

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CLASSROOMS WITH ORPHANS AND
VULNERABLE CHILDREN: A STUDY OF THREE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
LESOTHO**

by

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**Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of
Education (MEd) degree in the discipline Education Leadership, Management and Policy;
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ABSTRACT

With introduction of Free Primary Education in Lesotho, teachers are now leading and managing classrooms with increased numbers of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). This study seeks to understand how teachers lead and manage classrooms with OVC. It explores the experiences of teachers who lead and manage classrooms with OVC, and the support they receive from School Management Committees (SMCs) in their leadership and management of classrooms with OVC. Transformational leadership and democratic classroom management theories are used as theories underpinning the study.

The study is located within the interpretive paradigm. It employs a qualitative approach. The data was collected from three primary schools in the Leribe dissemination centre in Lesotho. One community school and two church schools were sampled. Nine participants (3 from each school) were purposively selected. One teacher each was selected from the three different levels of teaching from each primary school. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to generate data. The findings reveal that teachers experience increased existence of poverty among OVC, which is illustrated by severe hunger, lack of basic requirements like food, clothing and educational support. Teachers have formulated different strategies to deal with these issues in their classrooms. When difficult issues arise the principals play an important role in helping the teachers. Unfortunately, there is less support for teachers from other SMC members.

DECLARATION

I ‘Makabelo Melida Lehlaha declares that

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- iii. This dissertation does not contain other persons’ data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being source from other persons.
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As the candidate’s supervisor I agree/do not agree to the submission of this dissertation.

Dr Inba Naicker

Signed _____ Date _____

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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Dear Mrs Lehlaha

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0209/011M

PROJECT TITLE: Leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children: A study of three primary schools in Lesotho

In response to your application dated 9 May 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late sister Bertha ‘Mabaki Lethunya who was passionate about education and encouraged me to take steps ahead and excel in education.

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ACRONYMS

ACL – Anglican Church Lesotho

AIDS – Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

CRC – Convention on the Rights of a Child

EFA – Education for All

FPE – Free Primary Education

FRESH – Focusing Resource on Effective School Health

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

LEC – Lesotho Evangelical Church

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

OVC – Orphans and Vulnerable Children

RCC – Roman Catholic Church

RSA – Republic of South Africa

SMC – School Management Committee

SOS – Save Our Soul

UNAIDS – Jointed United Programmes on HIV and AIDS

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THIS STUDY

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY

Internationally, education is considered a tool for the attainment of a society's economic, political, social and technological aspirations. Since the 18th century the government of Lesotho began to promote the importance of education in the country by allowing the admission of missionaries into the country. These missionaries, on arrival into the country, started to build churches and schools. The first church denominations which started to erect schools were the Lesotho Evangelical Church (LEC), Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and Anglican Church of Lesotho (ACL). These church schools, once erected, fell under the management of the respective church authorities. The church schools comprise the largest number of schools in Lesotho. The balance of the schools, comprising about 10% of schools is fully government owned (World Bank, 2005). The government, however, does assist the church schools by paying the salaries of teachers.

School-based education in Lesotho is structured under different levels which are: early childhood care (2-5 year olds), primary school education comprising grades 1-7 (6-12 year olds), secondary education comprising forms A-C (13- 15 year olds) and high school education comprising forms D and E (16-17 year olds). Primary school education in Lesotho is free and compulsory. With the advent of free primary schooling coupled with compulsory primary schooling there was a large influx of children to schools. Most of these children were children at risk. Large cohorts of these children were orphans and vulnerable (OVC) children (UNICEF, 2009 & World Bank, 2005).

Lesotho is a small, mountainous, landlocked country within the Republic of South Africa (RSA). It is a poverty stricken country which depends on RSA economically. Over the years Basotho (local inhabitants of Lesotho) men have been working in the mines in RSA in order to eke out a living. This led to a temporary separation of the men from their families which led to bad sexual practices among Basotho men. A consequence of this was the spread of HIV and AIDS among

the Basotho people resulting in large numbers of people being either infected or affected by the pandemic. As a result of deaths related to the pandemic, many children were left orphaned without any one to care for them or support them. Sometimes they are left with old people who are unable to provide these children with the basic necessities of life. Therefore, these children's lives changed. This change affected them socially, mentally and physically. Many children tended to drop out of school because of the stigma attached to HIV and AIDS. Further, these children are discriminated against and excluded from accessing basic services such as education and suffer exploitation and abuse (Kimane, 2005).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teachers are leaders and managers in classrooms which have children with different life experiences. The experiences of children, who come from structured families, are different from orphans and vulnerable children. Orphans are children below 18 years of age who have lost both parents by death whereas vulnerable children are those who belong to high-risk groups who lack access to basic social amenities or facilities owing to illness, disability, family background and others (Salaam, 2005). Lesotho has one of the highest rates of HIV and AIDS prevalence in the world with about 12 percent of its population orphaned (Jibunoh, 2010 and Smiley, 2009). The number of orphaned children in Lesotho threatens children's overall development and the social fabric of entire communities. Owing to this, the government of Lesotho has launched a programme funded by the European Commission to assist and utilise essential services – health, education, protection, care and support for OVC (Barbadoro, 2007). Therefore, access to school for OVC has emerged as a major policy priority for the country. Since the year 2000 the government of Lesotho has distributed most of its income to the education sector when Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced. Further, the policy on inclusive education has resulted in children with special needs being integrated into mainstream schools. These interventions were to meet the goals of international policy on Education for All (EFA), Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (World Bank, 2005). Given this context, the purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers lead and manage classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children.

1.3 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Being a primary school teacher for more than twenty years and keeping records of OVC at school for a few years, I have noticed a vast change in classroom reality after the introduction of FPE and inclusive education. For example, the children who were once regular school attendees attend school less regularly after their parent's death. This does not only affect children's social wellbeing but also hinders the children's academic performance. OVC attendance and performance is adversely affected as they are unable to concentrate in class due to anxiety they experience at home (Robson & Sylvester, 2007). When children are asked about their absenteeism at school, the possible answers may be: "We did not have food at home." "There was no soap or Vaseline." "My parent or my younger sister or brother was ill." "I did not have school equipment (book, pen, and pencil) etc." These 'excuses' frustrate teachers because handling such matters calls for skills which many of them were not trained for. According to my experience, teachers in Lesotho are largely knowledgeable in teaching skills but not counselling skills.

In addition to the absenteeism of orphans, teachers struggle when these orphans are present at school because they may be inattentive, sleepy and tired in the classroom. Robson and Sylvester (2007) find that orphans' tiredness and dozing in the class is said to be common. On 20 May 2010, the government of Lesotho passed the Educational Act 20 that legalised the right to free and compulsory education (Lesotho Government Gazette, 2010). This means that the number of OVC in the classrooms is likely to increase. This diversity in the classrooms poses a challenge to teachers. Some of these disadvantaged orphans are from child-headed families and they grow without adult supervision.

Orphaned children suffer recurrent psychological trauma which starts from their parents' illness and death (Matshalaga, 2002). Matshalaga (2002) asserts that, the OVC trauma is followed by poverty, malnutrition, stigma, exploitation and often sexual abuse. All these effects affect OVC performance in the classroom. It makes them underperformers. Consequently, the OVC challenges need to be managed so as to help these children become future functional citizens. This leads me to the need to understand how teachers lead and manage classrooms with OVC.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to explore teachers' leadership and management of classrooms with OVC. The objectives of this study are to:

- Elicit the experiences of teachers in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children.
- Determine how teachers are supported by School Management Committees (SMCs) in leading and managing of classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children.

1.5 KEY QUESTIONS

This study seeks to answer the following key questions:

- What are the experiences of teachers in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children?
- How are teachers supported by the School Management Committees (SMCs) in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The rapid increase in the number of OVC is a global issue owing to the existing HIV and AIDS pandemic and unemployment. Most of the Sub-Saharan countries have introduced FPE which gives all children the opportunity to access basic education. This has led to an increase in the number of OVC in schools. Research has been conducted on the well-being of OVC internationally and how teachers lead and manage the classrooms with OVC. In Africa, Kendall and O'Gara (2007) conducted studies in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Van Dyk (2008), Theron (2008), Lemmer and van Wyk (2007) and Wood (2008) conducted studies in South Africa. Robson and Sylvester (2007) conducted studies in Zambia. However, what I have observed is that these African studies focus less on teachers leading and managing classrooms with OVC. Their main focus is on schools in general. Again, from my literature search there was no indication of any study which was conducted in Lesotho concerning teachers' leadership and

management of classrooms with OVC. Therefore, this study will serve as a reference for other teachers and researchers nationally because it mainly focuses on teachers' leadership and management of classrooms with a large number of OVC.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS

The purpose of this section is to provide operational definitions of the concepts and terms that will be used in this study.

1.7.1 Leadership

Yukl (2006) contends that leadership is about articulating a vision and creating an environment within which things can be accomplished. Leadership might also be defined as an interactive and dynamic process of drawing members of an organisation together so as to build a culture which makes them feel secure enough to articulate and pursue what they want to become (Rallis, 1990). According to Konzen and Posner (1995, p.30) classroom leadership can be defined as the act of mobilizing others (children) to want to struggle for shared objectives. They further indicate that classroom leadership is a process of creating a positive classroom environment in which learning can occur freely.

1.7.2 Management

Gunter (2001) asserts that management is a way of building and maintaining organisational structure. It involves arranging people in terms of their authority and responsibility. This means that the management process is concerned with organising and helping the members of an organisation to attain individual as well as organisational objectives within the changing environment of the organisation (Mampuru & Spoelstra, 1994). In terms of classroom management, Kruger and van Schalkwyk (1997) contend that classroom management is the sum total of activities (education and teaching activities excluded) that are necessary to enable the core or main task of the teaching-learning situation to take place effectively.

