pay school fees in time, and as a result students don’t attend classes to the maximum number of days allocated by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, most students still come to school without books for
quite a long time, and therefore, it becomes difficult for teachers and students to do their work effectively.”

A school-by-school analysis revealed that the effects of poverty, such as loss of academic learning time due to failure by learners to pay fees on time and a lack of textbooks, were more pronounced in the low- and average-performing schools than in the high-performing schools. Thus, the maximum time use could arguably be another factor that puts the high-performing schools at a comparative advantage, in terms of performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

5.3.2.6 Teacher turnover and shortage of staff

Seventeen (16%) teacher respondents, 9 (21%) principal respondents, 4 (10%) deputy principal respondents, 6 (35%) school board member respondents, and 3 (30%) Ministry of Education official respondents reported that high staff turnover was another factor that contributed to the unsatisfactory performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. One teacher respondent stated that her school suffered: “A lack of staff who stay permanently, and move step by step as the students move from class to class.” In this regard, a high staff turnover appears to be inimical to the effective and systematic process of learning as it causes learners to take long periods of time without teachers, or to change teachers frequently. One school board member respondent connected the poor performance of her school in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations to the fact that her school is situated in the difficult and remote mountainous areas. This respondent stated that in view of this, most local qualified teachers are reluctant to go and teach at her school. In turn, this scenario necessitates that the school engage expatriate teachers who mostly have an English accent that is difficult for learners to understand.
5.3.2.7 Lack of suitable libraries and laboratories

Only an insignificant proportion of respondents, namely 13 (4%) learner respondents, 4 (4%) teacher respondents, 7 (17%) principal respondents, 2 (5%) deputy principal respondents and 4 (24%) school board member respondents, cited a lack of basic physical facilities such as libraries and laboratories as a factor that contributed to the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. The percentages of the respondents who cited a lack of physical facilities as another contributory factor to the poor academic performance of learners are relatively low. This implies that the respondents considered other variables discussed above, such as a lack of a selective admission policy, poverty of parents, a lack of learner determination and a lack of teacher commitment, as more important in determining the academic performance of learners than the issue of an adequate supply of facilities.

5.3.2.8 The examinations are difficult and not relevant to the social context of learners

An insignificant number of learner respondents, 11 (3%), cited the difficulty of the examinations or failure by the candidates to interpret the questions correctly as another factor that accounts for the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. They reported that many learners sit for their final examinations ill prepared and lacking examination-taking skills. Similarly, 2 (20%) Ministry of Education official respondents stated that the current Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations are difficult and irrelevant to the cultural, developmental and technological context of Lesotho and the shifting job market demands. One English Inspector observed: “The Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations have not changed for many years, and the students of today cannot cope with them. They are still steeped in the British traditions, which are alien to our students and teachers.” This statement highlights the fact that there is a need to redesign and realign the curriculum and examinations to the cultural and developmental context and needs of Lesotho.
(b) Reasons provided by the respondents who were positive about the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations

5.3.2.9 Learner determination and teacher commitment

Seventy-four (20%) learner respondents, 8 (8%) teacher respondents, 6 (14%) principal respondents, 6 (15%) deputy principal respondents, who indicated that the performance of their schools was good in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, attributed this to the fact that learners were determined and worked hard at their studies. The respondents indicated that the learners’ sense of commitment or determination is a key factor that contributes to their success in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

In terms of teacher commitment, 37 (10%) learner respondents, 8 (8%) teacher respondents, 8 (19%) principal respondents, 10 (26%) deputy principal respondents, and 2 (12%) school board member respondents attributed the good performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations to the fact that teachers at their schools were committed and dedicated to their duties. The respondents cited the cooperation or teamwork between teachers as a factor that indicated that they were committed to their work. As one school board member respondent briefly stated: “There is good teaching at this school.” Similarly, in a case study that investigated the factors that caused some South African schools to succeed academically against the odds of poverty, material deprivation and disruption of communities, Christie (2001: 46) found that a distinguishing feature of these schools was that they focused on teaching and learning as the primary and central purpose of their existence. Christie (2001: 46) concluded that a dominant feature of these successful schools was that every aspect of the learner’s life was geared towards learning.
5.3.2.10 School culture and discipline of learners

Only 2 (2%) teacher respondents, 5 (12%) principal respondents and 2 (5%) deputy principal respondents, cited good discipline of learners at school and the enforcement of this by teachers as a reason for the success of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. One principal respondent cited the inculcation of the Christian values or the “the fear of God” as a reason behind the academic success of his school. In this respect, a positive school culture or the school’s ability to enforce discipline in learners was considered to be an enabling condition for the academic success of learners. In general, school culture and discipline of learners were less associated with the academic success of learners.

5.3.3 Do you think your school has the potential to perform better in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

The learner, teacher, principal, deputy principal and school board member respondents were asked to tick an appropriate answer from a twofold, closed question to indicate whether their schools had the potential to perform better than they were performing in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. The Ministry of Education official respondents were asked to indicate whether secondary schools in Lesotho have the potential to perform better in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. The results of their opinions are presented in Table 5.11.

Table 5.11 Does your school have the potential to perform better in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
<th>Boards</th>
<th>E/Officers</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: E/Officers – Education Officers
Table 5.11 indicates that overall, a substantial number of respondents across all the groups felt that their schools, or the secondary schools in Lesotho, have the potential to perform better than they are currently performing in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. However, the question remains: what can be done to improve the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in Lesotho? In order to tackle this question, the opinions of the respondents were probed on the strategies that can be pursued in order to improve the performance of schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this regard, the respondents suggested the strategies discussed below.

5.3.4 What do you think can be done to improve the performance of your school in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations?

The purpose of this question was to elicit information from the respondents as to the strategies that can be employed to improve the performance of secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

5.3.4.1 Collaborative determination and hard work by learners and teachers

A substantial number of learner respondents, 197 (42.8 %), suggested that hard work or the sustained collaborative determination of learners and teachers is a key factor that can improve the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. On the other hand, this variable was mentioned by 34 (35%) teacher respondents, 11 (26%) principal respondents, 14 (38%) deputy principal respondents, 1 (6%) school board member respondent and 2 (16.7%) Ministry of Education official respondents. This finding reveals that, generally, learners prefer to work collaboratively with their teachers. In other words, a substantial number of learner respondents felt that a one-way effort or commitment by learners would not be sufficient and effective in improving the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. Instead, the learner respondents indicated that the basis for improving the
academic performance of schools is the collaborative determination and concerted effort of both learners and teachers. However, some respondents stated that the determination or commitment of learners counts more than that of teachers in ensuring the academic success of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

5.3.4.2 A culture of speaking English at school

One hundred and fourteen (25%) learner respondents stated that the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations could improve if learners could speak English consistently at school. Some emphasised that there should be a strong built-in culture of speaking English by both learners and teachers in schools. Some respondents indicated that teachers should be exemplary in this regard.

While a substantial number of learner respondents considered speaking English at school to be vital for improving the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, only a small fraction of other respondents reported this factor. For example, only 10 (10%) teacher respondents, 4 (10%) principal respondents, 5 (14%) deputy principal respondents, 5 (29.4%) school board member respondents, 3 (25%) Ministry of Education official respondents and 1 (20%) Education Secretary suggested that learners should speak English at school in order to improve their academic performance. Some respondents stated that speaking English at school is indispensable for improving the academic performance of learners in view of the fact that all subjects, except Sesotho, are taught in English. A lack of proficiency in written and spoken English was seen as a serious handicap that hampers the process of effective student learning. The respondents stressed that the learners’ poor command of English language is the root cause of their academic weakness in other subjects.

Some respondents reported that a factor that undermines the learners’ acquisition and mastery of English language is a lack of a reading culture amongst the learners. The cause of this could be sought in a dearth of appropriate and relevant reading materials in the country, written in English that is accessible to learners. One Education Secretary
articulated a lack of a reading culture in Lesotho as follows: “As Basotho, we are not a reading nation, but a talking nation. We talk a lot, and we hardly give ourselves time for reading.” This Education Secretary emphasised that a lack of a reading culture in learners, is a reflection of a lack of a reading culture in the teachers themselves. In view of this, he concluded: “Teachers fail to cultivate the love of reading and learning in students.”

Many respondents stated that a starting point for improving the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations lies in reversing the situation portrayed above, by means of building a culture of speaking English at school. In the same vein, one Ministry of Education official respondent accentuated that the learners’ proficiency in English is central to successful learning, and suggested that learners should be immersed in English at school. This respondent expressed scepticism about the fact that the teaching or learning of English at school is predominantly classroom-bound, in the sense that it is restricted to the instructional periods that last for 40 minutes per subject in a school day. This respondent asserted that this duration is insufficient for the optimal and successful learning of English.

5.3.4.3 Extended and productive study

Fifty-four (12%) learner respondents reported that in order to improve the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, study time should be extended and supervised so that it could become productive. This factor was however, found to be less important by other respondent groups. This is probably because these respondents considered the time allocated for study and the manner in which the study was conducted as satisfactory. For instance, only 4 (10%) principal respondents, 1 (3%) deputy principal respondent and 2 (13%) school board member respondents cited an effective study as a factor that could help improve the academic performance of their schools.
Most learner respondents who suggested that there is a need for an effective study, expressed discontent with the way study time is conducted and utilised in schools. They reported that study time is subject to abuse by some disorderly and disruptive learners, and some teachers who used it for remedial work and, in some cases, by the principals, who allowed teachers and learners to use it inappropriately for sport. This implies that learners were denied an opportunity to study on their own. Some learner respondents indicated that they would prefer to have the study conducted in the morning when their minds were still active rather than after school when they were already worn out.

While a substantial number of respondents suggested that an extended study would be ideal, a few learner respondents, particularly those who were boarders, remarked that they were sometimes subjected to long periods of study, which tired them out. Thus, to reduce the negative effects of extended study, it would be sensible to have it properly timed and supervised in order to ensure that it is productive.

5.3.4.4 Recruitment of qualified, stable and dedicated teachers

Fifty-one (11%) learner respondents reported that one of the factors that could improve the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations would be the recruitment of qualified, stable and dedicated teachers. On the other hand, the recruitment of teachers of a good quality was reported by 7 (7%) teacher respondents, 23 (55%) principal respondents, 5 (14%) deputy principal respondents, 5 (29.4%) school board member respondents, 5 (41.7%) Ministry of Education official respondents and 3 (60%) Education Secretaries. The need for the recruitment of well-qualified, stable and dedicated teachers was reported mostly by the learner respondents in rural schools, which often experience a shortage and a high turnover of teachers, especially those of mathematics and science subjects.

It should be noted that a large proportion of principal respondents, 23 (55%), more than any other school-level respondent group, considered the availability of well-qualified, stable and dedicated teachers to be another factor that could improve the academic
performance of their schools. A possible explanation for this could be that the principals, as the day-to-day executive managers of schools, see the negative impact of a lack of qualified, stable and dedicated teachers on the effective management of the entire school in general and on student learning in particular. Some principal respondents expressed concern at the high teacher turnover in their schools. Some principal respondents indicated that a high teacher turnover was not only caused by teachers who transferred to other schools or changed jobs, but also by those who went for further studies, still retaining their posts as the contractual employees of their schools. In view of this, the question is whether it is not necessary for the state to institute some kind of teacher control and regulation to ensure that teacher turnover and study leave do not disrupt student learning.

5.3.4.5 Teachers should attend classes regularly

Relatively speaking, a few learner respondents, 46 (10%), stated that the academic performance of their schools could improve if teachers would attend classes regularly. On the other hand, 18 (19%) teacher respondents, 2 (5%) principal respondents, 16 (43%) deputy principal respondents, 8 (50%) school board member respondents, 7 (70%) Ministry of Education official respondents indicated that the regular and consistent attendance of classes by teachers is a necessary condition that teachers should develop staff cohesion, team spirit and a positive attitude for improving the academic performance of their schools. In addition, the respondents suggested towards work and learners.

5.3.4.6 Firm and effective school leadership

Overall, a few respondents identified the issue of firm and effective leadership of the principal as an important factor that could contribute towards improving the academic performance of their schools. This factor was mentioned by only 42 (9%) learner respondents, 5 (5%) teacher respondents, 2 (5%) principal respondents, 6 (16%) deputy principal respondents, 1 (6%) school board member respondent, 3 (20%) Ministry of
Education official respondents and 2 (40%) Education Secretary informants. The learner respondents emphasised that their principals needed to be dedicated to their work, and to be strict with both learners and teachers. They emphasised that the school principals should be firm in ensuring that teachers do their professional work diligently, and that learners study hard. This is in line with Sergiovanni’s (1990:10) conceptualisation of value-added leadership, which he reckons as a powerful force of leadership by the principal that can stimulate the drive and commitments of both teachers and learners more than the use of authority or control.

5.3.4.7 An adequate provision of facilities

Contrary to the researcher’s expectation, only a small proportion of learner respondents, 25 (5.4%), indicated that an adequate provision of facilities such as libraries, laboratories and classrooms, is important for improving the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. However, this factor was mentioned by 22 (23%) teacher respondents, 14 (33%) principal respondents, 14 (38%) deputy principal respondents, 11 (64.7%) school board member respondents, 3 (30%) Ministry of Education official respondents and 4 (80%) Education Secretaries.

Given that, in general, a small proportion of learner respondents indicated that an adequate provision of facilities was important for improving the academic performance of their schools, it can be deduced that they considered learner productivity and teacher productivity more important. From the results presented above, it is discernible that compared to the learner respondents, a relatively larger proportion of teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents considered an adequate supply of facilities and materials to be vital for improving the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. A possible explanation for this is that it is easier for principals and teachers as professionals to see the impact of a lack of facilities on the teaching and learning process.
we should continue with our own material or products.” In this quotation, the central argument is that a starting point for turning an ineffective school into an effective one, is to introduce strict admission and promotion policies, which would ensure that the admission and promotion of learners are based on proven academic ability. However, the question remains: how can the principals in Lesotho secondary schools stick to the strict admission policies under the current situation where there are more low calibre candidates who complete the Primary School Leaving Examinations and the Junior Certificate examinations?

It would seem that the low-performing secondary schools in Lesotho are grappling with the challenge of harmonising two contradictory goals. On the one hand, they are striving to improve the poor academic results of their schools, whilst on the other, they are struggling to meet the enrolment requirement of a minimum of 400 learners per high school, stipulated by the Ministry of Education.

5.3.6 What do you think can be done to improve the standard of learning in this school?

The purpose of this question was to tap the opinions of the learner, teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents on the ways that can help to improve the standard of learning in their schools. In their responses to this question, the following major themes discussed below emerged.

5.3.6.1 Learners should speak English consistently at school

One hundred and sixteen (25%) learner respondents indicated that the standard of learning in their schools could improve if learners could speak English. However, this factor was reported by only 12 (13%) teacher respondents, 7 (17%) principal respondents, 2 (5%) deputy principal respondents and 1 (9.1%) Ministry of Education official respondent. The respondents highlighted the fact that all the subjects at school, except Sesotho, are done in English. Hence, they indicated that the proficiency of learners in
English language is fundamental to the process of effective learning. They stated that on their own, learners are usually reluctant to speak English because there is no culture of speaking English in schools. In this regard, some respondents indicated that even teachers themselves also predominantly speak Sesotho in their conversations. To some extent, this aversion to speak English could be related to the fact that Lesotho is largely a monolingual country where the vast majority of the local people speak Sesotho. At the same time, the predominant use of Sesotho by learners and teachers at school could be an indication of the low proficiency level of the majority of the population in spoken and written English.

The respondents suggested that a culture of speaking English should be institutionalised and sustained in schools. The learner respondents maintained that this objective could be achieved, if teachers would be firm and determined to ensure that all learners speak English within the precincts of the school. They stated that speaking English at school, could be enforced by applying punitive measures, such as corporal punishment, to learners who are non-compliant. In view of the above, it can be asserted that the school principals, teachers and other relevant role players such as the Ministry of Education officials need to develop mechanisms that would expand the learners’ opportunities to acquire and speak English in order to improve the quality of learning in schools.

5.3.6.2 Collaborative determination and hard work by learners and teachers

Ninety-five (20.2%) learner respondents, 44 (48%) teacher respondents, 18 (44%) principal respondents and 16 (42%) deputy principal respondents indicated that collaborative determination and hard work by both learners and teachers is a necessary condition for enhancing the standard of learning in their schools. In contrast to other respondents, 3 (27.3%) Ministry of Education official respondents indicated that the standard of learning in schools could improve if teachers would work more diligently. In this respect, they suggested that some reward should be offered to teachers for outstanding performance of duties or for achieving high pass rates in the examinations in their subjects, in order to enhance their motivation.
5.3.6.3 Provision of facilities such as libraries and laboratories

Seventy-two (15.3%) learner respondents, 28 (30%) teacher respondents, 10 (24%) principal respondents, 18 (47%) deputy principal respondents and 2 (18.2%) Ministry of Education official respondents indicated that in order to improve the standard of learning in their schools, there should be adequate provision of facilities such as libraries, laboratories and classrooms. The Ministry of Education official respondents stated that the state should provide library books, textbooks and educational materials to schools. By means of school-by-school analysis, it was discernible that it was mostly the respondents from the under-resourced schools, where these specialist facilities and educational materials are in short supply, who indicated that they are important in enhancing the standard of learning. Thus, it could be inferred that for those schools that are well endowed with the specialist facilities, such as laboratories and libraries, the respondents no longer consider their availability to be significant in improving the quality of learning because they already exist.

5.3.6.4 Extended and productive study time

Sixty-nine (15%) learner respondents, 4 (10%) principal respondents, and 3 (8%) deputy principal respondents suggested that another strategy that could improve the standard of learning in their schools is to ensure that learners engage in extended and productive study. Evidently, the issue of a need for adequate time for study was reported by a small proportion of respondents across all the groups. It could be assumed that this is because they considered the amount of time allocated for study adequate. However, the question is whether such time is used optimally and effectively.

5.3.6.5 Employment of qualified, dedicated and effective teachers

Eighty-one (17.2%) learner respondents, 2 (2%) teacher respondents, 4 (10%) principal respondents and 4 (11%) deputy principal respondents suggested that their schools should
employ qualified, dedicated and effective teachers in order to improve the standard of learning. In this regard, some learner respondents indicated that there should be the redeployment or transfer of staff so that their schools could get new and effective teachers.

5.3.6.6 Interclass and interschool academic competitions

Fifty-two (11%) learner respondents, 15 (37%) principal respondents and 5 (13%) deputy principal respondents suggested that there should be within-school or interschool competitions in academic activities, such as debates and quizzes, in order to promote communication skills and problem-solving skills in learners. The respondents also suggested that clubs for subjects such as science, mathematics and English should be formed in order to enhance the learners’ understanding and appreciation, and to heighten the spirit of academic competition amongst learners. It would appear that, generally, learners have a strong predilection to learn by competition, either to compete with one another within the same school, or to compete with their contemporaries in other schools.

5.3.7 What do you think makes some schools more effective (better) than others?

The purpose of this open-ended question was to probe the opinions of different respondent groups involved in the study on the factors that make some schools more effective than others. From the respondents’ responses the following major themes emerged.

5.3.7.1 Collaborative determination and hard work by learners and teachers

A large number of learner respondents, 211 (45%), reported that what makes some schools more effective than others is mainly the collaborative determination or commitment of both learners and teachers. However, this factor was reported by 19 (21%) teacher respondents, 24 (59%) principal respondents, 23 (59%) deputy principal respondents, 4 (27%) school board member respondents, 6 (54.5%) Ministry of
Education official respondents, and 2 (40%) Education Secretary informants. The respondents emphasised that a major feature that characterises and distinguishes the effective schools from the ineffective ones is the fact that teachers in effective schools have a sense of commitment and dedication to duty, and learners have determination in their studies. This finding accords with the one made by Gordon (2000: 43) in a case study of a high-performing school in rural Texas, that the reason for the high academic performance of the school was the highly committed staff, who spent a great deal of their free periods, lunch time and after school helping learners. In view of this, Gordon (2000:43) concludes that, “it is the energy of this motivated faculty that gets the results.”

Another dimension of the concept of teacher commitment and learner determination was defined in terms of the reciprocal relations that exist between teachers and learners. As one learner respondent from a high effective school indicated, what makes some schools more effective than others is the fact that “the students and teachers are determined to do their work, and there is also cooperation between students and teachers.” Some learner respondents reported that in effective schools teachers are friendly with learners and, in turn, learners are not afraid to approach them to ask questions about their schoolwork. They indicated that in effective schools, teachers do not whip learners when they do not understand. This could be regarded as an indication that teachers in effective schools have a sense of professionalism. This implies that they fully assume the responsibility for making sure that learners grasp the subjects they are teaching. Hence, it can be deduced that the combined efforts, an air of openness and congeniality, and cooperation between teachers and learners constitute an important condition for ensuring that schools become more effective.

Furthermore, some learner respondents indicated that teachers who teach in effective schools do not merely perform their duties perfunctorily, but are rather impelled by a strong belief that their presence and effort make a big difference in the lives of learners. Gaziel (1998:324) and Murphy and Alexander (2002:17) refer to this belief as a sense of self-efficacy or a sense of professionalism. According to Gaziel (1998:324), a sense of self-efficacy and motivation “refers to the teacher’s feeling that his or her teaching is
worth the effort, that it leads to students’ success and that it is personally satisfying.” The feeling of the respondents was that because teachers in effective schools are committed to their professional work, it occurs automatically to their learners to reciprocate this determination or effort. Some respondents, however, suggested that it is the learners, more than teachers, who should apply more effort and show more determination in their schoolwork. As one teacher respondent put it: “Students’ determination contributes a lot in making some high schools more effective.”

5.3.7.2 Availability of qualified, stable and dedicated teachers

A total of 96 (20.4%) learner respondents reported that another factor that makes some schools more effective than others is the fact that they have qualified, stable and dedicated teachers throughout the school year. This factor was considered an important condition mostly by the learner respondents in the rural schools, who reported that sometimes they took long periods of time without teachers. Similarly, 23 (56%) principal respondents and 3 (19%) school board member respondents reported that a key feature of effective schools is that they have qualified, stable and dedicated teachers. They indicated that schools that are academically successful are characterised by a sense of duty and teamwork among teachers. As one principal of a high-performing secondary school stated, teachers of effective schools are dedicated and show an “altruistic attitude towards students – students first, and the teachers’ individual interests after.” The central argument is that at the heart of high effective schools is the guiding principle that the academic interests of learners constitute the nucleus of all the school activities.

In general, most principal respondents emphasised that the availability, dedication and commitment of teachers to duty is central to the academic success of learners. However, one expatriate principal respondent of one of the best-performing secondary schools in the country remarked that in Lesotho schools: “There is more absenteeism than in any other country I have worked in.” In a way, this corroborates the views expressed by most learner respondents that the problems of teacher absenteeism and teacher tardiness were rife in schools.
5.3.7.3 Availability of facilities and textbooks

The adequate supply of resources, such as libraries, laboratories and other instructional materials that facilitate learning, was identified as another key factor that makes some schools more effective than others. This was mentioned by 82 (17.5%) learner respondents, 31 (34%) teacher respondents, 16 (39%) principal respondents, 10 (26%) deputy principal respondents, 4 (25%) school board member respondents and 2 (40%) Education Secretary respondents. The respondents indicated that some secondary schools are more effective than others because they have enough library books for learners and learners also have their own textbooks.

Some learner respondents linked the school’s wealth or endowment with adequate educational resources to the ownership of the school, and stated that some schools are more effective than others because they are owned by the government. This could be attributed to the fact that the government owns a small number of mostly secondary schools and because of this, is able to allocate a large proportion of the capital budget to their infrastructure development and the purchasing of educational resources. Thus, this gives the government-owned secondary schools a competitive advantage over the majority of other secondary schools in terms of attracting and retaining more able learners and well-qualified teachers.

5.3.7.4 A positive school culture and firm school regulations

Eleven (2.3%) learner respondents, 10 (24%) principal respondents, 6 (15%) deputy principal respondents, 6 (54.5%) Ministry of Education official respondents and 1 (20%) Education Secretary respondent indicated that a positive school culture or school ethos is another factor that characterises effective schools. One Ministry of Education official respondent reported that the school policies and regulations, which are conceived as the imperatives for creating a success-oriented school culture, should be clear to all and followed by all. The core argument of the respondents was that because the effective
schools already have well-established cultures of academic success, it is easy for learners who are admitted to such schools to get assimilated into the productive school culture. As one learner respondent put it: “The effective schools already have a good name, so students who attend them work hard to keep it up.”

While other respondents viewed the school culture as a characterising feature of effective schools, 76 (16%) learner respondents and 6 (7%) teacher respondents viewed this in terms of sound school regulations that guide the behaviour of learners. Some learner respondents reported that in effective schools, there are strict rules and regulations, which are followed to the letter, because teachers are firm in ensuring that learners comply with them. In this respect, some respondents stated that another characteristic of effective schools is that they have well-functioning disciplinary committees that look after the discipline of learners.

5.3.7.5 Effective leadership of the principal

Sixty-nine (15%) learner respondents, 28 (31%) teacher respondents, 6 (15%) principal respondents, 5 (31.3 %) school board member respondents, 8 (72.7%) Ministry of Education official respondents and 4 (80%) Education Secretary respondents indicated that another factor that makes some schools more effective than others is the effective management or strong leadership of the school principals. The learner respondents considered effective principals as those who are firm and strict and have the capacity to inspire a sense of dedication to duty in both teachers and learners. Most learner respondents emphasised that strong principals tend to ensure that teachers attend classes regularly, and perform their duties effectively. Some respondents defined effective principals in terms of being able to ensure that there is order and discipline at school, and seeing to it that learners do their academic work as expected. In this sense, an effective school principal is seen as an advocate or defender of the academic interests of learners.

From the above pattern of responses, it is discernible that there are stark differences of opinion between the school-level respondents (learners, teachers, principals and deputy
principals), on the one hand, and the respondents outside the school, namely the Ministry of Education officials and Education Secretaries regarding the effective leadership of the principal as a correlate of effective schools. While a high proportion of respondents outside school regarded the effective leadership of the school principal as the key correlate of effective schools, a relatively small proportion of the school-level respondents considered this a factor that makes some schools more effective than others. These differences in opinion could be the result of the different life-worlds and contexts in which these respondents operate. On the one hand, the conceptions of the school-level respondents of an effective school may be influenced by the unique needs of their schools. However, because of working with many schools under their supervision, the Ministry of Education officials and the Education Secretaries may be aware that the calibre of the school principal is a key factor that makes some schools more effective than others.

5.3.7.6 Learners speak English and teachers enforce this

Sixty-eight (14.5%) learner respondents, 5 (6%) teacher respondents, 2 (5%) deputy principal respondents and 4 (24%) school board member respondents indicated that in effective schools learners speak English and there are collaborative efforts by all teachers to enforce and sustain a culture of speaking English.

5.3.7.7 A selective admission policy

Fifty-nine (13%) learner respondents, 36 (60%) teacher respondents, 17 (42%) principal respondents, 25 (65%) deputy principal respondents, 6 (40%) school board member respondents, 5 (56%) Ministry of Education official respondents and 2 (40%) Education Secretary respondents indicated that another contributory factor that makes some schools more effective than others is the selective admission policy. These respondents stated that a distinguishing feature of effective secondary schools in Lesotho is that they select good candidates only in Form A and Form D, or those who obtained first class and good
second class in the Primary School Leaving examinations and Junior Certificate examinations.

Relatively speaking, a large proportion of teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that a good admission policy is a key characteristic of effective schools. At the same time, this factor was reported by a small proportion of learner respondents. This implies that according to the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents, other factors such as the effective leadership of the principal, committed staff, learner-friendly school environment, and the determination of learners, exert less influence on the academic performance of learners in Lesotho secondary schools than the quality of the school’s learner intake. In terms of this thinking, the academic standard and ethos of a school are fashioned by the quality of learners admitted.