1.7.3 Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

Orphans are children below 18 years of age who have lost one or both parents by death (Maudeni, 2006). Vulnerable children are children who live in a household with chronically ill adults and who, as a consequence of this, experience hardship in coping with life. They experience various social and psychological needs. Their social needs include food, clothing, and shelter. Their psychological needs include the need for constant counselling because of the emotional problems they face, for example, the need to be loved, respected and accepted and the need to feel a sense of belonging (Mchombu, 2005, p.3).

1.8 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003), there are two reasons for conducting a literature review, Firstly, it is to generate and refine research ideas and secondly, to determine the current state of knowledge of the subject including its limitations. Therefore, the purpose of the literature review in my study was to present issues in the literature relating to leading and managing classrooms with OVC. To this end, the researcher engaged in a comprehensive search of various national and international databases on current and completed research. The majority of the books and journal articles consulted were obtained from the library at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative study located within the interpretive paradigm. The study methodology employs semi-structured interviews to generate data. The data generated was subjected to content analysis.

1.10 ORGANISATION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study comprises five chapters.

Chapter One provides a general background and overview of the key aspects of this study. The study is introduced by pointing out the context of education in Lesotho and the problem statement. The motivation and rationale for pursuing this study are presented. The objectives and key research questions that inform this study are listed followed by the definition of key concepts and terms used in this study. A brief outline of the methodology employed in this study brings this chapter to conclusion.

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature surveyed with regard to leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children. The survey commences with the theoretical frameworks employed in this study and is then followed by national and international studies related to the critical questions of this study.

Chapter Three discusses the methodological orientation of the study. The major components of this chapter will include the description of qualitative research design, interview and document analysis as methods used during the process of data collection, and the procedure for data analysis and the sample used. Ethical considerations and a model for ensuring trustworthiness will be outlined.

Chapter Four presents the results of the study and emphasise how teachers lead and manage classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children. The findings will be outlined and discussed.

Chapter Five will conclude the dissertation. It will give an overview of the findings related to teachers' leadership and management of the classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children. Moreover, recommendations will be made and future research directions will be provided.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the background and introduction to this study. This chapter focuses on the literature reviewed with regard to the key research questions formulated in chapter one. This chapter commences with a discussion on the theoretical underpinnings of this study namely, transformational leadership and democratic classroom management. Thereafter, it presents scholarship around the key research questions. A thematic approach is followed comprising the following themes: Challenges facing OVC and implications of OVC-related challenges for teachers in the classrooms and implications of OVC-related challenges for leading and managing classrooms. Furthermore, the chapter will show how teachers lead and manage classrooms with OVC. The School management committees support for teachers will also be discussed under this chapter.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Grix (2004) a theory is a scheme or system of ideas or statements held as an explanation for phenomena. In addition, theories are abstract notions which assert specific relationships between concepts. The abstract ideas and propositions contained in theories are either tested in fieldwork by the collection of data or derive from the data. This study is underpinned by the theories of transformational leadership and democratic classroom management theory. These theories will assist me to make meaning of the data generated in this study and will also provides me with the tools to critique the data.

2.2.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

This study views transformational leadership as key to understanding how teachers can lead classrooms with OVC. Transformational leadership is about enhancing motivation and

performance of learners. Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms individuals (Hall, Johnson, Wysocki & Kepner, 2008). Teachers using a transformational leadership style would be able to get learners to want to change, to improve and to be led. Transformational leaders can positively influence learner's behaviour and perceptions. Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) cited Bass (1985) who defines transformational leadership as the synthesis of components that includes charisma, individualized considerations and intellectual stimulation. Charismatic leaders are considered by others to be dynamic, hard working, confident, attractive, competent and successful. Charismatic leaders are inspirational as they are emotional, courageous, conscious and stimulating. Teachers who use a transformational leadership style treat learners on the basis of their individual needs and capabilities. They also enhance the intellectual stimulation of learners by encouraging them to rethink ideas that they may never have questioned before (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009).

Transformational leadership during a time of rapid change would be one of the best strategies for teachers as educational leaders in the classrooms occupied by learners with diverse abilities and challenges. A transformational leadership style can help teachers to cross the thresholds of their classrooms (MacBeath, Moos & Riley, 1998). This leadership style consists of dimensions which maintain effective leadership. The dimensions that determine transformational leadership are: building vision, establishing goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individualized support, modelling best practices and important organisational values, demonstrating high performance expectations, creating a productive school culture and developing structure to foster participation in school decisions (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999, p.118). Transformational leadership involves mobilizing resources, including human and intellectual resources in order to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of others (Owens & Valesky 2007). Dimmock and Walker (2005) state that, an effective leadership process that fosters tolerance and appreciation of diversity of students, will lead to encouragement of group identity and pride for minority students and reduce stereotypes and biases. Learners develop the sense of oneness so they unite and work as a team which can lead to an effective teaching and learning atmosphere.

2.2.2 DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

There is a range of classroom management styles used by teachers to manage their classrooms. The two styles mostly used by teachers are the authoritarian style and the democratic style. In the classroom where the authoritarian style is practised, control is in the hands of the teacher. However, the teachers who espouse a more democratic classroom management style share power with learners rather than exercise power over them (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001 and Overton & Sullian, 2008). When teachers share power with learners, the learners experience a sense of possession. Similarly, Kruger's and van Schalkwyk's (1997, p.82) viewpoint is that the teacher who has a democratic management style, "is firm, encouraging, helpful, warm, caring and fair". In such an environment, OVC are more likely to renegotiate aspects of the classroom environment with classmates and their teachers. Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006) point out that a democratic teacher considers learners emotional needs therefore, he/she provides an optimal conditions which facilitate learning. Where there is power-sharing there is a gradual development of increased participation and decision-making for learners (Overton & Sullian, 2008). While learners participate in decision-making it will be easier for OVC learners to be involved in decisions that are related to their assistance.

In a democratic classroom the teacher and learners work together to make decisions about how the class will function. They formulate rules and regulations governing the classroom jointly. Classroom rules and regulations form an important structure that makes clear what is or is not accepted. Developing rules together helps the teacher to avoid learners being explicitly aggrieved and destructive (Eaude, 2006). According to Gilman, Huebner and Furlong (2009) mutual respect for oneself and others is the principle that underlies democratic classroom management. Gilman, Huebner and Furlong (2009) further assert that in a classroom where there is mutual respect, everyone is accepted as equals, the individual's appeal is recognised as ideas, plans and contributions are valued. This also can be successful if the teacher is sure of individual child differences and knowledge.

A democratic leader ensures that there is acceptance and awareness of children's differences in the classroom. Blackmore (2006) observes that, leaders should ensure that organisations work on democratic principles based on recognition of respect for and not assimilation of differences.

Consequently, there would be no discrimination of others in the classroom. According to Overton (2007) and Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006) a democratic manager ensures the existence of the three C's – 'capability, connectivity and contribution' as essential in helping learners feel a sense of belonging. When learners are taken and made to feel capable, they are able to connect with their peers and teachers and make contributions in different activities.

2.3 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

According to Reardon (2006, p.151), the purpose of a review of literature is to, "help to find what already has been done,so as to gain a good understanding of the subject of interest and recognize the key features and communicators in the subject." With that in mind, my literature review will clarify some ideas on the subject of OVC and on how teachers lead and manage classrooms with OVC.

2.3.1 CHALLENGES FACING OVC

Every child, like all adults, has a need for care and support. The family as a primary system is the chief provider of children's care and support (Jacques, 2006).With regard to OVC, this system seems to fail due to the change in its structures. Consequently, some OVC are forced to live on their own without any adult advice, care and supervision.Although there are some OVC who live with adults in foster care or with parents who are sick or negligent, their survival needs are not well managed. This thus leads to many life challenges which OVC experience in their day-to-day lives.Among these challenges are child headed house families, child labour, starvation, abuse and others.These challenges differ in degree and nature from one OVC to another.

Every child has a right to education but there are several challenges that hinder OVC's rights to education.Globally education is viewed as remedy to poverty. As a result free and compulsory education is generally accepted as a hallmark of a society's development and emphasizes a basic right and entitlement for all children by the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child. Similarly, inLesotho education is free and compulsory for all primary grades (Lesotho Government Gazette, 2010).Consequently, all children including OVC have to attend

school. Even though it is compulsory for OVC to attend school, they drop-out either temporarily or permanently (UNICEF 2006). In AIDS-affected families, the children often drop-out of school to become caregivers of younger siblings. Deame (2001) adds that the problem of orphans mounts quickly. This means that, though the schooling is free, there are many obstacles that hinder the OVCs education. Among these challenges are: child labour, child-headed families, extended families and inadequate food security.

Child labour is frequent among orphans. In the rural areas of Lesotho, orphaned boys as young as four years are employed in hazardous conditions as livestock herders (United States Department of Labour, 2005). These children work either for relatives or are hired out to community members through negotiations with the OVC's relatives and parents. In urban areas most of these children work as domestic workers, car washers, taxi-fare collectors and street vendors (United States Department of Labour, 2005). Oleke, Blystad, Fylkesnes and Tumwine (2007) in their study found that, on a regular basis, one orphaned school boy used to be late for school or even absent. When teachers questioned the boy as to why he was always late for school or sometimes absent from school, the boy informed the teachers that before coming to school he has to cultivate the neighbours' gardens in exchange for food because he was the eldest in the family. The foster parents of OVCs sometimes exploit them for personal gain. Teachers give examples of orphans who were being treated as labourers by their guardians. They insist on them first finishing their chores at home before attending school (Werk, 2004).

The fostered or adopted children and orphans often act as domestic workers or servants. Young orphaned boys herd livestock while the natural children of the family attend school (Jacques, 2006). Even when adopted children and orphans are enrolled in schools, they do not attend school regularly. In 2002 the Lesotho school attendance statistics show that only 66.9% of children who started school were likely to reach grade 5 (United State Department of Labour, 2005). The engagement of OVCs in child labour contributes to this high drop-out rate.