5.3.8 Satisfaction factors

The purpose of this section of the questionnaire was to assess the satisfaction levels of the learner, principal, deputy principal and school board member respondents with their teachers and principals, with reference to the performance of their duties. In this regard, the respondents were asked to register their approval or disapproval on the question of whether their teachers and principals were doing their jobs well. Furthermore, in this section, the results of the satisfaction levels of the learner respondents to the question of how they were treated at school, with reference to a culture of human rights, are presented. The last part presents the results of the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents on the question of whether they were satisfied with their jobs. The results of the satisfaction levels of the different respondent groups are presented in Table 5.12.
5.3.8.1 Perceptions of respondents of whether their teachers were doing their jobs well

Table 5.12 Do you think that your teachers are doing their jobs well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
<th>Boards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.12 shows that 318 (59%) learner respondents indicated that their teachers were doing their jobs well, while 203 (38%) indicated that their teachers were not doing their jobs properly. On the other hand, 19 (46%) principal respondents indicated that their teachers were doing their jobs well, 9 (22%) indicated that they were not, and 13 (32%) said some. Given the fact that the researcher had framed the question in a twofold style of [Yes] or [No], 46% of the principal respondents who indicated that their teachers were doing their jobs well represents a low satisfaction level. It can be deduced that there is a relatively a low level of satisfaction among the principal respondents with respect to the organisational commitment and efficiency of teachers. Similarly, the fact that 38 percent of the learner respondents indicated that their teachers were not doing their jobs well and that 3 percent indicated that only some of their teachers were doing their jobs well highlights that there was generally a low level of satisfaction with the way teachers were doing their jobs across the schools that participated in the survey.
5.3.8.2 A comparison of the levels of satisfaction with teachers, between the learner respondents in high, average and low effective schools

Table 5.13 Do you find your teachers to be doing their jobs well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>High No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Low No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>50.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13 indicates that there were some differences in terms of the satisfaction levels between the learner respondents in high, average and low effective schools on the question of whether their teachers were doing their jobs well. The learner respondents in high effective schools expressed the highest satisfaction levels at 82%, followed by those in average effective schools at 63%, with those in low effective schools showing the lowest satisfaction levels at 47.6%. In view of the above findings, it could be said that, in general, the learner respondents in high effective schools were satisfied that their teachers were doing their jobs well. Unlike the learner respondents in the average and low effective schools, who indicated that the academic performance of their schools could improve if teachers could attend classes regularly and work harder, the learner respondents in high effective schools stated that the academic performance of their schools could improve if learners would work harder at their studies. This implies that teachers in high effective schools tend to attend classes more regularly and show more professional commitment to their work. There were, however, a few learner respondents, 7 (11%), in high effective schools, who indicated that their teachers were not doing their jobs well. As one learner respondent stated, some teachers “dodge classes and give phoney excuses.”
In contrast with the learner respondents in high effective schools, who were generally satisfied with their teachers, a large proportion of learner respondents in average effective (35%) and in low effective schools (51%) indicated that their teachers were not doing their jobs well. In this regard, the majority of respondents expressed a high level of dissatisfaction with the fact that their teachers did not attend classes regularly. Some respondents cited incidents of unprofessional conduct by some teachers, which include yelling at learners, whipping learners badly, and in some cases, failing to teach effectively in class. The fact that teachers were reported not to be doing their jobs properly could be connected to a lack of effective school leadership and supervision of teachers by the school principal. Another possible explanation for the reported low motivation of teachers in average and low effective schools could be that they have already prejudged that their learners are academically less able. In turn, it is also possible that the low cognitive abilities of learners in average and low effective schools add to the low teacher morale.

5.3.8.3 A comparison of the levels of satisfaction with teachers between the learner respondents in rural, peri-urban and urban schools

Table 5.14 Do you find your teachers to be doing their jobs well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Peri-urban</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison between the learner respondents in the urban, peri-urban and rural schools reveals that the learner respondents in the rural schools expressed the lowest levels of satisfaction with their teachers. Table 5.14 indicates that 56% of the learner respondents in the rural schools indicated that their teachers were not doing their jobs well, whilst
only 32% of the respondents in the urban schools, and only 25% in the peri-urban schools expressed dissatisfaction with their teachers in this regard. The learner respondents in the rural schools reported that the incidence of teacher absenteeism and teacher tardiness was ripe in their schools. Another contributory factor to the low satisfaction levels of the learner respondents in the rural schools could be linked to a high rate of teacher turnover, which, as the respondents indicated, hampered their learning. Some learner respondents reported that the problem of teacher absenteeism was common in schools and indicated that some teachers took several days in a week without coming to school.

Unprofessional or unethical conduct of some teachers was reported to be one of the factors that caused dissatisfaction amongst some learner respondents. They reported that some teachers whipped learners badly in class and threatened them. Similarly, some learner respondents stated that some of their teachers became angry in class when they did not understand some concepts. In this regard, the dissatisfaction of the learner respondents seems to be based on the failure by some teachers to create a non-threatening classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

5.3.8.4 Please give reasons that support your answer as to whether you are satisfied or dissatisfied with your teachers

The purpose of this follow-up question was to get the respondents’ reasons in support of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their teachers, in order to see whether there were similar patterns in their responses.

(a) Reasons provided by the respondents who were satisfied with their teachers

The following reasons were provided by the respondents who reported that they were satisfied with their teachers, implying that their teachers were doing their jobs well.

- Teachers attend classes regularly and teach effectively.
- Teachers treat learners well, motivate them and respect their human rights.
5.3.8.4.1 Teachers attend classes regularly and teach effectively

The reason provided by most learner respondents, 246 (50%), who indicated that they were satisfied with their teachers was that they attended classes regularly and hardly missed their lessons. On the other hand, this reason was given by 26 (67%) principal respondents, 26 (68%) deputy principal respondents, 12 (75%) school board member respondents. It would seem that the issue of attending classes regularly, which underpins a sense of teacher commitment or dedication to duty, is a basic requirement that every teacher is expected to meet. It is evident that the key actors involved in the day-to-day core functions of school management, teaching and learning, namely: principals, deputy principals and learners become satisfied with teachers when they are aware that they are committed to their professional work, attend classes regularly, and are efficient in their teaching.

5.3.8.4.2 Teachers treat learners well, motivate them and respect their human rights

The second reason provided by 143 (29%) learner respondents as to why they were satisfied with their teachers was that their teachers treated them well and encouraged them to work hard. By implication, the concept of humanity or respect for the rights of learners in the teacher-learner interactions is fundamental to creating an enabling academic environment that allows qualitative teaching and productive learning to occur.

(b) Reasons provided by the respondents who were not satisfied with their teachers

The respondents who indicated that they were not satisfied with their teachers provided the following reasons:

- Teachers do not attend classes regularly.
- Unprofessional conduct of some teachers.
5.3.8.4.3 Teachers do not attend classes regularly

One hundred and thirty-seven (28%) learner respondents, 25 (64%) principal respondents, 22 (58%) deputy principal respondents, 5 (33%) school board member respondents reported that they were not satisfied with their teachers, because they did not attend classes regularly. Some learner respondents reported that the incidence of teacher absenteeism is more common at the end of the month when they have received their salary cheques and in winter when it is cold. Admittedly, the problem of teacher absenteeism is within the province of the school principals, in the sense that it can persist only if they fail to address it strategically, by inspiring a sense of duty and professional commitment in teachers.

Some principal respondents attested to the fact that the problem of teacher absenteeism was common in their schools and reported that some teachers had a bad tendency of just being absent from work without valid reasons or permission from them. Furthermore, some principal respondents reported that there was no teamwork amongst their teachers, and indicated that they operated individually. They emphasised that as a consequence of a lack of teamwork among teachers, some teachers lacked enough subject content that they should teach to learners.

5.3.8.4.4 Unprofessional conduct of some teachers

The second reason given by most learner respondents, 119 (24%), who were not satisfied with their teachers was that their teachers lacked professional ethics and professional efficiency. Some learner respondents reported that some teachers were inefficient in their work, and lacked a sense of commitment, and a sense of urgency, as seen in the following statement: “Some of our teachers do not teach well, and they take a long time teaching one topic.” Some learner respondents indicated that during the classroom instruction, some teachers digressed a lot and talked about the social issues that were outside the scope of teaching, and thus spent less time on teaching. Some learner respondents
reported that some teachers were unapproachable, a condition which they found bizarre for a teacher.

It should be noted that, unlike the learner respondents, the principal and deputy principal respondents did not mention the fact that their teachers lacked professional ethics and were inefficient. This is probably because they did not have firsthand information about the pedagogical practices of individual teachers, gained either through the reports made by learners, or during the classroom observations conducted by the principals or deputy principals. This dichotomy of perceptions between the learner respondents on the one hand, and the principal and deputy principal respondents on the other, signifies that there are no open and candid two-way communication channels between the two parties focusing on the learners’ academic affairs or concerns.

5.3.8.5 Respondents’ perceptions as to whether their principals were doing their jobs well.

Table 5.15 Do you think the principal of your school is doing his/her job well?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Learners</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
<th>Boards</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No  %</td>
<td>No   %</td>
<td>No  %</td>
<td>No   %</td>
<td>No   %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>60  -</td>
<td>8   -</td>
<td>2   -</td>
<td>0    -</td>
<td>70   -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>356 69</td>
<td>86 84</td>
<td>33 89.2</td>
<td>12 68.8</td>
<td>486 72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>151 29</td>
<td>16 16</td>
<td>2 5.4</td>
<td>3 18.8</td>
<td>172 25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes/not sure</td>
<td>8 2</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>2 5.4</td>
<td>2 12.5</td>
<td>12 1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>575 100</td>
<td>110 100</td>
<td>39 100</td>
<td>17 100</td>
<td>740 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A large proportion of respondents across all the groups indicated that their principals were doing their jobs well. Table 5.15 shows that 356 (69%) learner respondents, 86 (84%) teacher respondents, 33 (89.2%) deputy principal respondents, and 12 (85.7%) school boards member respondents indicated that their principals were doing their jobs well. On the other hand, 151 (29%) learner respondents indicated that their principals were not doing their jobs well. The general feeling among all the respondent groups was
that their principals were performing their duties as expected. However, it should be acknowledged that making a judgement about the effectiveness of a principal is elusive, especially if there are no Likert-type questions provided to rate his or her performance. This is because the duties of a principal are wide-ranging. Thus, a principal who may be effective in performing the administrative duties such as office management and the mobilisation of resources for infrastructure development may be weak in the domain of the supervision of staff and learners.

5.3.8.6 Reasons provided by the respondents to the question of whether their principals were doing their jobs well

(a) Reasons provided by the respondents who were satisfied that their principals were doing their jobs well

The respondents who indicated that their principals were doing their jobs well provided the following reasons:

- The principal oversees that the school regulations are kept, and motivates learners.
- The principal supervises teachers.
- The principal is firm and does not allow mischief.
- The principal exercises collaborative leadership.

5.3.8.6.1 The principal oversees that the school regulations are kept and motivates learners

One hundred and ninety-one (41%) learner respondents, 61 (68%) teacher respondents, 20 (54%) deputy principal respondents and 12 (85.7%) school board respondents stated that their principals were doing their jobs well because they oversaw that the school rules were kept and performed their general duties as expected. These included playing the custodian and supportive roles of advising learners, maintaining order and discipline amongst learners, and addressing the social, academic and personal problems of learners. Some respondents stated that their principals looked after the welfare of learners and
teachers. In other words, they considered their principals effective because they ensured that everybody was comfortable at school, by seeing to it that healthy and working relations between learners and teachers were maintained. Some learner respondents reported that their principals were open and welcoming, and that they listened to and addressed the concerns of learners, and treated all of them equally. Some learner respondents spoke highly about their principals because they were strict about bad manners.

5.3.8.6.2 The principal supervises teachers

Ninety-one (20%) learner respondents, 32 (36%) teacher respondents and 10 (27%) deputy principal respondents stated that their principals performed their supervisory roles as expected. These included the fact that their principals made sure that teachers attended their classes regularly and did their work as expected. However, the respondents did not cite incidents where the principals undertook the task of observing teachers in class. It would appear that to learners and teachers, the supervision of staff by the principal, particularly ensuring that teachers attend classes regularly, and that learners learn effectively are the prime factors that define an effective principal.

5.3.8.6.3 The principal is firm and does not allow mischief

Another reason reported by a significant number of learner respondents, 87 (19%), was that their principals were firm and did not allow mischief. In this respect, an effective principal was equated with being a tough disciplinarian. From the statements made by the learner respondents, it became apparent that a firm, resolute and no-nonsense principal was the ideal.

5.3.8.6.4 The principal exercises collaborative leadership

Twenty-three (62%) deputy principal respondents and 4 (28.6%) school board member respondents stated that their principals were doing their jobs well because they involved
everyone in the management of the schools. Thus, it can be deduced that for deputy principals, the issue of teacher involvement in decision-making or collaborative leadership is a critical factor that defines an effective principal. Likewise, it is apparent that for school board members, the issue of the involvement of school board members or a closer cooperation or synergy between the principal and the school board members is a defining factor of an effective principal.

(b) Reasons provided by the respondents who felt that their principals were not doing their jobs well

- The principal delays to take action.
- The principal is too strict, insensitive and hard on learners.
- Other anecdotal reasons.

5.3.8.6.5 The principal delays to take action

Seventy (15%) learner respondents who felt that their principals were not doing their jobs well, reported that their principals delayed taking action in sorting out issues that did not work well at school. Some learner respondents reported that their principals used a laissez-faire style of leadership and because of this, they did not realise even when things had to be brought under control. They indicated that their principals were generally averse to taking action, even when things were drifting in the wrong direction. In this regard, some learner respondents cited the fact that their principals were reluctant to deal with teachers who habitually avoided attending classes. Some respondents simply stated that their principals were “not strict like other principals.” Some learner respondents reported that their principals did not look after the welfare of learners and did not care even when learners were served bad and unpalatable food. Hence, one learner respondent concluded that his principal “loves money more than students.”
5.3.8.6.6 The principal is too strict, insensitive and hard on learners

Forty-three (9%) learner respondents reported that their principals were not performing their duties well because they were too strict, insensitive and hard on learners. Some of the descriptors used by these respondents included the fact that the principals were cruel and insensitive. In this respect, some learner respondents cited the fact that their principals administered severe corporal punishment to learners. Some learner respondents reported that their principals were insensitive to the financial problems of parents, in the sense that they sometimes sent learners back home to collect school fees, even when their parents had reported their financial problems. A few learner respondents reported that their principals were intrusive in the sense that they accused some female learners of having love affairs. In this way, they expressed a concern that the principals did not want learners to socialise with others.

5.3.8.6.7 Other anecdotal reasons

There were other anecdotal reasons provided by some learner respondents who had the negative perceptions about their principals. In this respect, 16 (4%) learner respondents reported that their principals were too busy and did not have time for them and that they did not come to school sometimes. From the learners’ responses, it could be deduced that the principals became busy in performing office management and logistical duties that were not directly related to the core functions of teaching and learning. The net result of this was that the principals had little time to interact with learners. Six (1%) learner respondents reported that their principals were autocratic, and did not consult or involve other teachers before taking decisions. Five (1%) learner respondents stated that their principals lacked tact and diplomacy in handling some sensitive issues, such as the quarrels between learners, and the complaints that learners lodged against some teachers. In this regard, one learner respondent made the following remark about her principal: “If you complain about a teacher, she tells that teacher, and you will see a teacher changing attitude towards you, starting to become unkind to you.” Likewise, another learner respondent stated that her principal “scolds teachers in front of students.”
5.3.8.8 Please give reasons that support your view as to whether learners are treated well at school

(a) Reasons provided by the learner respondents who felt that they were treated well at school

5.3.8.8.1 Our human respects are respected

One hundred and eighty-two (41%) learner respondents reported that they were treated well at school, and indicated that their human rights were respected. They emphasised that they were treated the way they should be treated as learners. In this respect, some respondents reported that even when they had breached school regulations or misbehaved in some way, their teachers administered fair and appropriate punishment. Some learner respondents stated that they were given freedom of expression to air their views. Some reported that their teachers were always there for help.

Forty-nine (11%) learner respondents reported that they were treated well at school, because they were provided with everything necessary for their academic work. Furthermore, they stated that their principals wanted learners to display their talents; 35 (8%) simply indicated that they were well looked after. In this regard, some respondents cited the fact that their teachers saw to it that learners kept the school regulations, and that no learners went out of the school yard to roam the street during the school day.

5.3.8.8.2 The cultivation of the moral and Christian values

Twenty-three (5%) learner respondents, who expressed satisfaction with the way they were treated at school, stated that their teachers enforced discipline, and cultivated moral and Christian values in learners. This highlights the fact that there was an awareness amongst the learner respondents that education should be holistic, in the sense that it should not only focus on the pursuit of the academic goals, but should also develop values of good character and good citizenship in learners.
(b) Reasons provided by the learner respondents who felt that they were not treated well at school

5.3.8.8.3 Unfair and unequal treatment

One hundred and thirty-seven (31%) learner respondents reported that they were treated unfairly and unequally at school. In this respect, they expressed a concern and dissatisfaction with the fact that some teachers showed overtly that they liked some learners more than others. Some learner respondents indicated that learners were not given freedom of expression to air their views at school. Some respondents stated that some teachers beat learners severely, thus, violating their human rights. Some learner respondents expressed a concern that they were not provided with quality education they were at school for, and this highlighted that their teachers were not teaching well.

Twenty-eight (6%) learner respondents indicated that learners were unfairly treated at school in the sense that they were sometimes sent back home, if their parents had not paid up the school fees. They remarked that this was unfair and wasted a lot of their academic learning time, especially because it was not learners themselves who were responsible for the non-payment of fees, but their parents.

5.3.8.8.4 Lack of professional commitment and negligence of some teachers

Thirty-four (8%) learner respondents reported that some teachers were negligent, indicating that they did not help learners when they did not understand some concepts in their subjects. Moreover, some respondents indicated that some teachers did not attend classes, and lacked professional commitment to their jobs. Some respondents reported that some teachers had a bad practice of speaking Sesotho, with learners at school, instead of English, which is supposed to be the language of communication at school. They remarked that this was unprofessional because teachers are expected to inculcate the love for speaking English in learners by leading by example.
5.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS’ DATA

In this section the factors that were exclusively related to the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents such as the academic and professional qualifications, subjects taught, and job satisfaction were probed. This was done to determine whether the factors outlined above could provide some insight into the exploratory search for the factors that cause most Lesotho secondary schools to be ineffective.

5.4.1 Teachers’ qualifications

Table 5.17 Teachers’ qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th></th>
<th>Deputies</th>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B degrees</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Ed, M. Sc</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STC, Dip. Ed</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTC</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
*B degrees* – Bachelor’s degrees; *M.Ed* – Master of Education degree; *M.Sc* – Master of Science degree; *STC* – Secondary Teachers’ Certificate; *Dip.Ed* – Diploma in Education; *PTC* – Primary Teachers’ Certificate; *COSC* – Cambridge Overseas School Certificate

Of the 108 teacher respondents who indicated their qualifications, 73 (68%) reported that they held the university degrees, 23 (21%) held the junior secondary-level qualifications, namely, the Secondary Teachers’ Certificate or Diploma in Education. On the other hand, some 42 (98%) principal respondents, 34 (85%) deputy principal respondents held the
university degrees. Nine (8%) teacher respondents indicated that they held the primary teachers’ professional qualifications, and thus were under-qualified to teach at secondary school level. The remaining 3 (3%) teacher respondents indicated that they only held the Cambridge Overseas School Certificates, and these are normally classified as “uncertificated” teachers. Altogether 96 (90%) teacher respondents were qualified to teach at either the junior secondary or senior secondary school level. For a poor, developing country such as Lesotho, 90% represents a high percentage of qualified teachers.

Of the 191 teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents who indicated their qualifications, 149 (78%) held university degrees. Of the 149 (78%) who held university degrees, 21 (10.9%) held the Masters’ degrees. Table 5.17 reflects that a large proportion of teacher respondents were of a good quality, if the educational qualifications of teachers are considered an indicator of teacher quality. In this regard, the hypothesis that there is a shortage of qualified teachers in Lesotho secondary schools is negated. Hence, the issue of a shortage of qualified teachers in Lesotho secondary schools cannot be considered to be a contributory factor to the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. It should, however, be clarified that the specialisations of the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents were heavily skewed in the sense that there were disproportionately more non-science teachers as reflected in Table 5.18.
Table 5.18 Number of teachers by subject specialisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications by subject specialisation</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree science</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree non-science</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STC, Dip. Ed Science</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STC, Dip. Ed non-science</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary cert. non-science</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSC non-science</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:

COSC – Cambridge Overseas School Certificate  
Cert. – certificate;  
STC – Secondary Teachers’ Certificate  
Dip. Ed. – Diploma in Education;

Overall, there were more non-science teacher respondents than science teacher respondents. For instance, of a total of 191 teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents only 45 (24%) indicated that they held science degree qualifications, compared to 105 (55%) respondents who indicated that they held non-science degree qualifications. Altogether, there were only 58 (30%) respondents who indicated that they taught the science-related subjects, whereas there was a total of 133 (70%) respondents who taught the non-science subjects. This pattern of teacher specialisations confirms statements made by various respondent groups that, in general, there was a shortage of mathematics and science teachers in schools. In this regard, it can be legitimately argued that the disproportionately small number of science teachers contributes to the general poor performance of the vast majority of learners in mathematics and science subjects in the Junior Certificate and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.
5.4.2 Job satisfaction of the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents

Table 5.19 Are you satisfied with your job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.19 reflects that the majority of respondents, 87 (83.7%) teacher respondents, 25 (62.5%) principal respondents, and 28 (71.7%) deputy principal respondents, indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs. However, it should be noted that of the three respondent groups, the principal respondents expressed the lowest satisfaction level with their jobs. This could be attributed to the fact that principals often have immense workloads, and are often put under intense public pressure to improve the academic performance of their schools, particularly the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results. This can also be linked to the fact that it is the principals who are held accountable when their schools do not perform to the expected level in the national examinations. Another possible explanation for the relatively low job satisfaction among the principal respondents is the fact that their remuneration is not commensurate with their immense workloads.

5.4.3 Please give reasons as to why you are satisfied or dissatisfied with your job

In this question that sought the reasons from the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents as to why they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs, the following major themes emerged.
(a) Reasons provided by the respondents who were satisfied with their jobs

- I simply enjoy teaching.
- Teaching provides professional autonomy.
- Teaching provides a chance to be involved in preparing young people for the future.
- The working atmosphere at school is favourable and harmonious.

5.4.3. I simply enjoy teaching

Sixty-eight (76%) teacher respondents, 31 (78%) principal respondents and 24 (63%) deputy principal respondents reported that they were satisfied with their jobs simply because they enjoyed teaching. The following reason given by one teacher respondent was typical of the general feeling among the respondents who stated that they were satisfied with their jobs: "I enjoy teaching, I love the subjects I am teaching. In class I am everything – a counsellor, a nurse, a judge and so on. I am independent, I do my duties without being pushed." In this instance, the teacher’s job satisfaction seems to derive mainly from the love for the profession, and the fact that teaching is a dynamic job in the sense that it is a blend of multiple professions. One teacher respondent reported that she liked her job because she taught at a popular school, and that this built her self-confidence.

One would expect that most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents would report low satisfaction levels with their jobs, given that there is a general feeling amongst the entire public and the resurgent complaints by teachers that the conditions of service for teachers are unsatisfactory. Contrary to the researcher’s expectation, most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs. As one English language teacher respondent stated: “The students in general have shown improvement in their language acquisition over the year. I feel I have played a contributing role in this arena.” Likewise, one principal respondent stated: “In teaching, unlike other professions, evaluation of one’s work and performance is in short cycles.” In the light of these statements, it can be deduced that a key factor that motivates teachers,
and increases their satisfaction levels is mainly a sense of achievement, or to see their efforts bearing fruits. In other words, a factor that seems to boost and sustain the morale of teachers is to see their efforts brought to fruition by the observable behavioural change, cognitive development and improved achievement levels in the learners they teach in their respective subjects.

5.4.3.2 Teaching provides professional autonomy

Some respondents indicated that they liked teaching because it afforded them some professional autonomy vis-à-vis other professions where there is authoritarian control, close monitoring by one’s supervisor, and the demand for the employees to show high standards of accountability in their work. In this respect, one teacher respondent gave the following reason as to why she liked teaching: “I am independent and dislike to be pushed around. I enjoy planning and delivering my work according to the mood of the day.” Another science teacher respondent stated thus: “I am a born science teacher. This is a call to me.” In these examples, the teachers’ job satisfaction seems to centre on professional autonomy, a passion for the job, and a strong sense of identity with the teaching profession.

5.4.3.3 Teaching provides a chance to be involved in preparing young people for the future

Some teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents reported that they loved teaching because it provided them with a chance to prepare young people for the future. They stated that teaching afforded them a noble opportunity to be involved in nation-building. They indicated that this endeavour is thrilling and satisfying. As one teacher respondent stated: “Imparting knowledge to others has always been my aspiration, and class contact gives me pleasure.” In this context, the teacher’s job satisfaction seems to stem from the intrinsic love for teaching. However, the question is whether that intrinsic love for the profession is sustained and demonstrated in action. The question could also
be posed as to whether the principals create a supportive school environment that induces teacher commitment.

Some principal respondents cited the issue of the economic or career success of their school’s alumni as another factor that increased their job satisfaction. In this regard, one principal respondent of an all boys’ school stated thus: “… we form many good men for life. Many of my former students are good and successful leaders in this country. This makes teaching a rewarding profession.” Similarly, another principal of an average-performing school stressed: “Seeing some of my students’ dreams fulfilled is a payback.” In these two statements the respondents’ job satisfaction seems to be a long-term sense of achievement, in that it stems from the recognition that some of the school’s alumni are good leaders in the country, or are successful in their chosen careers.

5.4.3.4 The working atmosphere at school is favourable and harmonious

Another reason given by 11 (12%) teacher respondents, 7 (18%) principal respondents and 8 (21%) deputy principal respondents who indicated that they liked teaching was that the working atmosphere that prevailed at school was favourable and harmonious. Likewise, some teacher respondents stated that they had created a non-threatening environment in class or a good rapport with learners.

Some teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents acknowledged that they were not satisfied with the conditions of service and the salaries they were paid by the state but nonetheless, admitted that they enjoyed teaching. As one teacher respondent stated: “I produce excellent results. No student fails my subjects; students enjoy my subjects, workmates are easy and harmonious to work with. However, I am not happy with the salary.”
(b) Reasons provided by the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents who were dissatisfied with their jobs

5.4.3.5 Teaching academically weak learners and poor academic results of the school

For those teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents who indicated that they were dissatisfied with their jobs, the causes mainly centred on the issue of the academic weakness of learners or poor academic results of their schools. Thus, a deduction can be made that, in the main, the factors that dampen the morale of teachers and principals are diametrically opposite to those which increase their job satisfaction, namely the academic success of learners. For instance, 8 (9%) teacher respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with their jobs because they taught learners who were dull, lazy and low-esteemed. Some teacher respondents stressed that it is a dispiriting task to teach learners who have a low self-esteem, because they have already formed the attitudes that they are low-achievers. Van Amelsvoort (1999:136) stresses that having difficulties with learners may cause demotivation in teachers, or teacher burnout, which is the phenomenon of being mentally and physically exhausted.

Some teacher and principal respondents stated that they were not satisfied with their jobs because they failed to achieve their objectives of obtaining good results in the Junior Certificate and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this respect, one disgruntled principal respondent of a low-achieving school stated: “Students don’t have the fire that I have. They put me off. The results reflect on me as a non-performer. I play the tune and dance to it myself.” This accentuates the point that a lack of drive or motivation in learners, or their failure to live up to the academic expectations of teachers is a source of frustration to most teachers.

Four (4%) teacher respondents reported that they were not satisfied with teaching because they taught learners who were stubborn and lacked discipline. In this regard, one teacher respondent stated thus: “I teach students who are very lazy, do not have books, whose parents do not support their learning, and lack discipline.” Five (6%) teacher
respondents, 7 (18%) principal respondents and 7 (18%) deputy principal respondents reported that they were not satisfied with their jobs because the working conditions were not favourable. These included a lack of educational resources and facilities, such as heaters and poor remuneration.

In the light of the above, it can be argued that in order to increase the satisfaction levels of teachers and principals, it is crucial that the strategies that can enhance the achievement levels of learners in schools should be explored and instituted. This would need the concerted effort of all those involved in education service delivery, right from the policy-making level at the Ministry of Education, down to the principal and staff at an individual school level. This implies that there is a need to revitalise the school leadership, by means of enhanced professional support, and to mobilise teacher commitment and learner determination in a manner that would ensure that the school achieves good academic performance.

5.4.4 Are you satisfied with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results of your school?

The purpose of this question was to determine whether the principal and deputy principal respondents were satisfied or not, with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results of their schools. The results of their satisfaction levels are presented below.

Table 5.20 Are you satisfied with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results of your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Deputies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.20 indicates that a large proportion of principal respondents, 29 (74%), and deputy principal respondents, (90%), reported that they were not satisfied with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results of their schools. Paradoxically, even some principals of the high-performing schools reported that they were not satisfied with the results of their schools. The major reason provided by 32 (80%) principal respondents and 33 (85%) deputy principal respondents for being dissatisfied with the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate results of their schools was that a large number of their learners performed poorly. The respondents expressed a concern that a large number of their learners obtained the General Certificate of Education, a class below a third class, and thus could not be admitted to institutions of higher learning, particularly to the National University of Lesotho. In the main, the respondents stated that the majority of their learners tended to perform poorly, or obtain the General Certificate of Education in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, because they failed English language. Some principal respondents emphasised that they would like to see more of their learners admitted to institutions of higher learning, particularly to the National University of Lesotho.

5.4.5 Is there a high incidence of learners who lack textbooks in your school?

In a two-fold, closed question, teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents were asked to indicate whether there was a high incidence of learners who lacked textbooks in their schools. The results from this question are presented in Table 5.21.

| Response     | Teachers | | Principals | | Deputies | | Total |
|--------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|---------|
|              | No       | %         | No         | %         | No       | %       | No      | %       |
| No response  | 14       | -         | 0          | -         | 0        | -       | 14      | -       |
| Yes          | 74       | 77        | 32         | 74        | 29       | 72.5    | 135     | 75      |
| No           | 22       | 23        | 11         | 26        | 11       | 27.5    | 44      | 25      |
| Total        | 110      | 100       | 43         | 100       | 40       | 100     | 193     | 100     |
Table 5.21 reflects that 74 (77%) teacher respondents, 32 (74%) principal respondents and 29 (72.5%) deputy principal respondents indicated that there was a high incidence of a lack of textbooks among learners in their schools. It can be deduced from these high percentages that the problem of a lack of textbooks amongst learners is widespread in secondary schools in Lesotho. Textbooks are the indispensable educational implements that every learner should have for effective learning to occur. Thus, a lack of prescribed textbooks constitutes a serious disadvantage that militates against effective teaching and learning. This high incidence of a lack of textbooks amongst learners in Lesotho secondary schools can be attributed to the fact that the acquisition of textbooks and stationery is a direct responsibility of parents; most of whom are poor as highlighted in chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter.