In some homes, there is a change in the family structure because some children have to head households owing to their parents' death or if the remaining parent departs for employment away from the home town. If there are no relatives to take responsibility for the orphan's welfare or the

OVC do not want to join or live with other relatives in the absence of their parents, then children are forced to head the household (Raper & Van Rooyen, 2006). The children in this family structure usually do the household chores which used to be performed by their parents. Evans and Miguel (2007) contend that girls often withdraw from school mainly after maternal death as they are expected to perform tasks that were previously performed by their mothers. The children from the child-headed family backgrounds do not perform well-enough academically when compared to their colleagues who are not orphaned. The reason might be that these orphans give their school work less or little attention because of the home workload. In addition, Khanare (2009, p.18) points out that, “adolescents are compelled to abandon their schooling either temporarily or permanently as they are supposed to assume adult roles at home.”

The rapid increase in the number of orphans necessitates increased fostering in society. Normally in African tradition, relatives such as grandparents, uncles and aunts care for children who lose both their parents. Deame (2001) and The World Bank (2002) assert that the traditional system of fostering orphaned children is failing. The reason is that the number of adults is shrinking compared to the growing number of orphans. Fleshman (2001) in his study found that a 70 year old woman who raised four grandchildren indicated that since the children were brought to her, she has been suffering. She indicated that she was unable to supply the children with proper care and support. Such orphans suffer social isolation as their basic needs such as parental love, care and support are not fully met. This socialisation of parents and children help children to acquire necessary life skills that would help the children to become successful and responsible adults. Some of the OVC, because of unsatisfied needs of parental love, end up on the streets or may enter the world of prostitution. Khanare (2009) contends that, children who lack homework support may develop low motivation for learning. These children usually become stressed and tend to lose interest in learning. This may result in irregular school attendance or children dropping out of school.

The problem of starvation also exists among orphans. The increasing number of OVC deepens poverty and illness among children which are caused by malnutrition (Coombe, 2002). The OVC in child-headed households do not have people who supply them with food, so they have to struggle in order to produce food for their consumption. For this reason, orphans perform

difficult duties which are not equivalent to their age, as the older orphans have to care for young siblings, support them with food and look after them when they are sick. This indicates that orphans are at enormous risk of growing up without proper nutrition. Fleshman (2001) recounted that one orphaned girl in Zambia reported that her parents had a big farm but it was taken from her when her parents died. The girl indicated that her younger brothers and sisters had become beggars who went from house to house asking for food. Placed in such a situation, some children may turn to stealing in order to satisfy their basic physiological needs.

All these OVC-related challenges discussed above have an impact on the schooling of OVC. If the plight of these OVC is not understood by their teachers and if their teachers do not lead and manage their classrooms taking into account the challenges experienced by these OVC, then these children are going to be lost to the schooling system.

2.3.2 THE IMPLICATIONS OF OVC-RELATED CHALLENGES FOR TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM

The challenges experienced by OVC pose enormous problems for teachers in the classroom. Barman (2010) in a study conducted in India confirms that orphans are doubly disadvantaged when compared to non-orphans with regard to school attendance. The OVC do not have any one who can assist them with their homework and support them with their educational needs like uniform and school learning equipment. In addition, Wood and Hillman (2008) assert that 24% of orphans attend school compared to 60% of children with living parents. They further found that OVC often perform poorly at school and the dropout rates usually increase in areas where there is an increase in the number of OVC. In contrast, Werk (2004) points out that in comparing the performance of OVC with other children, the teachers were of the opinion that both competed favourably. They add that sometimes OVC perform better. For example, a teacher at Juja Farm Primary school said that their best Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) candidate was an orphan. However, such cases are the exception rather than the rule. Other teachers in this study commented that OVC lack support for their education, mainly homework. Teachers need to be aware of the lack of support of OVC when it comes to

homework. In leading and managing their classrooms, they need to be sensitive to this factor and put in place mechanisms to support OVC in the completion of their homework.

The growth in the number of OVC in the classroom makes untold demands on teachers, many of whom are not equipped to deal with the special psychosocial and economic needs of orphans. Theron (2008) and Wood and Hillman (2008) contend that teachers are deeply affected and traumatized by the challenges of OVC. In addition, teachers claim that these children tend to make classrooms difficult to manage as they tend to be aggressive and violent. (SOS: Kinderdorf, n.d). The teachers themselves tend to assume the role of social workers as they deal with OVC's challenges. The problems experienced by some of them are difficult to solve and this consequently creates feelings of helplessness among teachers. Therefore, it impacts negatively on teachers' morale (Coombe 2003, Wood & Hillman 2008). Further, the teachers' productivity in the classroom is affected by the fact that they spend more time on attending to traumatized and grieving learners with different challenges. According to Bhana, Morrell, Epstein and Moletsane (2004), these additional demands made on teachers mean that some of their pedagogical responsibilities may go unperformed. De Lange and Stuart (2008) and Bhana, Morrell, Epstein and Moletsane (2004) observe that teachers sometimes lack the skills necessary for addressing learners' problems.

Teachers often feel overwhelmed due to their lack of counselling skills when it comes to dealing with OVC. Owing to their lack of counseling skills, Kendall and O'Gara (2007) assert that some teachers ignore the grief, tears and withdrawal of OVC. Another reason furnished by teachers for turning a blind eye to OVC in the classroom is that they do not have skills or strategies to manage them in the classroom. This shows that teachers themselves are facing untold challenges in their work place in dealing with OVC. As the nature of learners is changing, teachers have to adapt to the changes so as to be able to lead and manage classrooms with OVC.

Khanare (2008) notes that some teachers are frustrated about their work because they contend that teaching is not only about teaching mathematics or English, but it goes beyond that. She adds that teaching is about touching the souls of learners and therefore needs to value the

individuality of children. Teachers report that management of classrooms with large number of OVC needs a lot of effort and time (SOS-Kinderdorf, n.d).

The negative attitudes from the community and/or the learners towards the OVC are a major issue that the teachers have to deal with. Many learners at school do not want to mix with those who have special needs, especially the mentally handicapped. The learners claim that they "fear" the handicapped children and this poses a problem to the teacher who is trying to integrate them into the class (Werk, 2004, p. 69).

A study conducted by Kendall and O’Gara (2007) observes that the OVC are often neglected in the classroom. They maintain that teachers claim that working with OVC is too much to handle, especially dealing with children’s emotional and psychosocial needs. Teachers also felt that they had not received sufficient training on how to address the behavioural and emotional needs of OVC in the classroom. In addition, Kendall and O’Gara (2007) in another case study, assert that teachers felt that they are generally overwhelmed and unable to address the needs of OVC in their classroom. The reason given by these teachers was that they have not been trained to change their teaching approaches, classroom management styles or disciplinary approaches to address the needs of OVC.

2.3.3 THE IMPLICATIONS OF OVC-RELATED CHALLENGES FOR LEADING AND MANAGING CLASSROOMS

Given the increase in the number of OVC in classrooms, it cannot be business as usual for teachers. Teachers have to be effective classroom leaders and managers in order to ensure inclusivity of OVC in the classroom. Drawing on Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) who maintain that learning organisations constantly and systematically reflect on their practice by asking how, why and what is needed to be done to improve their organisation, teachers dealing with OVC need to be reflective classroom leaders and managers.

Teachers have to create and sustain an enabling environment in order to assist all learners to work to their full potential. Sergiovanni (2001) asserts that leadership is about helping people to

understand the problems they face. It is about helping people to manage their problems and even learning to live with the problems. This means that, it is important for a teacher as the classroom leader to get OVC to understand the situation that they are in, and to assist them to manage the problems they face.

Fullan (2001) indicates that there are some common strategies which leaders need to develop during a period of rapid and extend change. These strategies are the development of a high moral purpose which will increase confidence and enthusiasm (Fullan, 2001). This means that teachers have to lead their classrooms with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of learners especially the OVC who are facing different life challenges caused by change in their lives. In the first instance, teachers as leaders of change have to assess the current situation in their classrooms. Secondly, they need to diagnose possible resistance they may encounter. Thirdly, they need to communicate their intentions to the children in the classroom and select possible strategies (Hord & Sommer, 2008).

The management of classrooms with OVC places a need for teachers to create an allowing classroom environment that would address OVC's needs in the classroom. Teachers need to create an environment wherein OVC would feel loved, secure and valued because they do not receive such support at home (Wood, 2008).

Wood (2008) suggests the following classroom tips:

Table 1: Tips for creating an emotionally safe classroom

The learner should know:	The teacher should:
I am good	Create structures to promote character building and create experiences in which the child can succeed
I am loved	Respect and accept all children, especially those deemed vulnerable
I belong	Include all learners in learning experiences, build up a sense of belonging
I can make good decisions	Give opportunities for problem-solving and decision-making and encourage acceptance of responsibility
I can feel and understand	Model empathy and encourage learners to show respect and listen to each other
I can manage conflict	Use positive methods of discipline and encourage self-discipline

(Adopted from: Wood, 2008, p.186)

Teachers must assist OVC with psychosocial and physical support and if needs be, also refer the OVC to other sectors for professional help. Van Dyk (2008) avers that all children have physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual needs that must be met if children are to enjoy life. The children who do not receive psychosocial support to fulfill all their basic needs may suffer long-term social and emotional impairment (Van Dyk, 2008). UNICEF (2002) maintains that the education system and the school have a key role to play in ensuring the protection, care and support of OVC. The OVC suffer the misfortune of having their basic needs being unfulfilled. Therefore, teachers have to play the parental role of caring.