The fact that in Lesotho the acquisition of textbooks and stationery is the entire responsibility of parents is atypical to many countries, such as South Africa and Botswana, where this is shouldered by the state. In the current situation in Lesotho, the exorbitant school fees and educational costs remain a barrier to access to secondary schools for many children. By implication, the phenomenon of exorbitant school fees and educational costs impinges on the effectiveness of the education system and the achievement levels of learners since they are usually sent back home when they fail to pay fees on time, or when they lack the prescribed textbooks.

5.4.5.1 How do you deal with the problem of learners who lack textbooks in your school?

5.4.5.1.1 Sending learners out of class, home or not allowing them to share books with others

To the question of what they did to deal with the problem of learners who lacked textbooks, 28 (35%) teacher, 6 (19%) principal, 9 (31%) deputy principal respondents reported that they sent them out of class or back home. Some respondents stated that they did not allow learners who did not have textbooks to share with those who did, whilst
some indicated that they did not give them a chance to read in class. In view of these measures taken against learners who do not have textbooks, it can be concluded that these learners are disadvantaged by a number of unfavourable factors in their schooling, which impinge on their academic achievement.

Furthermore, 28 (35%) teacher respondents reported that they improvised some strategies in order to cope with the problem of learners who did not have textbooks. In this regard, some teacher respondents stated that they photocopied some reading materials for learners. Twenty-three (29%) teacher respondents, 1 (3%) principal respondent indicated that they allowed shared reading or asked those learners who had textbooks to share with those who did not. However, this strategy appears to have some disadvantages in the sense that learners who have textbooks do not derive the optimal benefit from using them alone in class. In this way, the quality of classroom instruction, particularly for learners who have textbooks, is compromised.

Nine (11.4%) teacher, 20 (63%) principal, 17 (59%) deputy principal respondents reported that they discussed or negotiated with parents, wrote letters to them and raised the matter in the parents’ meetings. They indicated that they discussed the matter with the parents in order to show them that it is crucial that every learner should have his or her textbooks in order to enhance their learning.

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an integrated analysis of data obtained from the survey. This was done to identify the similarities, relationships and differences of perceptions between the different respondent groups in respect of the factors that contribute to the ineffectiveness of secondary schools in Lesotho, particularly to the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

The study found that a substantial number of learner respondents repeated classes in primary school. In this way, the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge
Overseas School Certificate examinations could be linked to the poor preparation or weak foundation laid in primary schools. The poor preparation of learners in primary school was identified in terms of high repetition rate, poor quality of education offered, and weak foundation in English language. The research results indicate that learners unavoidably carry along the effects of these factors into secondary schools. Consequently, these factors work against the process of effective student learning.

This chapter also revealed that the majority of learners live in home and social environments that are deprived and not conducive to learning, as evidenced by a dearth of the materials that can enrich learning in their homes. In turn, this condition works against the academic performance of most learners. Moreover, poverty of parents characterised by the inability to pay school fees for their children on time and to purchase textbooks and other educational materials was identified as another contributory factor to the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

The following were identified as some of the major contributory factors to the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations:

- Learners are not serious about their studies.
- Teachers lack a sense of commitment to duty.
- Learners do not speak English.
- A lack of a selective admission policy.
- A high teacher turnover.
- Poverty of parents characterised by failure to pay school fees on time and to purchase textbooks, thus leading to frequent interruptions of the learners’ schooling.

In a question that asked the respondents to suggest the strategies that can be employed to improve the performance of secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, they suggested that the abovementioned conditions should be reversed.
In terms of teacher quality, the study established that a high percentage of the Lesotho secondary school teachers hold the required professional qualifications, though the number of mathematics and science teachers appears to be disproportionately small. Despite the fact that the Lesotho secondary schools appear to have an adequate number of qualified teachers, a large proportion of learner and principal respondents expressed low satisfaction with their teachers. In general, their dissatisfaction centred on the fact that their teachers dodged classes and lacked the wholehearted commitment to the profession.

In chapter 6 the conclusions drawn from both the literature study and the empirical research findings will be discussed. Some recommendations that can contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of Lesotho secondary schools, particularly the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations will be made and areas for further research on the subject suggested.
CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Lesotho the recurrent problem of poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations needs to be addressed urgently to ensure that a larger proportion of learners succeed. The success of learners in the academic examinations depends on the combined efforts, determination and productivity of all the key role players involved in education service delivery, namely teachers, principals, learners, Ministry of Education officials at policy-making level, the government, the proprietor churches and parents. The problem statement of this study raised the question of what efficacious strategies the government, Ministry of Education officials, proprietor church authorities, teachers and parents employ to tackle the recurrent problem of poor performance of the vast majority of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this regard, recommendations will be made on what some of the stakeholders could do to deal with (and eliminate) the problem of poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

Chapter 1 located the study within a conceptual framework by means of presenting the historical and current context of the problem investigated in this study, namely the factors that cause most Lesotho secondary schools to perform poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In this regard, the history of formal education, which was introduced by the Christian missionaries, was discussed. Several factors that contribute to the problem of poor academic performance of most secondary schools, such as an excessive number of secondary schools, low teacher morale, a lack of learner motivation and the deprived home environments of learners, were highlighted. The general and specific aims of the study were also discussed.
In chapter 2 the focus was on the management and governance of Lesotho’s education system. The chapter detailed how the dual system or partnership between the state and the church in the management and governance of the education system is organised and operates. It was highlighted that the church-state partnership poses a variety of problems in that the state often has to engage in intense negotiations with the proprietor church authorities before it can introduce new policies or reforms in the education system. Weak management and leadership of the senior management staff in the Ministry of Education and of school principals was identified as a major factor that contributes to the ineffectiveness of most secondary schools.

Chapter 3 presented a literature review on school effectiveness, focusing on the school as a unit of analysis. It was argued that an adequate supply of inputs, such as physical resources, textbooks, learners who are motivated, and well qualified and motivated teachers, is crucial to creating effective schools. The purposeful leadership of the principal, a success-oriented school culture, collaborative management or the involvement of the deputy principal and teachers in school management, teacher effectiveness and learner productivity were identified as some of the key correlates of effective schools.

In chapter 4, the researcher explained the quantitative research methodology used in this study. The differences between quantitative and qualitative methodologies were explained and the rationale for the choice of a quantitative methodology given. The survey method, data-collection techniques, namely questionnaires and interviews, as well as the procedures followed in data capturing were described.

Chapter 5 presented the data analysis and interpretation. The issues, patterns, points of convergence and divergence that emerged in the analysis of data were discussed. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analysed largely by means of frequency counts, followed by the interpretation and discussion of the research findings. The textual form was used to synthesise and describe the dominant themes that emerged.
This chapter presents conclusions from the findings and makes recommendations for actions various stakeholders can take to deal with the pervasive problem of ineffective secondary schools, particularly to improve the poor performance of most Lesotho secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. Recommendations are also made for further study.

6.2 THE RESEARCH RESULTS

The following dominant themes emerged in the analysis of data collected from the following respondent groups: learners, teachers, deputy principals, principals, school board members, Ministry of Education officials, and the Education Secretaries:

- Learners are not serious with their studies.
- Prior achievement levels of learners in primary school examinations significantly influence their academic performance in secondary schools.
- The phenomenon of learner transfer between secondary schools is more prevalent in the average and low effective schools than in the high effective schools.
- Learner respondents in the high effective secondary schools had comparatively more advantageous home backgrounds than those in the average and low effective schools.
- There are different levels of satisfaction with the way learners were treated at school between the learners in the high, average and low effective schools.
- The poverty of parents contributes to learners’ poor academic performance.
- A lack of a culture of speaking English in schools affects the academic performance of learners negatively.
- A school’s admission policy has a great impact on its academic performance.
- The quality of education provided by most primary schools is generally poor.
- There are different levels of satisfaction with teachers between the learners in the high, average and low effective schools.
- Teachers are not committed to their work.
- High teacher turnover affects learning negatively.
- Most teachers in secondary schools hold the required professional qualifications.
- Most principals were considered to be doing their jobs well.
• Most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs.

6.2.1 Learners are not serious about their studies

Respondents from all the groups: learners, teachers, principals, deputy principals, school board members, Ministry of Education officials and Education Secretaries reported that the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations was poor because learners were not serious about their studies. There was general agreement among most respondents that learners were generally unmotivated and lethargic with regard to their studies. The respondents reported that many learners lacked a sense of purpose of why they were at school hence their lack of seriousness. In support of the claim that learners were not serious about their studies, some learner and teacher respondents indicated that some learners had a bad habit of “dodging” or not attending classes. The learners’ lack of seriousness about their studies was identified in two forms. First, the respondents indicated that some learners just had a bad habit of not attending classes. Second, they stated that in some cases, the problem of learner absenteeism was subject-specific in the sense that some learners avoided attending the lessons of the subjects with which they had academic problems, such as mathematics and science.

A point that has been argued throughout this study is that the effective leadership of the school principal and teacher are the necessary conditions that can induce the determination or seriousness of learners in their academic work. Thus, it is crucial that effective school management, teacher effectiveness and a positive school culture that can induce the seriousness of learners and enhance their academic achievement be improved.

6.2.2 Prior achievement levels of learners in primary school examinations significantly influence their academic performance in secondary schools

There appears to be a causal relationship between the achievement levels of learners in primary school examinations and their achievement levels in secondary schools. The vast
majority of learner respondents in high-performing secondary schools were of high ability. Fifty (78%) of them indicated that they had obtained first class passes, 13 (20%) indicated that they had obtained second class passes, and only 1 (2%) learner respondent indicated that he or she had obtained a third class pass in the Primary School Leaving examinations. Allied to this, a significant proportion of learner respondents in high effective schools (32%) indicated that they had attended elite, English medium primary schools known for academic excellence and success in teaching learners written and spoken English.

Contrary to the above, the average- and low-performing secondary schools showed relatively fewer learner respondents who had obtained first class passes in the Primary School Leaving examinations. For example, only 46.5% learner respondents in the average-performing schools and 33.5% in the low-performing schools indicated that they had obtained first class passes in the Primary School Leaving examinations. Moreover, the majority of the learner respondents in the average- and low-performing secondary schools indicated that they had attended ordinary church or community owned primary schools. Hence, it can be discerned that the relatively good performance of the high-performing secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations correlates with and can therefore be attributed to their selective admission policies. Equally, the low academic performance of the average- and low-performing secondary schools correlates with their non-selective admission policies.

The majority of teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents considered the prior achievement levels of learners in primary schools, especially in the Primary School Leaving examinations, to be the major determining factor of the differences in academic performance between the high, average and low effective secondary schools. Thus, for these respondents, other school-level factors, such as effective leadership of the principal, teacher commitment and learner determination, exert less influence on the academic achievement levels of learners in secondary schools than the quality of learner intake in Form A.
6.2.3 Learner transfer between secondary schools is more prevalent in the average and low effective schools than in the high effective schools

The phenomenon of transferring from one secondary school to another is more prevalent in the average and low effective schools than in the high effective schools. Relatively speaking, high effective schools appear to have high retention rates of learners. In other words, the majority of learner respondents in the high effective schools indicated that they had remained in the same schools for the five years of secondary school education. This is indicative of the fact that learners in high effective schools are generally satisfied with the quality of education offered by their schools and this is reflected in the achievement of their academic results. Thus, it can be deduced that the majority of learners attending the high-performing secondary schools tend to stay in the same schools even after the Junior Certificate examinations (Form C) because they meet the academic requirements of their schools for admission to Form D.

The reasons that caused the learner respondents in mostly average- and low-performing schools to transfer to other secondary schools were varied. In most cases, the learner respondents who transferred to other schools, mainly after the Junior Certificate examinations (Form C), did so because they could not be admitted to Form D by their former secondary schools due to unsatisfactory performance or low grades. Poor scholarship or the academic weakness of the learner respondents who transferred to other secondary schools appears to be the major factor that caused them to transfer. At the same time, some learner respondents from the low-performing secondary schools who had transferred to the high-performing secondary schools after obtaining good grades in the Junior Certificate examinations indicated that they had transferred because they were not satisfied with the quality of education offered in their former low-performing schools. Thus, it can be concluded that what motivates some high-ability learners in the low-performing schools to transfer to the high-performing secondary schools especially after the Junior Certificate examination, is the search for better quality education. Some respondents also reported that high school fees, other educational costs and the transport costs of commuting to and from school daily were some of the factors that caused them to
leave their former secondary schools.

6.2.4 Learner respondents in the high effective secondary schools had comparatively more advantageous home backgrounds than those in the average and low effective schools.

In terms of home backgrounds that were educationally and financially advantageous, the learner respondents in the high effective schools were better off than those in the average and low effective schools. A significant proportion of learner respondents in the average and low effective schools indicated that they lived in homes that were deprived, both in socio-economic and educational terms. Thus, the homes that were learner-friendly or learning-conducive appear to be an additional factor that gave the learner respondents in the high effective schools a comparative educational advantage over their counterparts in the average and low effective schools. These factors probably also motivated these learners to achieve academically better.

6.2.5 A lack of a culture of speaking English in schools affects the academic performance of learners negatively.

Most of the respondents across all the groups cited the fact that learners do not speak English or “refuse to speak English” as another contributory factor to the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. With the exception of the learner respondents, most respondents linked the learners’ reluctance to speak English and concomitant weakness in the subject as well as in other subjects to the poor foundation laid in English language in primary schools. Most respondents felt that primary school teachers failed to prepare learners adequately in the basics of English language. They reported that learners come to secondary schools speaking very little English, when they are expected to be much more fluent. The learners’ weakness or non-fluency in English was considered the major incapacitating factor in the process of effective teaching and learning and thus, a major contributory factor to their poor performance in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate
examinations. In research in London, Demie, Butler and Taplin (2002:102) found that learners who speak English as a second language and are non-fluent in English perform poorly academically in comparison with those who are fluent in English and speak it at home. The findings of the present study therefore confirm Demie et al.’s findings.

Most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents linked the learners’ weakness in English to the fact that they do not speak English at school. However, some learner respondents reported that the problem of a lack of a culture of speaking English at school is largely exacerbated by the fact that teachers themselves predominantly speak Sesotho at school. They indicated that this defeats the whole purpose of cultivating the learners’ enthusiasm to practise speaking English as their teachers fail to act as role models that they can emulate.

Though not explicitly stated by the respondents, it is submitted by the researcher that a major contributing factor to the learners’ weakness in English language is the fact that the vast majority of them speak Sesotho at home and in their social environments. This can be attributed to the fact that Lesotho is a monolingual country where a large section of the population across the country speak Sesotho. In this way, a lack of a culture of speaking English at school could be seen as a reflection and perpetuation of the predominant use of Sesotho, which is a language that is spoken in most families and in the society.

In Lesotho, as in many other developing countries that are former British colonies, English is not only one of the official languages, but also a medium of instruction from primary school up to university level. Thus, it is indispensable that learners be proficient in spoken and written English in order to increase their chances of academic success. This is further necessitated by the fact that the national examinations at the end of their secondary school education have always been set in Britain by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. In particular, Lesotho opted for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, which are in line with the ordinary level curriculum offered at senior secondary school level.
Lesotho’s dependency on the curriculum and examinations provided by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate could be linked to its colonial links with Britain. In this respect, another possible factor is the fact that, for a long time, Lesotho lacked the internal capacity to administer the national school examinations, in terms of a sufficient number of educators and educationists who had the necessary skills, knowledge and competence to set, mark and moderate the examinations at issue.

6.2.6 Learners in the high, average and low effective schools had different levels of satisfaction with the way learners were treated at school.

The learner respondents expressed different levels of satisfaction with the way they were treated at school, with reference to a culture of and respect for their human rights. The majority of learner respondents in the high effective schools indicated that they were treated the way they should be treated, meaning that their human rights were respected. However, a large number of learner respondents in the average and low effective schools reported that their human rights were violated in terms of living and studying in a fear-free and learner-friendly school environment. In this regard, they cited the following malpractices by teachers as examples: severe beating of learners, yelling at learners, and unfair or unequal treatment of learners. The problem statement of this study raises the question of how learners can learn successfully and perform well in their Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in a school environment where they are beaten severely by some teachers and live in fear of them.

6.2.7 The poverty of parents contributes to learners’ poor academic performance.

The study has established that a large proportion of learner respondents came from poor or low socio-economic status families and this, in turn, affected their academic performance. The majority of the teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents considered the poverty of the parents as another contributing factor to the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. Poverty was said to affect learners directly in two ways: (1) they lacked
textbooks and other basic educational materials and (2) they were frequently sent back home by the principals and teachers to fetch money for school fees. The respondents reported that in view of this, learners could not attend classes the maximum number of days allocated for schooling. Most teacher and principal respondents reported that the two factors cited above hampered the process of effective teaching and learning.

It was deduced that the learners who lacked textbooks were not only disadvantaged by the fact that they had no primary sources of learning, but were also subjected to various forms of punitive mechanisms, which were intended to force them to purchase books. These included being sent home by the principals, or out of the classroom by some teachers during their periods, if they did not have the textbooks for their subjects. Furthermore, some teacher respondents indicated that they disallowed learners who did not have textbooks to share with those who had them. In the light of this study, the question is how the goal of obtaining good quality results in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations can be achieved in Lesotho secondary schools when many learners lack textbooks and are sometimes sent out of the classrooms because of this.

6.2.8 A school’s admission policy has a great influence on its academic performance.

Most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents reported that a major contributory factor to the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations was a lack of a selective admission policy with respect to mostly Form A learners. Most of the respondents from the average- and low-performing schools indicated that unless their schools become more selective with regard to the calibre of learners they admitted, the performance of their schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations would remain poor.

The analysis of the empirical data confirms that the different admission policies between the high effective schools, on the one hand, and the average and low effective schools, on the other, was the major determining factor of the differences in academic performance
between these categories of schools. The study established that high effective schools tend to be highly selective with their applicants while the average and low effective schools tend to have an open admission policy.

A substantial number of teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that a school’s admission policy has a great impact on its performance in the academic examinations. However, the issue of instituting a selective admission policy in all the secondary schools in Lesotho appears to be unworkable, in that only a small proportion of candidates obtain good grades in the Primary School Leaving examinations and the Junior Certificate examinations. Thus, if all the secondary schools were to apply a selective admission policy, the majority of learners would be excluded from participating in secondary education. This condition would be uneconomic and imprudent for the social and economic development of the country.

6.2.9 The quality of education provided by most primary schools is generally poor.

There was general agreement amongst most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents that primary schools generally produced learners who were ill prepared to handle the secondary school curriculum. The recurrent poor performance of learners in the Primary School Leaving examinations and a high repetition rate in most primary schools indicated that the quality of education provided by most primary schools is generally poor. This was confirmed by most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents, who reported that the new Form A learners who came into the secondary school environment were particularly weak in written and spoken English. Some of the possible contributory factors to the poor quality of primary education, include weak school management by the principals, teacher tardiness and absenteeism.

Furthermore, a large proportion of primary school teachers who hold low academic and professional qualifications appear to be another contributing factor to the poor quality of education offered by most primary schools. In this respect, *Education Statistics 2001*, prepared by the Ministry of Education (2003:35-38) indicate that of a total of 8,762
primary school teachers in 2001, 6,558 (75%) were qualified while 2,204 (25%) were unqualified. Admittedly, 75% of qualified primary school teachers appears to be a favourable figure. However, it is common knowledge in Lesotho that over the years, the entrance requirements for the student teachers who enrolled for the Primary Teachers’ Certificate programmes in the defunct denominational teacher training colleges and lately in the government-owned National Teacher Training College were low. These included the Primary School Leaving examination certificate, the Junior Certificate (Form C) and the General Certificate of Education, which is a class below a third class in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

6.2.10 There were different levels of satisfaction with teachers between the learners in the high, average and low effective schools.

There were some differences in the levels of satisfaction with teachers, with reference to the question of whether they were performing their duties well, between the learner respondents in the high, average and low effective schools. Compared to other respondents, the learner respondents in the high effective schools expressed the highest satisfaction with their teachers while those in the average and low effective schools expressed lower and lowest satisfaction, respectively. Most learner respondents in the high effective schools felt that their teachers were doing their jobs well whereas the majority of those in the average and low effective schools felt that their teachers were not committed to their jobs. Evidently, it was the higher levels of commitment to duty by teachers in the high effective schools and the lower levels of teacher commitment in the average- and low-effective schools that caused the learner respondents in these schools to have unequal levels of satisfaction with their teachers.

Teachers in the high effective schools were perhaps more committed to their duties as the learner respondents in these schools indicated, mainly because of the strong management and leadership of the school principal. A long history of academic excellence and a culture of a strong work ethic among teachers in the high-performing schools could be possible factors that increase their organisational commitment. Moreover, teaching
learners who are high achievers could be another factor that motivates teachers and induces their professional commitment. In the light of the study, the question is what mechanisms can be employed to increase the low motivation of teachers in the average- and low-performing schools, who teach large numbers of low-ability learners.

6.2.11 Teachers are not committed to their work.

Most learner, principal and deputy principal respondents reported that some teachers at their schools lacked a sense of commitment to their work. They indicated that teachers at their schools lacked whole-hearted commitment to the teaching profession and did not motivate learners to work diligently at their studies, so that all of them, or the majority of them could succeed in their studies. In this respect, the respondents indicated that teachers at their schools had a low morale towards teaching. Low teacher morale could be a manifestation of a variety of factors, such as a lack of strong leadership and supervision by the principal, a lack of learner motivation, teacher burnout because of teaching learners who are academically less able, unsettled working conditions and a lack of adequate professional support from the Ministry of Education. A major problem that was reported in most secondary schools visited by the researcher where the respondents participated in the study was that of the rampant absenteeism or a bad tendency by some teachers not to attend their lessons. A lack of professional commitment among teachers was also couched in terms of teacher tardiness and a negative attitude towards learners. Many learner respondents simply stated that teachers at their schools were not serious about their professional work.

The principal respondents identified the teachers’ lack of professional commitment in terms of a lack of teamwork, collaboration and cooperation in professional matters, such as drawing up a scheme of work to be done during each of the four quarters of the school year, planning lessons and team-teaching where there was a need. They stated that teachers at their schools lacked a team spirit and tended to work independently. A school-by-school analysis revealed that the problems of teacher tardiness and teacher absenteeism were reported more by the learner and principal respondents of the average
and low effective schools than those of the high effective schools. This study raises the question of what the impact of the different levels professional commitment shown by teachers of the high, average and low effective schools is on the academic performance of these schools.

6.2.12 High teacher turnover affects learning negatively.

A substantial number of learner, teacher, principal, deputy principal and school board member respondents reported that the problem of high teacher turnover was another contributory factor to the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. The high staff turnover was reported mostly by the respondents in the rural schools. They indicated that there was a propensity by teachers in the rural areas to transfer to secondary schools in the urban areas once they had secured the teaching posts. The rugged mountainous topography where some of these rural secondary schools are situated, undeveloped infrastructure and general harsh living conditions were cited as some of the factors that triggered the rural-to-urban transfers of teachers.

Furthermore, some respondents expressed concern that the government is very lax with the control of teachers, particularly with the regulation of their transfers. Some principal and learner respondents reported that another factor that caused teacher turnover was an exodus of teachers who went for further studies while remaining contractual employees of their schools. They indicated that it is often hard to secure a substitute teacher who can replace the one who has gone for further studies. This raises the question of how can learners experience successful learning and achieve optimally in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in schools with a high staff turnover.

6.2.13 Most teachers in secondary schools hold the required professional qualifications.

The study established that most teacher respondents and, by implication, most teachers in
Lesotho secondary schools hold the academic and professional qualifications required at this level. In fact, the empirical research and *Education Statistics 2001* prepared by the Ministry of Education (2003:69) indicate that in 2001 a significantly large proportion of teachers in Lesotho secondary schools, namely 1,787 (54.1%) of a total of 3,290, held Bachelor’s degrees. Of a total of 3,290 teachers in 2001, only 413 (12.5%) were unqualified. Thus, this negates the assumption that a shortage of qualified teachers in Lesotho secondary schools is a factor that contributes to poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. The study has, however, revealed that the distribution of teachers according to subject specialisations is uneven, characterised by a large proportion of those with non-science subject specialisations, such as development studies, religious education and Sesotho, and a disproportionate small fraction of others who are qualified to teach mathematics and science subjects. Moreover, the study found that it was mostly the learner and principal respondents in the rural areas who expressed concern that there was a shortage of teachers in their schools.

6.2.14 **Most principals were considered to be doing their jobs well.**

Most learner, teacher, deputy principal and school board member respondents expressed satisfaction with the way their principals were conducting their jobs. They stated that the principals of their schools were performing their tasks as expected. These included overseeing that the school rules were kept, encouraging learners to work diligently at their studies, and being strict about bad manners. A large proportion of respondents reported that their principals ensured that teachers attended classes regularly. From the respondents’ responses, it was apparent that most learner and teacher respondents considered an effective principal to be one who saw to it that teachers attended classes regularly. This creates an impression that the effective leadership of the principal in the core functions of the school is a defining attribute of a good principal. A substantial number of respondents reported that their principals were firm and did not allow mischief. The learner respondents appeared to have a predilection for a tough, resolute and goal-directed school principal. Regarding the problem statement of this study, the question is why the problem of teacher absenteeism is rampant in Lesotho secondary
schools if the school principals are performing their duties as expected.

A substantial number of learner, teacher and deputy principal respondents reported that the principals of their schools performed their duties effectively. However, this perception is inconsistent with the fact that a large number of learner, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that most teachers at their schools “dodged classes” or did not attend classes regularly. Thus, it can be deduced that the principals of the schools where the study was conducted probably worked diligently themselves, but did not see to it that their teachers performed their duties as expected. A possible explanation for this anomaly is that the principals of the schools where the study was conducted lacked managerial and supervisory skills.

In the light of the above, it is evident that teachers and deputy principals tend to favour a principal who is non-intrusive and does not interfere in their professional or instructional affairs. In this respect, it can be inferred that the learner, teacher and deputy principal respondents judged the effectiveness of their principals in terms of their performance of administrative and office management duties. It would appear that these respondents did not judge the effectiveness of the principals of their schools in terms of their performance in the domains of instructional leadership and staff supervision, which are directly related to the core business of teaching and learning.

6.2.15 Most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs.

Contrary to the common perception that teachers, in general, have low satisfaction levels with their jobs, the majority of teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs. The study revealed, however, that of these three groups, the principal respondents recorded the lowest satisfaction levels with their jobs. In this respect, one explanation offered by some principal respondents was that they had immense workloads in relation to the remuneration offered by the state. Another possible explanation for the low satisfaction levels of principals could be sought in the
fact that they are often under public pressure to improve the academic results of their schools. Moreover, as the chief executive officers of their schools, the school principals are considered by the local communities, the authorities of the proprietor churches and the state to be the linchpins or catalysts of the productivity of teachers and learners and of the academic success of their schools. Thus, the failure to meet these challenges adequately could be a source of discontent to most principals. This study raises the question of why the results of most secondary schools continue to be poor in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations and yet the job satisfaction of most teachers, principals and deputy principals is high.

There was general acknowledgement among most teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents that the academic performance of most of their learners was poor. However, when their views were probed in respect of their job satisfaction, they indicated that they experienced much job satisfaction when some of their learners were successful in their studies and academic examinations. Thus, the successful learning of learners and their improved achievements in the examinations appear to be the key factor that increases and sustains the job satisfaction of most teachers and principals. Moreover, some teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents reported that another factor that increased their satisfaction levels was the congenial and collegial relations at work amongst the staff. These communal and reciprocal relationships amongst the staff, which create a harmonious work environment and promote the active involvement of workers in the decision-making processes, are termed the quality-of-life by Fitz-Gibbon and Kochan (2000:263) and the quality of working life by Erasmus and Van der Westhuisen (1996:225). The harmonious working relationships among teachers and learners at school are regarded as an indicator of effective schools. Thus, creating a congenial school ambience is one of the key tasks of an effective school principal.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section the researcher makes recommendations that can be adopted to deal with the ineffectiveness of Lesotho secondary schools, particularly the recurrent problem of
poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. In chapters 1 and 2 it was argued that the factors that impinge on the academic performance of learners are interrelated, complex and multi-level. This means that they are at macro- or policy-making level in the Ministry of Education while others are at micro or school level. In this respect, the recommendations made will be directed mainly at these two levels. It is recommended that these recommendations be implemented as they have high educational utility, and yet can be implemented at relatively low or no cost.

**It is recommended that learners should work more diligently at their studies.**

The learner and teacher respondents reported that another major problem that causes most Lesotho secondary schools to perform poorly in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations is that most learners lack determination or seriousness in their studies. Hence, it is recommended that learners should work more diligently at their studies in order to maximise their chances of academic success. Since principals and teachers have a great deal of leverage on the schooling of learners, it is recommended that principals, teachers and parents should continually motivate learners to work hard at their studies. In this respect, teachers and parents could show learners the value of education in life and the economic benefits that would accrue to them later in life, if they work hard at their studies. To ensure that learners keep up the momentum of working diligently, it may be necessary for the principals and teachers to constantly monitor their progress and motivate them. Likewise, the principals and teachers should also facilitate the formation of study groups for learners and inculcate a spirit of cooperation in them so that they can tackle academic problems together.