Teachers, through creative classroom management strategies, can play a pivotal role in getting OVC to integrate with other children. In the context of the classroom the teachers can employ group work which has the potential of developing team spirit among children. Naicker and Waddy (2002) maintain that, 'TEAM' means that 'together everyone achieves more'. This means that working as a team can serve as a remedy for problems, because in a team one's problem is for team members. Therefore, OVC's contact with their peers will reduce the discrimination of OVC by other children. The OVC will also create a sense of belonging and the activities will slow down the impact of discrimination and reduce the orphans' stress.

The OVC needs to know that despite the frightening changes in their day to day life experiences, they still belong to a loving and caring group at school. The teachers have to encourage orphans to value education as a weapon against poverty. Lemmer and Van Wyk (2007) state that after school lessons are vital in the support of OVC. Some teachers help OVC (who do not have support at home) with their school work. Besides that, teachers assist OVC to become self-reliant so as to overcome their present and future life challenges. Some OVC are also helped with practical skills which would enhance their ability to overcome economic challenges. The children are taught handicraft skills such as basket weaving; wood carving and beading, during time scheduled for arts and craft or during afternoons where such time is not scheduled (Lemmer & Van Wyk 2007).

Generally, teachers are sympathetic towards OVC. They want to help children. Werk's report indicates this:

Many of the teachers were found to be sympathetic to the OVC and at times contribute towards their education. Some teachers said that at times they have to use their own money to help some of the poor pupils buy items such as exercise books when they get filled up. Some poor children cannot afford school uniforms and the teachers' source some for them from the pupils who have completed school. Another teacher said that at one time she had to give out a medical bill for hospital and transport cost to a sick poor girl. However, the teachers said they could only do so much for the needy pupils and thus requested for a more formal arrangement to fund such cases under the FPE (Werk,2004, p. 70).

Teachers should use different techniques to help OVC to express their feelings. The development of a conversation session strategy will help learners to express their feelings. This strategy will also help teachers to detect challenges which individual children are facing in classrooms. Mthiyane (2003) states that, a conversation session will help teachers and learners to understand an individual's feelings through the exchanging of ideas and thereby bring about change in their lives. The international HIV/AIDS Alliance (2003) indicates that children often find it easier to express their feelings by using different forms of writing. For young children, drawing can help them express their feeling of loss and sadness. Wood (2008) maintains that teachers have to encourage learners to get in touch with their feelings and to be open to discuss them. Wood (2008) contends that the learners must have journals where they can write their feelings. These journals may have drawings which illustrate ones feelings. The drawings will be useful to those learners who are not yet competent in the writing of meaningful letters, namely those learners in the lower grades. For shy children, there should be a post box where learners place their letters to their teacher. This post box will help to keep confidentiality between the teacher and the individual learner. During the time allocated for the reading of the messages the teacher and the learners can discuss the issues or problems indicated on the scripts without identifying the writer. This will help shy learners to write or make drawings about their experiences. Poems and storytelling are also useful tools for children to express their feelings. To OVC, the sharing of experiences will help them to remove feelings of isolation and reduce their anxiety and fear.

Children's basic needs must be met otherwise children would not concentrate in the class (Wood, 2008). The teachers should arrange feeding schemes for OVC who come to school without having eaten any food at home. In some schools a grandmother who cares for orphans is asked to prepare food for children at school (Buthelezi, 2008 and Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2007). The potential role for the teacher is to identify OVC in their classroom who need food support (Van Leer, 2005). The teacher may ask for donations from other stakeholders who are business owners who might feel passionate about helping. The OVC who do not have food at home are to be provided food security on weekends.

According to Bhana, Morrell, Epstein and Moletsane (2004), the multiple demands on teachers in classrooms with OVC mean that the OVC who are hungry, without equipment for learning,

like pens and books cause an inconvenience in the classroom. In some cases the teacher ends up improvising or buying them exercise books. Some teachers reported that at times they have to use their own money to help some of the poor learners buy items such as exercise books when they get filled up. Some children who cannot afford school uniforms are assisted by the teachers to get uniforms. These teachers usually ask former learners to donate their uniforms to less fortunate learners (UNICEF, 2006). One of the teachers, who had learnt how to improvise, said that she would get her children's old books, cut out the unused pages and bind them together with a stapler so that they can be used by OVC (Werk, 2004, p.50).

When teachers identify OVC who are difficult for them to manage alone in their classrooms they usually refer such OVC for assistance. The support for OVC children depends on individual teacher's ability to empathize with the children who encounter problems. The development of referral criteria on complex problems needs to be established. According to Jacques (2006), orphan referrals are more successful and effective when they are made by professional members of the school (teachers).

2.3.4 SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS WITH OVC IN THEIR CLASSROOMS

The section will give out the types of support get by teachers who lead and manage classrooms with increased number of OVC.

2.3.4.1 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

The School Management Committee (SMC) is a group of people elected from different groups of stakeholders in the school. All SMC members work hand-in-hand in order to ensure that the school's human and physical resources are well managed. The SMC is also responsible for monitoring the school's finance and learner enrolment. They prepare and maintain records such as minutes of school meetings, and are also involved in the reporting of finance matters to parents and the OVC committee (UNICEF, 2009). In Lesotho, the SMCs comprise eight members per school which include three parent representatives, two church members for church

schools or two community members for community schools, one teacher who represents the teachers in the committee, one area chief and the principal.

2.3.4.2 SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

Due to the increase in the number of OVC in schools in Lesotho, schools must also facilitate and co-ordinate a multi-sectoral approach in order to support teachers in dealing with OVC (UNAIDS, 2004). For example, in *Education for All* Focusing Resource on Effective School Health (FRESH) framework illustrates how schools can effectively address a range of learner needs (UNAIDS, 2004).

Teachers usually report to their school principals about the challenges they face with regard to leading and managing their classrooms. They report both positive and negative outcomes. The school principal as a member of SMC and the person who has an overall picture of the school, always reports to the SMC on issues affecting the school, including the challenges that teachers face their classroom leadership and management. Based on reports from teachers, the school principal usually intervenes where there are indications of child abuse perpetrated by the guardian's of OVC. Werk (2004) confirms in his study of how two school principals had to intervene and report cases to the police where girls complained to them of incidences of abuse that they experienced at home.

The SMC members, who are church representatives, assist teachers by referring OVC to other church members who volunteer their services to help OVC (Khanare, 2009). The UNICEF (2009, p.17) contends that in Nairobi the SMCs encourage parents to help to contribute financially to the purchase of uniforms for OVC in school. Further, they request that older children's uniforms are handed down to OVC in lower classes. They also appeal to NGOs like World Vision and Christian Children's Fund for assistance with the purchase of school uniforms.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter has highlighted the literature reviewed with regard to the study. It commenced with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks employed in this study. Thereafter, it looked at some of the related literature linked to the research questions. It provided an account on how teachers lead and manage classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children.

The next chapter looks at the research design and methodology employed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the theoretical framework that informs this study and the literature reviewed around the critical questions. The focus of this chapter is on the research design and methodology employed in this research study in order to answer the following key research questions generated in chapter 1:

- What are the experiences of teachers in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children?
- How are teachers supported by the School Management Committee (SMC) in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children?

An account on the research paradigm employed in this study is presented. This is followed by an exposition on the methodological approach of this study. An account on the data collection methods, sampling, data analysis techniques, ethical issues and limitations of this study is then presented.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

This study was guided by the interpretive paradigm because this paradigm emphasizes experiences and interpretations of people. Borrowing from Henning (2004), Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) interpretive research is basically concerned with meaning and seeks to understand people's definitions and understanding of situations. Moreover, the interpretive research is time and context dependent as interpretations depend on when they are made and the context in which they are made (Biggam, 2008). The central assumption of this paradigm is that reality is socially constructed as individuals develop subjective meanings of their own personal experiences and give out own interpretation about the phenomena and this gives way to multiple meaning (Biggam, 2008, Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Similarly, Scott and Morrison (2006, p. 184) assert

that all educational research needs to be grounded in people's experience. For interpretivists reality is not 'out there' as a combination of external phenomena waiting to be uncovered as a 'fact' but it is a construct in which people construe reality in different ways (Scott & Morrison, 2006). Therefore, my role and purpose as a researcher in this study, is to seek the understanding and experiences of the teachers on leading and managing classrooms with OVC.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

According to Grix (2004), methodology refers to the theory of getting knowledge through the use of the best ways, methods or procedures. Methodology is also viewed as a set of ideas about the relationship between phenomena of how the researchers gain knowledge in the research context and why (Scott & Morrison, 2005). The 'why' question is critical since it is through a methodological understanding that researchers and readers of the research are provided with a rationale to explain the reason for using specific strategies and methods in order to construct, collect and develop particular kinds of knowledge (Scott & Morrison, 2005; Henning, 2004).

This study methodologically employs a qualitative approach. In qualitative research there are multiple realities which can be constructed and interpreted by individuals' interactions within their context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010, Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The qualitative approach therefore assisted the researcher in gathering in-depth information from the teachers on how they lead and manage classrooms with OVC. Additionally, Biggam (2008) contends that qualitative research is linked to in-depth exploratory studies because things are studied in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. The intent of qualitative research is to examine a social situation or interaction by allowing the researcher to enter the world of the other and attempt to achieve a holistic, rather than reductionist understanding (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008, p.80).

3.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Methods of data collection in research are ways and techniques used during the process of data production and analysis. Wiersman and Jurs (2009) and Cohen,*et al* (2007) define research methods as specific research techniques that are used to collect and analyse data. It is the responsibility of the researcher to select and choose methods that he or she thinks will provide him or her with rich and appropriate data. For this study, I chose interviews as method of data collection and content analysis was used as a method to analyse the data produced.

3.4.1 INTERVIEWS

In this study interviews were used as the primary data production strategy. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), qualitative researchers use methods such as interviews to generate data. Kumar (2005) contends that interviews are person to person interactions between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind. Interviewing is a basic and generally old mode of inquiry which has been used for years by people to narrate and tell stories about their experiences. Fox and Bayat (2007) assert that the qualitative interview is a research method considered to be a way of learning about people's thoughts, feelings and experiences. The aim of this study is to acquire an understanding of each teacher's experience in leading and managing classrooms with OVC. Thus, this method of data generation was adopted as an appropriate method of data collection for this study.

There are different types of interviews namely: structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. In this study, semi-structured interviews are used as a method of data gathering. A semi-structured interview is an in-depth interview whereby a researcher enters the interview with a number of pre-planned questions in mind (Grix, 2004). Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) maintain that semi-structured interviews are rather formal and consist of a series of questions designed to elicit specific answers from participants. For this study in order to ensure manageability of the inquiry, only ten interview questions were posed. Grix (2004)

further indicates that the advantage of this type of interview is that it allows a certain degree of flexibility and allows for the pursuit of unexpected lines of enquiry during the interview.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2008, p. 446) contend that “a skillful researcher learns to begin with non-threatening questions to put a participant at ease.” They add that, in order for anyone to become a competent qualitative researcher, the researcher must establish an atmosphere of trust, cooperation and mutual respect if she or he has to obtain accurate information (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008). During interviews I tried to sort out questions in such a way that I started with questions which were not sensitive and that would not be difficult for participants to answer and did not need much thinking. Open-ended questions are preferable than close-ended questions as they allow the respondent to answer in his or her own words (Cohen, *et al.* 2007). Hence I used open-ended questions for my interviews.

The voice recorder was used during interview sessions and later the interviews were transcribed in order to change the information into textual data. Hoepft (1997) and Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2002) assert that recording has the advantage of capturing data more faithfully than hurriedly written notes and can make it easier for the researcher to focus on the interview. Before recording the interview the researcher asked permission from the participants to tape record the discussions. After transcription of tape recorded interviews, the researcher read the transcribed interviews with the participants to confirm whether what is transcribed is what they said during interviews.

3.5 SAMPLING

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) define qualitative sampling as the process of selecting a small number of individuals for a study in such a way that individuals will be good participants who will contribute to the researcher’s understanding of a given phenomenon. Similarly, Kumar (2005) maintains that a relatively small number of participants selected can provide the researcher with a sufficiently high degree of probability and true reflection of the sampling population. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample. According

to Cohen, *et al.* (2007) purposive sampling is a type of sampling whereby the researcher chooses a sample that is easy to reach. Therefore, nine teachers were selected from three urban primary schools that fall within the Hlotse Dissemination Centre that offers FPE. The types of schools selected was one community school, and two church schools because there are more church schools than community schools in the Hlotse Dissemination Centre. Three teachers from each school were selected comprising one teacher from the lower grade, one from the middle grade and one from the upper grade. These teachers provided the researcher with rich information on their experiences of leadership and management of classrooms with OVC.

3.6 THE SCHOOLS AND THEIR PARTICIPANTS

A brief narrative on the schools selected in this study as well as their participants is furnished.

School A: Morateng Primary School

Morateng Primary School is a school owned by LEC church. It is situated in an urban area. The school offers from standard 1 to standard 7 with children of age 6-20 years. The school roll is 869 learners. There are 18 teachers. Most of them have a Diploma in Education. The pupil teacher ratio is 48:1. It is a good performing school scoring between 70-90 % in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). There are three blocks of classrooms with many classrooms to accommodate all learners. Most of the children who attend this school are vulnerable as they stay with parents, some of them are jobless and some of them abuse alcohol. There are also those children who are vulnerable because they are orphans staying in child headed households.

Teacher's profile

Teacher's name	Sex	Age	Highest Qualification	Teaching experience	Years of service in this school
'Malisebo Rats'iba	female	32 years	Diploma in Education	8years	8 years
'Matumelo Seforo	female	40 years	Diploma in Education	16 years	7 years
Limakatso Rejele	female	60 years	Advanced Certificate ACP=>Diploma in Education	36 years	28 years

School B: Ithute Primary School

Ithute Primary School is a Methodist church school located in the urban area of one town in Lesotho. It offers from standard 1 to standard 7 with learners of ages 6 years to 20 years. It is under the government's policy of FPE. This school is one of the best performing schools in Lesotho which always get 100% pass in the external examination every year. The academic performance of the school leads to high school enrolment every year. The school roll this year is 1 203 learners. The context of children attending this school is similar to that of school A. About one quarter of these learners are orphaned children and one fifth are vulnerable children staying with jobless parents. There are 24 teachers who are permanently employed. The teacher pupil ratio is 1:50+. The school building consists of 11 classrooms which are overcrowded because of large numbers of learners who are grouped together in one classroom. The grades are divided into streams; 3 streams in standard 1, 2 and 3. And 2 streams in standard 4, 5 and 6. For standard 7 they are always combined regardless of the number of children enrolled for the standard. Most of the teachers' highest qualification is a Diploma in Education.

Teachers' profile

Teachers' names	Sex	Age	Highest Qualification	Teaching experience	Years of service in this school
Keke Lemati	female	38 years	Diploma in Education	17 years	13 years
Phefo Serame	male	27 years	Diploma in Education	2 years	2 years
'Malikotsi Maqeba	female	44 years	Diploma in Education	18 years	17 years

School C: Musi Primary School

Musi Primary School is a community owned school situated in a semi-urban area. It is a newly constructed school, build by the Lesotho Government after the introduction of FPE. For the first two years of its existence, its PSLE results were not satisfactory. Since 2008 its PSLE results indicate academic growth. For three years it scored 100% pass. Most of the teachers started their teaching in this school with a Diploma in Education. The principal is the only one with a Bachelor of Education. Some of the teachers are still doing their degree through part-time studies. The school roll this year is 479 learners. The teacher pupil ratio is 1:47+. It is an advanced school with spacious classrooms, big enough to make teaching and learning easy. There is a principal's office; a staffroom and a kitchen. The children who attend this school come from similar backgrounds to that of school A and B.

Teachers' profile

Teachers' names	Sex	Age	Highest Qualification	Teaching experience	Years of service in this school
Liemiso Talimo	Female	35 years	Diploma in Education	5 years	5 years
Thuso Leanya	Male	37 years	Diploma in Education	6 years	5 years
Puseletso Mpona	Female	33 years	Diploma in Education	5 years	5 years

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used content analysis to analyse the raw data collected from the interviews. Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 101) asserts that content analysis is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarises the message content. Nieuwenhuis (2007) further indicates that content analysis is an inductive and interative process where we look for similarities and differences in texts that would corroborate or disconfirm the theory.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.290). In any qualitative research project, four issues of trustworthiness demand attention: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility refers to the ability of the researcher to produce findings that are convincing and believable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To address credibility, the researcher did a verbatim

transcription of the tape recorded interviews and then engaged in ‘member checking’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) with all of the participants.

Transferability refers to the fit or match between the research context and other similar contexts as judged by the reader (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). In addition, Scott and Morrison (2005) view transferability as how well the study has made it possible for the reader to decide whether a similar process will work in their own setting and communities by understanding in-depth how they occur at the researcher’s site. To address issues of transferability, I also provided an interview schedule used in the study that other researchers can use, if they choose to repeat as closely as possible the procedures of this study.

Dependability refers to whether one can track the process and procedures used to collect and interpret data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Confirmability is assurance that data interpretations and outcomes of inquiry are rooted in contexts and person apart from the researcher and are simply figments of the researcher’s imaginations (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). To address the issues of dependability and confirmability, I subjected my study to an independent audit of my research methods by a competent peer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) argue that qualitative researchers make it known that their data are available for review by other researchers. I asked a colleague to code several interviews in order to establish inter-rater reliability with the aim of reducing potential bias of a single researcher collecting and analysing data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This served as ways of minimising the limitations of qualitative research identified below.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of the study refer to an exposure to the conditions that may weaken the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Careful thought has been given to ways of accounting for these limitations and ways of minimising their impact. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) assert that it is common with all qualitative studies, that results cannot be generalised since qualitative studies aim at in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under the study rather than the generalizability

of results. This was the case with this study. The researcher's aim was not generalisability but rather that of gaining an in-depth understanding of leading and managing classrooms with OVC.

3.10 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethical issues are always important when doing any research. According to Reardon (2006) ethical standards must be maintained by researchers. At the heart of ethics in research is the notion of beneficence and non-maleficence (Cohen, *et al.* 2007). Beneficence refers to the extent to which the researched or participants are going to benefit by participating in the study. The non-maleficence principle states that no harm of any kind should occur to participants, and the researcher must take all necessary steps to prevent or minimize harm that may be caused to participants (Cohen, *et al.* 2007). The other ethical issues that must be observed when doing research include informed consent by the participants, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the study at any stage by participants. Anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of the content of the discussion between the researched and the researcher must be observed.

For this study, the researcher applied for ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Ethical clearance for this study was granted (see Appendix 5). Permission to conduct research at schools was also sought from the Lesotho education authorities. Firstly, a letter was directed to the Senior Education Officer in the Leribe District asking for permission to conduct the study in schools under his control. Permission was granted (see Appendix 2). Secondly, letters were sent to the three principals of the selected schools, asking for permission to conduct the study at their schools (see Appendix 3). Lastly, letters were also sent to the teachers asking for their participation in the study. The participants had the right to agree to participate or to refuse permission. The researcher explained to each participant the purpose of the study. To ensure acceptance of their participation in the study, each participant signed a consent form as evidence of agreement (see Appendix 4). All these processes were completed a few days prior to the research interview. Before and throughout the data elicitation process the researcher ensured the

confidentiality of the names of the schools and participants. The use of *nom de plumes* was employed where there was a need for the mentioning of names.