**It is recommended that the learners’ acquisition of English language be improved.**

With the exception of the learner respondents, all the respondents indicated that learners are generally weak in written and spoken English, mainly because there is no culture of speaking English in schools. The respondents stated that the predominant use of Sesotho
instead of English at school by learners and teachers is a key factor that accounts for the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. Similarly, the respondents indicated that the learners’ proficiency in English is a necessary condition for their academic success in all the subject areas. Hence, it is recommended that principals and teachers cultivate and sustain a culture of speaking English in schools. This could be intensified by the use of electronic media that use English language, such as television and radio programmes, and videos relevant to the learners’ studies. It is hoped that this would go a long way towards boosting the learners’ appreciation and mastery of English language, which is crucial to their academic success since all the subjects except Sesotho are done in English in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.

The previous Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations have invariably pointed to the fact that the candidates’ weakness in or poor mastery of English language is the major cause of failure (Examinations Council of Lesotho 1999:commentary page; 2003:ii-iii). Hence, it is important that the learners’ acquisition of and proficiency in English language be optimised. Parents could also assist in reinforcing the efforts of the school by creating a learner-friendly and English language-rich home environment. In this regard, parents who can afford to do so could provide learners with reading materials in English, such as magazines, newspapers and novels, as well as supervise them in viewing television programmes relevant to their schooling.

**It is recommended that teachers become more committed to their work.**

The investigation has revealed that there is a lack of consistent and sustained teacher commitment in most secondary schools. The learner, principal and deputy principal respondents indicated that teachers at their schools had the bad habit of frequently not attending their lessons. This condition is counterproductive and undermines the goal of optimising the standard of learning and improving the academic results in secondary schools, particularly the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. Hence, it is recommended that teachers show more professional commitment to their work by
attending classes regularly, teaching more diligently and providing remedial help to learners who experience difficulties in their subjects. In this regard, it may be necessary for the school principal to supervise teachers to ensure that they attend their lessons regularly and teach effectively.

Moreover, a school-based regulatory mechanism, such as a class attendance sheet, may be developed by the school principal and teachers collectively for teachers to sign at the end of every lesson they have taught and countersigned by the class monitors or prefects. In turn, the District Education Officers could periodically inspect the daily class attendance records. This is in cognisance of the fact that a lot of literature suggests that the whole-hearted commitment of teachers to the core business of teaching and learning is vital for creating and sustaining successful schools (Christie 2001:46; Dimmock 2000:2). In the same way, the school principals are integral to the academic success of their schools in that they are the chief architects who should create a school climate that can inspire teachers to be committed to their duties and learners to be motivated in their learning.

Furthermore, in order to enhance teacher productivity and the academic results of secondary schools, it is recommended that the principal, in conjunction with teachers, should forge professional cooperation amongst teachers. The task of inspiring a sense of duty and commitment in teachers may require the support of other key role-players, particularly the Ministry of Education officials. Thus, it is recommended that the relevant officials of the Ministry of Education from the Minister, the Principal Secretary, the senior management staff, Central Inspectors and District Education Officers should frequently emphasise that teachers should attend classes regularly and teach effectively.

**It is recommended that the teaching of mathematics and science be enhanced.**

There is ample evidence from both the literature reviewed and the empirical study carried out by the researcher that the performance of learners in mathematics and science subjects is poor (Examinations Council of Lesotho 2002:vi; 2003:iv, v). Therefore, it is
recommended that the teaching of these subjects be intensified and improved in order to optimise the learners’ chances of academic success in them. Remedial or supplementary work in mathematics and science subjects and extended learning time outside the teaching time may be an essential strategy to adopt in order to enhance the learning and academic achievement of learners. In addition, the teaching methods in mathematics and science subjects should be diversified and enriched by using techniques such as team-teaching, group work, quizzes, relevant television programmes and videos, where necessary.

**It is recommended that the principals become more effective in managing schools.**

The current poor performance of most secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations has proven to be intractable and warrants that change and renewal be effected in schools. It was argued in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this study that the academic success of a school, teacher productivity and learner productivity are largely determined by the effective leadership and management of the school principal. Therefore, it is recommended that the principals in Lesotho secondary schools continually seek to become more effective leaders and managers. It is the strategic and goal-directed leadership of the principal that can lead to improved academic results in Lesotho secondary schools. Without the effective leadership of the principal that is outcomes-driven and emphasises the centrality of teaching and learning as the core business of the school, it will be difficult to obtain good academic results in a school.

It is also recommended that principals in Lesotho secondary schools share power and authority with teachers and manage schools collaboratively with them. If the school principals practise participative management or collaborative leadership with teachers, the pressure of their workloads would be significantly reduced. This would also improve working relations among teachers and cement cooperation between the principal and teachers. At the same time, the involvement of teachers in the management of the school could encourage them to become actively involved in the collective search for continuous improvement at work, in terms of improving their productivity and motivating learners in
order to improve the academic results of their schools.

**It is recommended that time be managed effectively in schools.**

A dominant theme raised as a concern by mostly the learner respondents is time wastage caused by excessive extracurricular activities, such as sports, teacher tardiness, teacher absenteeism or failure by some teachers to attend classes regularly and the unsupervised study of learners. The academic learning time appears to be seriously reduced by these factors. Similarly, it was deduced from the data analysis that in a number of secondary schools, the timetables are not followed in accordance with the duration and number of periods stipulated by the Ministry of Education. Thus, it is recommended that the school principals should adhere to the timetable guidelines prescribed by the Ministry of Education.

**It is recommended that a success-oriented school culture be established.**

The data analysis revealed that an academic culture of success, characterised by constant dedication and collaborative effort of learners, teachers and principals, is wanting in most Lesotho secondary schools. It is the researcher’s contention that the starting point for achieving extraordinary academic performance in Lesotho secondary schools lies in the building of a success-oriented school culture by the principal, in collaboration with teachers. In other words, principals and teachers have to create an academic ambience that encourages both teachers and learners to be constantly dedicated to their professional and academic work, respectively. Therefore, it is recommended that the school principals create a learning-conducive school culture and climate to induce teacher productivity and learner productivity.
It is recommended that parents who can afford to do so should send learners to qualified private tutors of mathematics, science and English to supplement their learning.

It is recommended that in situations where there is a need, parents who can afford to do so should send their children to private classes or tutorial centres after school, at weekends and during the school holidays in order to supplement their learning, particularly in mathematics, science and English. However, it is important that such tutorial centres have teachers or subject specialists well qualified in mathematics, science and English. Alternatively, parents could make arrangements with teachers or private tutors of the target subjects to assist learners. These private tutorials could be conducted after school and over the weekends in a relaxed and personalised home environment. However, for the purpose of regulation and quality assurance, the Ministry of Education needs to spell out guidelines or an operational framework for these private tutorial centres.

It is recommended that the quality of primary education be improved.

There appears to be a direct link between the prior achievement of learners in primary school examinations and their academic success in secondary schools. The study revealed that, in the main, the learners who obtained the first class passes, particularly those who attended good primary schools or elite English medium primary schools, performed well in secondary schools. This was indicated by, among other things, their academic success and high survival rate in secondary schools and their propensity to attend the selective, high-performing secondary schools in the country. Therefore, it is recommended that the quality of teaching in primary schools be improved in a manner that would ensure that primary schools produce learners of a good academic quality, who would be academically well prepared and strong enough to handle the secondary school curriculum successfully.
It is recommended that the professional skills of primary school teachers be upgraded.

It was argued earlier that in the past, a large proportion of primary school teachers entered the teaching profession after completing the Primary School Leaving Examinations, Junior Certificate examinations and the General Certificate of Education, which is a class below a third class pass in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. This indicates that a large proportion of Lesotho primary school teachers hold low academic qualifications, even though they may possess the required professional qualifications. Thus, the question is whether the quality of education offered to learners in Lesotho primary schools is not lowered by the low academic qualifications of a large proportion of teachers teaching at this level.

In the light of the above arguments, it can be asserted that the starting point for improving the quality of primary education in Lesotho is to improve the quality of primary school teachers. Thus, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education upgrade and update the professional skills and knowledge of primary school teachers by means of in-service teacher training workshops. Such training workshops should be informed by and based on the professional needs of teachers. Special focus could be placed on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. At the same time, primary school teachers should be encouraged to engage in continuous professional development in order to upgrade their academic and professional qualifications to diploma level at least. This could be undertaken through self-initiated distance learning courses or full-time study.

It is recommended that the Ministry of Education play a more visible and active role in supporting schools.

The role played by the Ministry of Education in Lesotho has, hitherto, been minimal and ineffectual, particularly with regard to ensuring that quality teaching and learning take place in schools. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education play a more active and visible, but unobtrusive, role in supporting schools to ensure that quality teaching and
learning occur in schools. The Ministry of Education could achieve this through enhanced two-way communication and links with schools, and through more visits to schools by the Central Inspectors, the District Education Officers and the senior management staff. Moreover, in order to improve the productivity of secondary school principals and teachers, the Ministry of Education should initiate workshops and seminars for them on topics such as transformational leadership, total quality management, instructional leadership, time management, school effectiveness and school improvement.

**It is recommended that the management capacity of the senior management staff in the Ministry of Education be strengthened.**

It was argued in chapter 2 that much of the ineffectiveness or poor academic performance of most Lesotho secondary schools can be linked to the weak or mediocre leadership of the senior management staff in the Ministry of Education. In order to turn the situation around and to redirect the entire education system to academic success, it is recommended that the management capacity and leadership skills of the senior management staff at policy-making level in the Ministry of Education be enhanced. This may include undertaking training in current theories of leadership, such as transformational leadership, a new form of leadership, which emphasises that the leader distribute power to followers and work in a more collaborative framework with the followers in order to effect continuous improvement in an organisation.

**It is recommended that the high teacher turnover be controlled.**

High teacher turnover is not only detrimental to the overall running of secondary schools, but also to the successful learning and academic achievement of learners. The frequent change of teachers in the course of a school year means that there is a lack of continuity and coherence in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is recommended that the Teaching Service Commission, in conjunction with the denominational Education Secretaries, regulate teacher turnover by means of jointly revising and adhering to the procedures that govern the movement and transfers of teachers within the teaching
service. For practical purposes, it is recommended that the transfers of teachers be effected at the beginning of the school year in January or at the beginning of the second session in July. As regards the transfers that are effected at the beginning of the second school session, it is important that before a transfer be approved, there should be assurance that there would be another teacher who would fill the post of the one who is leaving.

**It is recommended that a book rental scheme be introduced.**

It was stated in chapters 1, 2 and 5 that the majority of parents in Lesotho are poor and can barely afford to purchase textbooks. The fact that most parents in Lesotho are poor was confirmed by the majority of teacher, principal and deputy principal respondents, who indicated that there was a high incidence of learners who lacked textbooks in their schools. Certainly, this is a manifestation of the status of poverty facing the majority of parents in Lesotho. A lack of textbooks is undoubtedly a condition that hampers the process of effective teaching and learning. Thus, to address this problem, it is recommended that the Government of Lesotho should, as a matter of priority, institute a book rental scheme in secondary schools, similar to the one operating in primary schools, where learners pay a nominal book rental fee towards the revolving fund administered by the state.

Textbooks are indispensable and basic educational implements that every learner should have in order to facilitate the process of effective teaching and learning. The provision of textbooks to all the registered secondary schools by the state would also eliminate the problem of frequent absences of learners from school due to a lack of textbooks. At the same time, the provision of textbooks by the state would eliminate some teachers’ unprofessional tendency of sending learners who do not have textbooks out of the classroom during their lessons.
It is recommended that the government regulate the school fees and provide more scholarships.

It was argued in chapter 1 of this study that Lesotho is classified as one of the poorest countries in the world (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning 1996:8; Ministry of Development Planning 2000:7). Moreover, from the analysis of the learner respondents’ socio-economic status indicators and the teachers’ remarks in respect of the effects of poverty on the learners’ schooling, the inference can be made that the level of poverty among most Basotho families is high. Among other things, Lesotho’s high level of poverty could be linked to the fact that it lacks a strong industrial base, with water as the only major natural resource available. It was also indicated in chapters 1, 2 and 5 that the school fees problem hampers the smooth running of secondary schools and the process of effective teaching and learning as most learners are frequently sent home due to failure to pay school fees on time. In view of this, it is recommended that the Government of Lesotho regulate or standardise the secondary school fees so that they are affordable to the majority of parents. It is likewise recommended that the state increase the scholarship fund for secondary school learners so that many more learners could be sponsored, particularly those who are poor but able.

It is recommended that the government provide financial and material support to schools.

Secondary schools in Lesotho operate on a tight budget, under conditions of economic austerity. They do not receive any form of subvention from the state. The situation is largely compounded by the fact that the majority of parents are poor and can ill afford to pay the school fees and educational costs for their children. Hence, it is recommended that the state provide some financial assistance in the form of subvention to all the registered secondary schools, directed towards, among other things, the operating costs and feeding of learners. This would go a long way towards alleviating the effects of poverty, such as the frequent absence of learners from school due to failure to pay school fees on time and a lack of food. In respect of food supplies, an alternative strategy that
could be initiated by the state is to resuscitate the now-defunct self-reliance projects in schools whereby schools used to produce most of their basic food supplies from the school gardens or fields acquired through share-cropping with members of the local communities.

**It is recommended that the government exercise a firm control on the proliferation of secondary schools.**

The literature reviewed indicates that an intractable problem that hampers the effective macro-level control and governance of secondary schools in Lesotho is the unyielding competition between the churches, including the local communities to establish their own secondary schools (World University Service of Canada 1997:14). These excess schools are typically small, educationally unviable and are often seen as a major contributory factor in the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. It was argued in chapter 2 that the government is averse to taking legal action to stem the establishment of these excess schools. It is therefore recommended that the government exercise firm control on the proliferation of secondary schools. It is recommended that the government invoke section 6 (1) and (2) of the 1995 Education Act (1995:954-955), which stipulates the procedures for opening new schools and pronounces it illegal to open a new school without the approval of the Minister of Education. In terms of this Act, it is recommended that the government close all the illegal or unregistered secondary schools since they are educationally unviable in that they often lack qualified teachers and an academic milieu ideal for effective schooling.

**6.4 ADDRESSING THE POOR PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAMBRIDGE OVERSEAS SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS**

The following model is postulated by the researcher to address the widespread problem of the ineffectiveness of most Lesotho secondary schools, particularly the recurrent poor performance of the vast majority of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. It is submitted by the researcher that if the strategies proposed
in this model can be implemented by the Ministry of Education, school principals, teachers and learners, substantive improvement can be realised in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency of schools, the organisational commitment of principals and teachers, and the determination of learners. Consequently, the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examination results can be significantly improved.
Figure 1 A model to address the poor performance of secondary schools in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations in Lesotho

Improvements by:

- Ministry of Education:
  - To strengthen professional support to teachers;
  - To provide subvention to all registered schools;
  - To institute a book rental scheme; and
  - To enforce strict control on the proliferation of schools.