3.11 SUMMARY

This chapter provided a detailed description of this study's research design and methodology. The qualitative approach was employed. Individual semi-structured interviews were used as the method of data generation. The sample was made up of nine purposefully selected individual teachers from three schools. An account on ethical issues and trustworthiness of the data was also presented.

In the next chapter the data analysis, findings and discussion of the data is presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology employed in this study. This chapter focuses on the analysis, findings and discussion of the data gathered from the interviews. The data is presented using themes and categories generated from the interviews. Further, in presenting the data, the researcher wanted to ensure that the voices of the participants were not lost. Therefore, *verbatim* quotations are also used in the data presentation. A discussion of the data is infused into the presentation.

4.2 ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

The data from the semi-structured interviews were grouped into themes and subthemes.

4.2.1 THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS IN LEADING AND MANAGING CLASSROOMS WITH OVC.

The experiences of teachers in leading and managing classrooms with OVC were grouped into the following themes that emerged from the data: identification of OVC; freedom of OVC to talk about their problems; fair treatment of OVC; poverty, care and support of OVC by teachers and resolving difficult issues.

4.2.1.1 IDENTIFICATION OF OVC

The participants were asked to talk about how they go about identifying OVC in their classrooms. The majority of the participants indicated that they were able to do this by observing the children's behaviour, punctuality, absenteeism and appearance. Limakatso commented:

I identify [OVC] by way of their dressing, late coming and absenteeism

Liemiso commented:

Sometimes the child will give some reason for being late for school... she/he was sent somewhere or was told to do a particular home chore while she/he was supposed to come to school.

Thuso commented:

...with unfamiliar behaviours... they look tired, unhappy, yawning and sleepy

All nine participants indicated that the easiest way to identify the OVC in the classroom was by the repeated complaints from children that they are hungry. Liemiso asserts that:

Sometimes they tell me that they did not eat when they come to school

Some participants indicated that another way of identifying OVC in the classroom was by observing children for signs of physical abuse. In some instances the children related stories of the abuse they have to endure. According to Liemiso the OVC sometimes tell her that:

...they have been beaten roughly by their relatives they are staying with...e.g. aunts and uncles who are ill-treating them.

The above quotations show that teachers employed a variety of strategies to identify OVC in their classrooms. Van Leer (2005) points out that, the key to support OVC is potential for the teachers to identify OVC in their classroom. The strategies used by the teachers to identify OVC are supported by Jacques (2006). He indicates that such children may be observed to be poorly dressed, malnourished, anxious, chronically tired. They can be easily identified because of their appearance that makes them different from other children who are not vulnerable. This is further confirmed by Robson and Sylvester (2007, p.266) in their study conducted in Zambia where participant teachers reported that "orphans are often badly dressed, psychologically and

emotionally traumatised due to lack of parental love and vulnerable children are physically abused”.

Some OVC arrived late to school. Some even absent themselves. Werk (2004) in a study carried out in Kenya found that some of the OVC were treated as labour workers by their guardians. They are made to perform family chores before coming to school. Some of OVC are forced because of poverty to engage in work. This causes them to be late or to absent themselves from school. Oleke, Blystad, Fylkesnes and Tumwine (2007) in their study found that, on a regular basis, one orphaned school boy used to be late for school or even absent. When teachers questioned the boy as to why he was always late for school or sometimes absent from school, the boy informed the teachers that before coming to school he had to cultivate the neighbours’ gardens in exchange for food because as he was the eldest in the family.

Another way of identifying OVC in the classroom is through the non completion of homework. This is due to the lack of OVC having parental support in their learning. This might have the effect of reducing the OVC’s interest in learning. Consequently their academic work would be affected. Khanare (2009) contends that, children who lack homework support may develop a low motivation for learning. Additionally, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) affirm that children who are aware that their parents are interested in their school work, experience emotional stability and security, are better able to adjust to school, and better able to overcome obstacles. This is what is not possible for OVC because they do not have any parent to assist them.

4.2.1.2 FREEDOM OF OVC TO TALK ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS

In response to the question whether the children are free to talk in the classroom about the problems they experience, only two of the nine participants categorically asserted that the children were free to talk about their problems they experience as OVC. A very candid comment from ‘Malisebo sums this up:

Yes they are free

In addition, three participants responded “no” while the others contended that freedom of speech in the classroom depended on the individual children because some are shy. Limakatso commented:

It depends on the children because some are shy...

In a democratic classroom there must be freedom of speech as every child’s view is considered to be important. However, the above findings reveal that there were classrooms where there is little or no freedom of speech. Given their home circumstances where most of them stay in foster care, they were not given the opportunity to articulate their opinions in the home. Not being able to talk freely in the classroom thus severely constrained the OVC. On the other hand, sometimes the teachers’ way of managing their classroom often serves as the barrier to OVC openness because some teachers still use corporal punishment as form of discipline. According to Barkley (2005), punishment can lead to resentment and unfriendliness in children and this may cause children to retaliate. This retaliation can manifest itself in different ways resulting in some children withdrawing and keeping quite while others become aggressive. The children thus deserve a safe, nurturing and democratic learning environment where they can learn in an atmosphere of endurance, respect, gentleness and trust (Henchey, 2007).

4.2.1.3 FAIR TREATMENT OF OVC

Teachers were asked how they ensured that all children are treated fairly and with dignity. In response to the question almost all the participants focused on the treatment of OVC in the classroom by other children. They mentioned that they had established classroom rules which children must observe. They further indicated that they encouraged children to mutually accept each other. Two of the participants commented:

I make children aware that every person has to be respected. There is no one who can be ill-treated by others... if there is such action every child is free to report this to any teacher (Phefo).

I taught them that everyone needs to be respected and not be discriminated against (Limakatso).

In instances where children's attendance and punctuality suffers owing to the abuse and ill-treatment that the child endures from home most of the participants indicated that they call the parent or guardian to school and discuss the issue. Puseletso responded by stating:

...we call the parent or guardian to school to discuss the issue and show them the dangers of doing that to a child.

With regard to the question about how OVC are treated, only two participants answer focused on themselves as teachers. They responded:

I treat them equally... (Limakatso).

It is difficult because you think that you are doing the right thing... For orphans I usually tell them that they must take me as their parent (Keke).

Some of the teachers do formulate classroom rules and regulations on how children should treat each other. Developing rules help the teacher to avoid learners being hostile and destructive (Eaude, 2006). Further, this makes children aware of the expected standard of behaviour in the classroom. Among some teachers there is the focus on mutual respect among children. Wood (2008, p. 186) points out that in order for OVC to feel and accept that they are safe; teachers "encourage learners to show respect and listen to each other". In addition there is the existence of equality and equity in the classrooms. The teachers ensure that they treat all children alike without looking at the individual child's appearance, capability or behaviour. This shows that some teachers look beyond the individual differences among children.

There are teachers who are in tune with the reality of their classrooms. They are aware that some children lack parental love and involvement in their lives. They consequently go the 'extra mile' by indicating to the orphan children to take them as their parents. This demonstrates that some teachers play a parental role to children in their classrooms.

4.2.1.4 POVERTY

The participants were asked to speak about how they assist children who attend school without having had meal. The responses of the participants indicate that they have formulated a variety of

strategies to help children in their respective classrooms in managing the issues concerning the OVC and hunger. Some of the participants indicated that they buy food for the children. Sometimes they even hand-over their own lunches to the children.

I used to buy food for the child to eat. I ensure that they get enough food during serving so that she/he can eat during lunch and take some home to eat in the evening and in the morning before coming to school (Malikotsi).

I have phuzamantla [morvite] in my locker... I sometimes give them my lunchbox (Matumelo).

Besides hunger, another problem the participants identified was that the problem of clothing. The participants indicated that they donated clothes from their families to the children. They also seek donations in the form of clothing from parents in the community and classmates. Malisebo commented:

When those children [the OVC] have gone to the toilet, we discuss with other children about the situation we see... They will suggest that maybe my sister or brother has a uniform which he/she no more uses... other children would give some clothes and uniforms which they do not use. Secretly they are offered to the OVC so that he/she must not feel be-little.

The participants also indicated that teaching and learning was often compromised owing to the fact that the OVC did not have the basic learning materials because of poverty. When the participants were asked how they tackled the issue of children who do not have school learning materials, the majority of the participants indicated that they generally hand-out surplus learning materials they have accumulated over the years to the OVC. In some instances the participants asked the 'haves to share with the have-nots'. 'Malisebo commented:

Hey! It is the greatest problem. Sometimes when we have extra exercise books we give them but sometimes we are unable to help. I have extra pencils... sometimes I give it to those who do not have. I ask others who have to share with them.

Khanare (2009) in her study conducted in the KwaZulu-Natal province found that teaching was more than teaching Mathematics and English. It is a passion of the soul as teachers do more than teach in the classrooms. Leadership and management of classrooms are not only concerned with

the cognitive development of learners. Rather, it should also focus on a holistic approach to children's development. According to Jacque (2006), hungry children cannot concentrate in class. Not being able to concentrate is a serious impediment to the learning process. Further, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, if the physiological needs (in this case the nutritive needs) is not met of children, the satisfaction of higher order needs such as self-esteem and self-actualization needs will not be met (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007).

The children's appearance can make them feel inferior. This inferiority can contribute to the development of a negative self-concept in the child. Ruto, Chege and Wawire (2009) contend that when a child does not have a uniform to wear or wears a worn uniform, that child is labeled as a child from a poor family background. This labeling may have a considerable psychological bearing on children. In this study, the teachers seem to be aware of this and consequently they do manage such circumstances in their classrooms by being transformational and innovative in their thinking.

The teachers are also democratic in their operations in that they share the problems that exist in the classroom with children. Where there is sharing there is a gradual development of increased participation, decision-making and problem solving for learners (Overton & Sullian, 2008). When children are empowered they feel a sense of possession. In this manner children voluntarily assist OVC who have a need.

4.2.1.5 CARE AND SUPPORT OF OVC BY TEACHERS

In response to the question that was asked to participants on what they did when children took ill in class, all nine participants asserted that they helped the children. Depending on the type of the illness, the actions of the participants varied. Some of the participants indicated that they administer first-aid. Some of their comments were:

It depends on the degree of the illness but if it is on the level where I can be able to apply first-aid I will... if is above that I see the principal about it (Phefo).

If it is a minor illness like stomachache or headache we buy the child some tablet... But if it is a severe injury we usually take the child to the hospital. Our school is not far from the hospital (Keke).

Given that some of the OVC dwell in child-headed households or with illiterate parents and guardians, the completion of homework can be problematic. Consequently, the participants were asked how children are assisted with work they assign as homework. Almost all the participants acknowledged that this was a serious problem and they found this issue extremely difficult to deal with. A comment from 'Malisebo was:

It is difficult to deal with such problem... I only counsel them and show them the importance of schooling.

Some of the participants commented that they have extension classes for OVC. Others indicated that OVC are grouped in terms of the villages they hail from so that they can meet in their village groups and engage in peer learning. In some instances, older siblings assist the younger ones to complete their homework. Puseletso commented:

I have remedial classes... I group them according to their villages so that they can do their assignments together... others who have older sisters or brothers to help will help them.

Given the problems associated with the completion of homework, two participants indicated that they do not assign children homework because they do not trust the work done at home as children's own work. 'Malikotsi asserted:

I do not assign children homework. I long ended homework as I never trusted that work.

The participants also indicated that the irregular attendance of some OVC makes it difficult for them to keep abreast of their work. Consequently, some of the participants indicated that they always stress the importance of regular school attendance. 'Malisebo commented:

I make them aware of the importance of schooling and regular attendance.

In some instances the parents or guardians are called in order to investigate the irregular attendance only to find that some OVC are playing truant. 'Malikotsi asserted:

I used to call the parent or the guardian of the child... sometimes you hear that the child leaves home for school every day but there are some days where he/she disappears on the way between the school and home.

Some of the participants indicated that at times they have to use creative ways to get children to complete their work. Two participants commented:

I always tell them to go to their neighbouring classmates and ask them what we did (Limakatso).

I have remedial classes (Thuso).

At the extreme, one participant indicated quite categorically that she does nothing to assist the OVC in her class who are irregular at school. 'Matumelo indicated:

I do nothing to help the OVC.

The majority of the teachers fully engaged with matters that need their care and support of OVC in their classrooms. The teachers develop different ways to manage the repercussions of problems of OVC. They ensured that there is practical support so that learners are able to participate in the learning process (Moletsane, 2003). The teachers need to be transformational leaders in the classroom. They need to develop new and innovative strategies to manage the problems experienced by OVC. Therefore the teachers need to create structures and networks that promote character building and create experiences in which the child can succeed (Wood, 2008). Teachers, through creative classroom management strategies, can play a fundamental role in the integration of OVC with other children in order to transform them.

From the perspective of a democratic classroom, a democratic manager ensures the existence of the three C's – capability, connectivity and contribution Overton (2007) and Woolfolk Hoy and Weinstein (2006). They believe that the three C's are essential in helping learners feel a sense of belonging. When learners are taken and made to feel capable, they are able to connect with their peers and teachers and make contributions in different activities.

However, there are some teachers who are unable to support or help OVC in their classrooms. The literature seems to speak to this issue. In a case study conducted in Zimbabwe Kendall and O'Gara (2007) assert that teachers felt that they are generally overwhelmed and unable to

address the needs of OVC in their classrooms. Further, some teachers are of the view that they have not been trained to deal with the problems that OVC encounter and consequently feel ‘out of their depth’ in handling such problems in the classroom. Kendall and O’Gara (2007, p.13) affirm that “teachers felt that they had not received the training they needed to address the specialized behavioural and emotional needs of the OVC”. Additionally, De Lange and Stuart (2008) and Bhana, *et al.* (2004) observe that teachers sometimes lack the skills necessary for addressing learners’ problems. This leads to the teachers experiencing stress and a sense of helplessness as they are unable to support OVC who experience problems that might hinder their success in learning.

4.2.1.6 RESOLVING DIFFICULT ISSUES

Participants were asked about the measures they take to help children who encounter problems that are difficult for them to manage in the classrooms as teachers. All nine participants shared more or less a similar opinion. Puseletso’s comment sums this up:

First of all I consult with other teachers and then tell the principal if I cannot find the solution in our discussion with other teachers. The principal will help me to call the parents or guardians of the child so we talk about the problem together.

Further, there are indications that teacher’s discussions about classroom problems do not end within the school premises. Some participants went ‘the extra mile’ in order to seek the advice of others in the profession. Thuso pointed out:

I go to the other teachers and ask them how I can tackle such a problem that I cannot solve by myself... I even got out during the weekends to discuss the problem with other teachers from other schools.

The teachers do take the initiative in order to find solutions to the difficult issues that plague them in their classrooms. Working in collegiality with other members of staff often helps them in solving some of the problems they experience with OVC. In a democratic school, decisions are made through collaborative discussion. Through collaborative discussion, teachers negotiate and ask for advice from other teachers on how to deal with OVC’s challenges which seem difficult

for them to manage. In any profession, a person can get appropriate advice from other people who belong to the same profession because they might experience similar problems. Consequently, the advice from other teachers who lead and manage classrooms with OVC would help one to deal effectively with the problems one encounters in the classroom. Elbaz-Luwisch (2010, p. 317) avers that “professional communities in teaching are an influential source of support that would produce significant insight and contribution over time to the development of their teaching.” This can be helpful to newly employed teachers who would learn classroom leadership and management techniques in dealing with OVC from older teachers. Similarly, older teachers would learn from new teachers.

4.2.2 SUPPORT FROM THE SMC

The SMC comprises a diverse grouping of stakeholders (see page 21). The themes that emerged from the data are: SMC group support and SMC individual support.

4.2.2.1 SMC GROUP SUPPORT

Participants were asked to comment on the support that they received from the SMC in dealing with OVC in leading and managing their classrooms. Six participants indicated that the SMC helps them in most cases. The help ranged from ‘lending an ear to their problems’ to assisting by referral to external organisations. The comment of two participants sums this up:

Sometimes they come to hear about the problems we have here at school. It is at this time we are able to tell them about the problems we encounter in our individual classrooms (Keke).

I think for OVC they help a lot. They take the children’s names and give them to institutions like the Social Welfare, Red Cross and World Vision... [These organisations] help a lot as they supply the children with food and clothes like school uniforms and for furthering their education (Limakatso).

In addition to this, they also serve as an intermediary between teachers and parents. They make home visits to keep parents and/or guardians informed of their children's progress. Two of the participants commented:

The SMC helps me when the parents do not want to play an active role or neglect their parental role (Phefo).

When we have a problem the committee members help us by visiting and calling parents or guardians because they live with them in the village...(Liemiso).

Three participants were quite adamant that they received no support from the SMC. In support of this 'Matumelo commented:

From the SMC I really do not know of any effort...

The SMC as a grouping do serve schools as it is their responsibility to assist schools in managerial issues. However, their support to teachers who lead and manage classrooms with OVC depends on how active the school SMC is. Some SMCs are extremely active and have an interest in the governance and management of the school. Others are passive and do not engage themselves fully in the governance and management of the school. They tend to leave the governance and management issues of the school in the hands of the principal. The reason they do this is because they are not paid for their services as SMC members. Those SMCs who take a keen interest in the activities of the school help the principal and teachers to connect with parents. The UNICEF (2009, p.17) contends that in Nairobi the SMCs encourage parents to help by means of financial contributions to purchase uniforms for OVC in school. Further, they coordinate programmes that request older children's uniforms to be handed down to OVC in lower classes. They also appeal to NGOs like World Vision and Christian Children's Fund for assistance with the purchase of school uniforms.

4.2.2.2 SMC INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

The constituent members of the SMC also assist the participants in leading and managing their classrooms with OVC. The groups that help are the church, the principal and parent members.

4.2.2.2.1 THE CHURCH

The responses from two participants indicated that the church, as the owner's of the school, do help them a lot. Generally the help is in the form of securing clothing for the OVC. 'Malikotsi indicated:

The church helps by buying school uniforms for these vulnerable children...They also donate clothes.

The churches consider the schools as their properties. Consequently, they always care for and have interest in what is going on in their schools. In problems that arise they always try to assist. The problem often becomes the responsibility of all church members including those who do not have children at the school. If a SMC member reports to the church about the circumstance in the school, a decision is made on how to resolve the problem encountered by teachers in their school. The SMC members who are church representatives assist teachers by referring OVC to other church members who volunteer their services to help OVC (Khanare, 2009). Due to the fact that churches have people of different economic status, for example some are business owners, they are and capable of giving monetary donations or foodstuff while others donate clothes to OVC. This decreases the burden on teachers who lead and manage classrooms with OVC owing to the fact that they need not go out and seek help for the OVC.

4.2.2.2.2 THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The school principals seem to be the most active members of SMCs in assisting the participants. Almost all the participants affirm that when they have problems in their classrooms they usually report them to their school principal. The school principal would then suggest a solution. They also indicated that the school principal also assists them to network with other committee members or parents in resolving problems experienced with OVC in the classroom. The comments of two participants were:

The committee members help us to visit and call the parents or guardians... but they [the committee members] are called by the principal (Liemiso).

The principal will help me to call the parents or guardians of the child so that we could talk about the problem together (Puseletso).

The quotations above show that the school principals usually intervene when there are problems in the classrooms because they have the authority to call parents/guardians. It is sometimes difficult for teachers to engage with parents/guardians on issues confronting OVC because some matters are of a very sensitive nature. Werk (2004) relates in his study of how two school principals had to intervene and report cases to the police where girls complained to them of incidences of abuse that they experienced at home. This was possible owing to the fact that school principals have power to authorize any referrals from the school.

4.2.2.2.3 THE PARENTS

There are parents who serve on the SMC that have sympathy towards the OVC. They volunteer their services to help teachers to overcome problems that they experience pertaining to OVC in their classrooms. The participants commented:

They get individual parents to donate clothes that their children do not use (Keke).

When there is problems in the classroom, the SMC sometimes come and assist...they call parents and tell them about the problem so other parents would donate clothes and foodstuff to OVC (Puseletso).

Most parents who have an interest in the school usually support teachers in management of OVC's challenges in the classroom. Individual parents who have free time on their hands often volunteer their services to the school. They assist with counselling services, fund raising and clothing drives.

4.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews were presented under themes and sub-themes which were generated after subjecting the data to content analysis. Under each sub-theme a discussion of the data was presented using relevant literature and the theoretical frameworks. In the next chapter, the main conclusions of this study are presented and certain pertinent recommendations are made.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter dealt with the analysis, findings and discussion of the data. This Chapter summarizes the study, makes conclusions and suggests recommendations in response to what emerged out of the investigation.

5.2 SUMMARY

The study explored teachers' experiences in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children. The first chapter outlined the background of the study and the statement of the problem brought by the introduction of FPE and Inclusive Education Policies in primary schools in the context of the HIV and AIDS crisis and high unemployment rate among the people of Lesotho. These factors have led to an increased number of OVC in the classrooms. The motivation for the study emanates from the literature, where I discovered that research has been conducted on the well-being of OVC internationally and how teachers lead and manage the classrooms with OVC. What I have observed is that the studies in Africa focus less on teachers' leadership and management of classrooms with OVC. Again, from my literature search there was no indication of any study conducted in Lesotho concerning teachers' leadership and management of classrooms with OVC. I therefore found it worthy to focus on teachers' leadership and management of classrooms with OVC. In Chapter Two, I reviewed the literature. The literature review commences with the theoretical frameworks employed in this study, namely transformational leadership theory and democratic classroom management. It is then followed by national and international studies related to the critical questions of this study.

Chapter Three outlined the methodology used in the study. The study is a qualitative study, underpinned by the interpretive paradigm. The data was generated through semi-structured interviews. There were nine teachers purposively selected from three schools for the

interviews. The interview method helped me to gain an understanding of the teachers' experiences in the leadership and management of classrooms with OVC. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to probe deeply into the issues that were investigated. In Chapter Four I presented the analysis, findings and discussion of the collected data. The data was arranged thematically. From the findings, the following conclusions can be reached.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study was guided by two key research questions:

1. What are the experiences of teachers in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children?
2. How are teachers supported by the School Management Committees (SMCs) in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children?

Based on the aims and objectives of this study and the two key questions, I have come up with the following conclusions. With regard to the experiences of teachers in leading and managing classrooms with OVC, teachers experience large class enrolment that comprise increased number of OVC who experience a variety of problems. The teachers help and support the children so that they may overcome these problems in order for them to participate fully in their school work. Teachers take the initiative to care and support the OVC who they identify as having a problem in their classrooms. The teachers even discuss the problems of OVC with other teachers with whom they share the class and with other teachers within the school premises. They also network with teachers from outside the school during their spare time. Some of the challenges are too difficult for teachers to manage on their own. Thus, they seek the assistance of the school principal. However, some of the challenges even go unresolved. This causes feelings of helplessness among teachers. Therefore, teachers need support in leading and managing classrooms with OVC.

In terms of support teachers receive from the SMC, there is little support that teachers obtain from the SMC in their leadership and management of classrooms with OVC. In the main, the school principals as members of the SMC play a pivotal role in helping teachers in the leadership and management of classrooms with OVC. This is due to the fact that principals are closer to

teachers and teachers always report to them when they experience difficulties concerning their classrooms' leadership and management responsibilities.

As a group, the SMC helps teachers by referring the OVC to other institutions for assistance. The churches as owners of schools do take the initiative to ensure that schools are functioning well. They take responsibility for seeing that the school's resources, both physical and human resources are in good condition. The churches sometimes donate foodstuffs and uniforms for OVC. Parents individually support teachers as they donate clothes to OVC and give their children permission to donate their uniforms which do not fit them, to OVC in lower classes.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- There must be teacher awareness campaigns about the challenges of OVC in the classrooms.
- There must be support for teachers who lead and manage classrooms with OVC by community members.
- There must be workshops for teachers, where they will be equipped with necessary skills like guidance and counselling in handling OVC. Leadership and management can be improved if the Ministry of Education can employ more teachers so as to reduce the high teacher-pupil ratio. There needs to be SMC training workshops that would clarify their responsibility and make them aware of their need to help classroom based teachers who experience problems teaching OVC.
- Government should offer grants for OVC in order to reduce the increasing poverty problem.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study has only explored teachers' experiences in leading and managing classrooms with OVC in three schools (two urban and one semi-urban). A much larger study employing a range of methods is needed to be done on teachers' experiences in the leadership and management of classrooms with OVC in order to get a better picture of the problem, and a clearer perspective of the magnitude of the crisis.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Do children talk freely to you about the problems they are experiencing? If yes, tell use some of the problems they experience.

If no, how do you identify that the child is experiencing some sort of problem?

2. How do you ensure that all learners are: treated fairly, with dignity and protected from abuse?

3. Tell me how you cater for individual children's differences in the classroom?

4. What do you do to assist children who come to school without a meal?

5. How do you tackle the issue of children who do not have school learning materials like exercise books, pens etc?

6. How do you help children who do not have anyone to help them at home with the work you assign them for homework?

7. What do you do when children take at school and no one is at home?

8. How do you do to get children who frequently absent themselves to catch-up with work?

9. What measures do you take in order to help children who encounter problems that you are unable to manage in your classroom?

10. How does the School Management Committee help you in leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children?

APPENDIX TWO

LETTER TO THE EDUCATION OFFICE REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood
3605

Senior Education Officer
Leribe Education Office
P.O. Box 12
Leribe
300

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct research

I am presently studying towards the Masters in Education degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am in the process conducting research for my dissertation. I therefore, request to conduct research in three primary schools operating under Free Primary Education in the Hlotse dissemination centre. The three schools are:

Xxx Primary School

Xxx Primary School

Xxx Primary School

My research topic is: **“Leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children.”** Three teachers from each of the three schools will be selected as participants. Teachers as the participants in the research process are free to withdraw from the study at any time. The teachers will be interviewed on how they lead and manage classrooms with orphans

and vulnerable children. The information provided by the teachers will be kept confidential and not be used for other purposes. The names of teachers and the schools will be kept anonymous.

It is hoped that the results of the study will benefit teachers and the School Management Committees (SMCs) as well as Education Officers so that they can help teachers in effectively leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children.

Yours Faithfully

Makabelo Melida Lehlaha (Mrs.)

My supervisor's: Dr. InbaNaicker

0738228240

031 260 3461

209530178@ukzn.ac.za

naickeril@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

I..... (Full name) hereby confirm that I understand the nature of the study. I understand that teachers will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. I am also aware that the information will be treated confidentially and the real names of teachers and schools will not be stated in the study. I therefore give you permission to conduct research in the three primary schools at Hlotse dissemination centre.

Name.....

Sign.....Date.....

APPENDIX THREE

LETTER TO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood 3605

The Principal
.....Primary School

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct research

I am presently studying towards a Masters in Education degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am in the process of conducting research for my dissertation titled: **Leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children: A study of three Primary schools in Lesotho**. Therefore, I request for permission to conduct research in your school. Teachers will be requested to answer interview questions about their leadership and management of classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children. Teachers will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. All the information will be treated confidentially. The names of the teachers or the school will not be mentioned in the study.

It is hoped that the results of this study will benefit the teachers and School Management Committees (SMCs), as well as education officers in assisting teachers in the effective leadership and management of classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children.

I have provided my contact details and those of my supervisor in case of a need for further clarification concerning the study.

Yours Faithfully

Makabelo Melida Lehlaha (Mrs.)

Supervisor: Dr. InbaNaicker

Cell: 0738228240

Tel. no. 031 260 3461

209530178@ukzn.ac.za

e-mail: naicker1@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

I..... (Full name) hereby confirm that I understand the nature of the study. I understand that teachers will have the freedom of withdrawal from the study at any time. I also understand that anonymity and confidentiality will be assured. I therefore give you permission to conduct research at my school.

Names.....

Sign.....Date.....

APPENDIX FOUR

LETTER TO PARTICIPANT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN MY STUDY

University of KwaZulu-Natal
Edgewood Campus
Private Bag X03
Ashwood
3605

Dear Participant

Request for participant participation in my study

I am presently studying for a Masters in Education degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am in the process of conducting my research on teachers leading and managing classrooms with orphans and vulnerable children. I request your participation by answering a few interview questions. The information that you provide will be treated confidentially and used only for this study. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you are willing to participate in my study, please fill in the attached consent form.

My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided below if further clarification is needed concerning the study.

Yours Faithfully

Makabelo Melida Lehlaha (Mrs.)

0738228240

209530178@ukzn.ac.za

My supervisor's details: Dr. InbaNaicker

031 260 3461

naickeri1@ukzn.ac.za

CONSENT FORM

I..... (Full name) hereby confirm that I understand the nature and the purpose of the study. I also understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time and that all information furnished will be confidential and will not be disclosed for other purposes other than this study. I therefore give my consent to participate.

Name.....

Sign.....Date.....