- Principals:
  - To become more committed to their work;
  - To create a climate that can motivate learning;
  - To maximise teaching-learning time; and
  - To ensure that teachers perform their duties diligently.

- Teachers:
  - To attend classes regularly and be more committed;
  - To create a success-oriented classroom atmosphere;
  - To provide remedial instruction to slow learners; and
  - To continually improve their professional skills.

- Learners:
  - To work harder on their studies;
  - To form study groups and tackle problems together;
  - To apply more effort in mathematics and science; and
  - To improve their English proficiency.

Strategy:

- A more effective and efficient education system
- Enhanced teacher and learner productivity;
- Improved results

Goal:

- Successful learning; and
- Improved academic results

The improvement in practice of the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examination results in Lesotho.
6.4 THEMES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is still a dearth of school effectiveness research in Lesotho to be undertaken, particularly with regard to the performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. There is currently no database on the strategies specific to and grounded in Lesotho that can be employed to improve the academic performance of learners. Much qualitative and quantitative research is needed to investigate the factors that work against, and those that can enhance the effectiveness of secondary schools in Lesotho, particularly with reference to academic performance. In this respect, related areas of research are:

- Strategies for improving the academic performance of learners in examinations.
- The mobilisation of educational resources for secondary schools.
- The effect of poverty on the academic performance of learners.
- Dealing with the recurrent poor performance of most learners in English, mathematics and science subjects in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations.
- The level of teacher commitment in Lesotho schools and its impact on learner achievement.
- The possibility of sharing teachers in scarce subject areas such as mathematics and science in secondary schools, particularly in the mountains and impoverished areas.
- The feasibility of networking between schools on management and curricular issues.
- Dealing with the shortage of mathematics and science teachers in secondary schools.
- The effect of the management capacity of the Ministry of Education on the effectiveness of schools.

6.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The ineffectiveness of most secondary schools in Lesotho, evidenced mainly by the poor performance of the majority of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations, is a disturbing issue to the state, parents and the Basotho nation. It was argued in chapters 2 and 5 of this study that the state and parents do not receive value for the money invested in the learners’ secondary education. Furthermore, it was highlighted
that school fees and educational costs are exorbitant in most secondary schools. Hence, to see the families’ resources not brought to fruition by the good academic performance of learners is frustrating to most families and learners. This is because the poor performance of learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations usually blocks their academic and career opportunities in that it renders them inadmissible to most tertiary institutions. In this way, for most families, the poor academic performance of learners at this level could create an impression that the investment they made in their children’s education has been wasted.

The above scenario warrants that the state, through the Ministry of Education, principals and teachers, should continually work in a more collaborative and synergetic framework to explore new and better ways of improving the overall effectiveness of schools, particularly the poor performance of most learners in the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate examinations. The principals as the school-based managers and teachers as the implementers of the curriculum are strategically placed at the point of education service delivery. In this regard, it is important that the school principals and teachers embrace the fact that their sustained professional commitment or dedication to duty and learner determination are fundamental to improving the academic performance of their schools. The state, through the Ministry of Education, should also do more to drive the improvement of the academic results of secondary schools by intensifying the professional, financial and material support that it renders to schools. At the same time, the state should be instrumental in building a culture of accountability in schools and ensure that schools become more accountable for the academic outcomes of learners.
REFERENCES


Management Development. Wilderness, Western Cape, South Africa, 18 to 20 September 1996.

*Schools as Organisations*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.


Improvement Research Traditions for Achieving Equity-Based Education. Equity and 


Effectiveness of Planning in Hong Kong Self-Managing Schools. Educational 

Project. Population and Human Resources Division Southern Africa Department. 
Maseru: Government Printer.

World Bank. 1995. Cost Effectiveness of Education in the Kingdom of Lesotho. Maseru: 
Government Printer.

World Bank. 1999. Education Sector Development Project. (Draft). Maseru: Ministry of 
Education.


Newspaper articles

Public Eye (28 January 2000).
Public Eye (4 February 2000).
Moeletsi oa Basotho (14 January 2001).
Moeletsi oa Basotho (4 November 2001).
The Sun (24 October 2001).
Southern Star (15 February 2002).
30th May 2001

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: REQUEST FOR MR. M. LEKHETHO TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

This serves to inform you that Mr. M. Lekhetho is a senior officer of the Ministry of Education who is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education Degree with the University of South Africa [UNISA]. As a requirement for his programme, the officer needs to conduct a research study on *"The Effect of the Education Management System on the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Lesotho".*

Kindly allow him to conduct the study in your school and accord him the necessary assistance and support in this important activity.

Your usual co-operation is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

L. Maqalika-Lerotholi
[Chief Inspector Central]
Appendix A

LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about your school, and yourself relevant to my research titled: The Impact of the Education Management System on the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Lesotho. The information provided will be used purely for my academic research, and will be treated anonymously and confidentially. So please provide the information requested as candidly as possible.

Name of school: --------------------------

PERSONAL INFORMATION/BACKGROUND FACTORS

1. Sex: -----------------
2. Date of birth: ---------------
3. What is the occupation of your parents/guardians?
   (a) Mother ------------------------; (b) father ------------------------
4. Please tick from the list provided, the materials available in your home.
   (a) Educational books -----, (b) television set -----, (c) radio -----, (d) telephone -----, (e) computer -----, (f) none ----- 
5. Do you receive any assistance with your schoolwork from your parents? [Yes] [No] 
6. If the answer to question 6 above is yes, please state how they assist you in your schoolwork.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

7. Do you get enough opportunity to study at home? [Yes] [No]
8. Please give evidence of your response above in the space provided below.
9. In which class did you pass Standard 7? -----------------, Year -------------
10. Which primary school did you attend? -------------------------------; District --------------
11. How many times did you repeat in primary school? Please tick where appropriate. (a) Never repeated (b) once, (c) twice, (d) three times (e) more than three times.
12. Which class(es) did you repeat in primary school? -------------------------------

SECONDARY SCHOOL FACTORS

13. How many secondary/high schools have you attended so far? -------------
14. Which secondary/high school did you attend before coming here? ---------------
15. Why did you leave your former high school, if you attended another high school before? Please state.

16. How would you rate the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?
   (a) Excellent, (b) very good, (c) good, (d) fair, (e) poor, (f) very poor
17. What do you think are the reasons for this performance?
18. Do you think this school has the potential to do perform better than it is currently performing in the COSC examinations? [Yes] [No]

19. If your answer to question 18 is yes, what do you think can be done to improve the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

20. What do you think can be done to improve the standard of learning in this school?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

21. Please choose from the options provided, the number of prescribed textbooks that you have for COSC. (1) All, (2) most, (3) many, (4) few, (5) very few, (6) none

22. Have you ever been sent back home due to lack of textbooks? [Yes] [No]

23. Have you ever been sent home for a long time due to failure to pay school fees? [Yes] [No]

24. What do you think makes some schools more effective (better) than others?
SATISFACTION FACTORS

25. Do you find your teachers to be doing their jobs well? [Yes] [No]
26. Please give reasons that support your answer to question 25 above.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

27. Do you think that the principal of your school is doing his/her job well? [Yes] [No]
28. Please give reasons that support your answer above.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

29. Do you think that learners are well treated at this school? [Yes] [No]
30. Please give reasons for your answer above.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION, MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU.
Appendix B

TEACHERS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about your school, relevant to my research title: The Impact of the Education Management System on the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Lesotho. The information provided will be used purely for my academic research, and will be treated anonymously and confidentially. So I humbly request you to provide the information requested as candidly as possible.

Name of school: ____________________________

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Sex: ____________________________
2. Highest qualification held: ____________________________
3. Subjects taught: ____________________________

SCHOOL FACTORS

4. How would you rate the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?
   (a) Excellent, (b) very good, (c) good, (d) fair, (e) poor, (f) very poor

5. What do you think are the reasons for this performance?

   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

6. Do you think this school has the potential to perform better than it is currently performing in the COSC examinations? [Yes] [No]
7. If your answer to question 6 is yes, what do you think can be done to improve the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?


8. What do you think can be done to improve the standard of learning in this school?


9. Is there a high incidence of learners who lack textbooks in your school? [Yes] [No]
10. If there is a high incidence of learners who lack textbooks in your school, please indicate how you deal with this problem.


11. What do you think makes some schools more effective than others?
SATISFACTION FACTORS

12. Are you satisfied with your job? [Yes] [No]

13. What are the reasons for your answer to question 12?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

14. Do you think the principal of your school is doing his/her job well? [Yes] [No]

15. Please give reasons that support your answer in the space provided below:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION, MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU.
Appendix C

PRINCIPALS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about your school, relevant to my research title: *The Impact of the Education Management System on the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Lesotho*. The information provided will be used purely for my academic research, and will be treated anonymously and confidentially. So I humbly request you to provide information requested as candidly as possible.

Name of school: __________________________

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Sex: ________________
2. Highest qualification held: __________________________
3. Subjects taught: __________________________

SCHOOL FACTORS

4. How would you rate the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?
   (a) Excellent, (b) very good, (c) good, (d) fair, (e) poor (f) very poor
5. What do you think are the reasons for this performance?
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

6. Do you think this school has the potential to perform better than it is currently performing in the COSC examinations? [Yes] [No]
7. If your answer to question 6 is yes, what do you think can be done to improve the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

8. What do you think can be done to improve the standard of learning in this school?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

9. Is there a high incidence of learners who lack textbooks in your school? [Yes] [No]

10. If there is a high incidence of learners who lack textbooks in your school, please indicate how you deal with this problem.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

11. What do you think makes some schools more effective than others?
SATISFACTION FACTORS

12. Are you satisfied with your job? [Yes] [No]
13. What are reasons for your answer to question 12?

14. Are you satisfied with the COSC results of your school? [Yes] [No]
15. What are the reasons for your answer above?

16. Do you find your teachers to be doing their work well? [Yes] [No]
17. Please give reasons that support your answer to question 16 above.

18. Do you think learners are doing their schoolwork well? [Yes] [No]
19. Please give reasons that support your answer to question above.
DEPUTY PRINCIPALS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about your school, relevant to my research title: *The Impact of the Education Management System on the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Lesotho*. The information provided will be used purely for my academic research, and will be treated anonymously and confidentially. So I humbly request you to provide information requested as candidly as possible.

**Name of school:** ------------------------------

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1. Sex: -----------------

2. Highest qualification held: ------------------------------

3. Subjects taught: ----------------------------------

**SCHOOL FACTORS**

4. How would you rate the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?
   - (a) Excellent, (b) very good, (c) good, (d) fair, (e) poor (f) very poor

5. What do you think are the reasons for this performance?

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

6. Do you think this school has the potential to perform better than it is currently performing in the COSC examinations? [Yes] [No]
7. If your answer to question 6 is yes, what do you think can be done to improve the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?


8. What do you think can be done to improve the standard of learning in your school?


9. Is there a high incidence of learners who lack textbooks in your school? [Yes] [No]

10. If there is a high incidence of learners who lack textbooks in your school, please indicate how you deal with this problem.


11. What do you think makes some schools more effective than others?
SATISFACTION FACTORS

12. Are you satisfied with your job? [Yes] [No]
13. What are reasons for your answer to question 12 above?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

14. Are you satisfied with the COSC results of your school? [Yes] [No]
15. What are the reasons for your answer above?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

16. Do you find the principal to be doing his/her work well? [Yes] [No]
17. Please give reasons that support your answer to question 16 above.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

18. Do you find teachers at this school to be doing their work well? [Yes] [No]
19. Please give reasons that support your answer above.

________________________________________________________________________
20. Do you think learners are doing their schoolwork well? [Yes] [No]
21. Please give reasons that support your answer above.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION, MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU.
SCHOOL BOARDS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about your school, relevant to my research title: The Impact of the Education Management System on the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Lesotho. The information provided will be used purely for my academic research, and will be treated anonymously and confidentially. So I humbly request you to provide information requested as candidly as possible.

**Name of school:** ----------------------------------------

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1. Sex: --------
2. Position held ------------------------

**SCHOOL FACTORS**

3. How would you rate the performance of your school in COSC examinations?
   (a) Excellent, (b) very good, (c) good, (d) fair, (e) poor (f) very poor
4. What do you think are the reasons for the performance?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

5. Do you think this school has the potential to perform better than it is currently performing in the COSC examinations? [Yes] [No]
6. If your answer to question 5 is yes, what do you think can be done to improve the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?
7. What do you think makes some schools more effective than others?

8. Do you think the principal is doing his/her job well? [Yes] [No]

9. Please give reasons that support your answer to question 8 above:

10. Do you think teachers at this school are doing their jobs well? [Yes] [No]

11. What are the reasons for your answer to question 10 above?

12. Do you think learners of your school are doing their schoolwork well? [Yes] [No]

13. Please give reasons that support your answer to question 12 above
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.
MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU.
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about your school, relevant to my research title: *The Impact of the Education Management System on the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Lesotho*. The information provided will be used purely for my academic research, and will be treated anonymously and confidentially. So I humbly request you to provide information requested as candidly as possible.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Sex: --------------
2. Job Title: ------------------------------- (subject): -------------------------------

SCHOOL FACTORS

3. How would you rate the general performance of learners in the COSC examinations in the country?
   (a) Very poor, (b) poor, (c) fair, (d) good, (e) very good, (e) excellent
4. What do you think are the reasons for this performance?

5. Do you think the high schools in Lesotho have the potential to perform better than they are currently performing in the COSC examinations? [Yes] [No]
6. If your answer to question 5 is yes, what do you think can be done to improve the performance of schools in the COSC examinations?
7. What do you think makes some schools more effective than others?

8. What do you think can be done to improve the standard of learning in schools?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION, MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU.
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATION SECRETARIES/SUPERVISOR

The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about your school, relevant to my research title: *The Impact of the Education Management System on the Effectiveness of Secondary Schools in Lesotho*. The information provided will be used purely for my academic research, and will be treated anonymously and confidentially. So I humbly request you to provide information requested as candidly as possible.

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

1. Sex: -----------------
2. Proprietor: ------------------

**SCHOOL FACTORS**

3. How would you rate the general performance of your schools in the COSC examinations in the country?
   (a) Excellent, (b) very good, (c) good, (d) fair, (e) poor, (e) very poor
4. What do you think are the reasons for this performance?

   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________

5. Do you think this school has the potential to perform better than it is currently performing in the COSC examinations? [Yes] [No]
6. If your answer to question 5 is yes, what do you think can be done to improve the performance of your school in the COSC examinations?
7. What do you think makes some schools more effective than others?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION, MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU.