



**Exploring the Nature of Support that is Provided to Early Career
Teachers by Education Officials in Schools**

by

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree,

Doctor of Philosophy

in the

Discipline of Educational Management, Leadership and Policy

School of Education, College of Humanities, University of

KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa

May 2025

Supervisor

Prof. TT Bhengu

DECLARATION

I, Masechaba Mohanoe, declare that:

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE



25 May 2024

Masechaba Mohanoe (223128868)
School of Education
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Dear M Mohanoe,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00007000/2024

Project title: Exploring the nature of support that is provided to early career teachers by education officials in schools.

Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 22 April 2024 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid until 25 May 2025.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)
/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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INSPIRING GREATNESS

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following people:

All glory to the almighty God. He has made it possible for me to complete this study. The God that never slumbers; it was he who gave me wisdom and strength to complete my study. This thesis is dedicated to my lovely mother, Mohanoe Mankadimeng Rosaliah. My mother had to give up on her dreams to be able to raise us. She did not have a chance to further her studies and go to tertiary because she had to work hard for us. I am where I am today because of her remarkable sacrifices and advice. She instilled in me the motto “education is key to success”. I appreciate her support towards my study. I am still amazed by the things she sacrificed for the sake of my study. All her love, efforts and support do not go unnoticed. Indeed, *oe tshwere ka bohaleng moradi wa Bataung.*

Ke Motaung wa Ramokgele, ke lekokolokotwana la kotso masiya, le reng le tla ja ha morithi ha o theha, ho thehe e menyane ya diotlwana. Motho wa lehanyana kopela, motho wa lehanyana borubothwana. Motho wa habo Tibisi, Tibiya tshwana. Motho wa habo Mosolodi, Mosolotsana Montwe, Montwetsana. Hlaba kgomo reje Mosolodi. Ke kgomo e kgwabamane majweng Thaba-paatswa, Ke photho ya kgomo ntho ena.

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I extend my gratitude to the Free State Department of Education for allowing me to conduct my research at the selected schools for which I am very grateful. Furthermore, I would like to thank the schools, SMT and ECT participants in this study for their participation.

On the note of importance, I would like to lastly give gratitude to the person who has made it possible for me to complete my study, my dear supervisor and inspiring mentor, Prof Thulani Thamsanqa Bhengu. He has always guided me and encouraged me to do my level best; his support and patience do not go unnoticed. I thank him for all his time and effort in my research. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

The study sought to solicit the nature of support that is provided to Early Career Teachers (ECTs) by the Education Officials in schools. Current scholars unearth that during ECTs first years at work, they are very energetic and ambitious but are daunted by the challenges that they face in schools. Scholars further reveal that these challenges are lack of training and development, lack of resources allocated to ECTs along with poor working conditions. They are known to hinder ECT from being able to work to their best capacity. Moreover, scholars divulged academic decisions are imposed on ECTs. The study scrutinised various forms of support that are provided to ECTs by Education officials. Utilising the qualitative research design within the interpretive paradigm, the study sought to explore the factors that facilitate and hinder support that is provided to ECTs in schools. The study adopted Case Study methodology. Two underpinning theoretical frameworks which are the Adult Learning Theory and the Instructional Leadership Theory were used to steer the study. 17 participants were selected using snowball sampling which allowed more participants to be sampled as I commenced with data generation. Participants range from School Management Team to ECTs and Subject Advisors (3 Principals, 3 Deputy Principals, 3 Departmental Heads, 3 Senior Teachers, 3 ECTs and 2 Subject Advisors). The 3 selected schools that are part of the study form a cohort of the Thabo Mofutsanyana district. Semi-structured interviews and documents review were used to generate data. Using Thematic Analysis, the findings of the study have provided the insights of the participant's experiences such as negligence they endured due to not receiving support and factors that discouraged the Education officials from providing support to ECTs. Four major themes and sub-themes emerged from the generated data. The major themes are as follows: The perspectives of ECTs and Education Officials regarding Educator support, The experiences of ECTs in being provided with support by Education Officials, The forms of support that are provided to ECTs by Education officials, The rationale why the ECTs need support from the Education Officials. Lesson learnt deepen our understanding of the importance of supporting ECTs in schools such as finding strategies to enhance the development and training of the ECTs.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ALT	Adult Learning Theory
ANA	Annual National Assessment
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
DRS	Document Review Schedule
ECTs	Early Career Teachers
EEA	Employment of Educators' Act
ELRC	Educational Labour Relations Council
FFLC	Foundation for Learning Campaign
IL	Instructional Leadership
ILT	Instructional Leadership Theory
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PL	Post Level
QLTC	Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign
RSA	Republic of South Africa
S.A	South Africa
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SMT	School Management Team
TA	Thematic Analysis
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific & Cultural organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

AN ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

A report on the study conducted to fulfil the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is provided in this document. The study stemmed from observations that were informal that I made on the nature of support that I received from Education Officials as an Early Career Teacher (ECT) in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District and the informal reports provided by other ECTs from other schools regarding the nature of support they received from Education Officials in their schools, also located in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. My experience and such reports suggested that in schools, Education Officials played a vital role of building ECTs professionally and assisting to ease the burden and challenges that are faced by the ECTs in schools. In my school and some other schools, it seemed like the Education Officials neglected their role of supporting ECTs, and this created huge problems for the ECTs in schools. This neglect is a problem because it has negative impacts on the ECTs professional work as it affects their self-efficacy and confidence where they end up being incompetent due to negligence of not receiving support. It also has a negative impact on their emotional and physical well-being as it leads to frustrated and burnt-out teacher. The negligence deeply affects all the stakeholders involved as it affects the ECTs productivity in a sense that they do not produce good results and have strained relationships with the Education Officials. It further affects the learners because when the ECT are not competent then the learner performance drops. The magnitude of the neglect is that the ECTs lose their passion for their job as teachers because they are constantly stressed and feeling burnt-out which often leads to decreased job satisfaction and some ECTs are more likely to leave the teaching profession as they are not satisfied.

I developed an interest in the topic and started to read articles around the support that is received by the ECTs and its implications. The purpose was to undertake an empirical study on the phenomenon of support provided to ECTs by the Education Officials. The study focused on the nature of support that is provided to ECTs by the Education Officials in schools. Upon scrutinising recent studies conducted by various scholars, I noted that the key focus is on the role of Education Officials, consisting of Subject Advisors, School Principals (Leithwood et al., 2019), School Management Teams and Senior Teachers in providing support to the ECTs.

There is a focus on the forms of support that is provided to Early Career Teachers and how these forms of support are provided to the ECTs (Ellis et al., 2020). However, there seems to be limited literature on the factors that causes the Education Officials to provide the ECTs with insufficient support. However, there is emergent studies that focus on the challenges that are faced by ECTs when they are not provided with support, and such studies seem to embrace Instructional Leadership principles playing a vital part in developing ECTs in schools (Pitsoe & Sebeng, 2024), as well as cultivating Adult Learning Theory principles in helping ECTs as adult learners (Merriam, 2017). Through this research, I aimed to add to the understanding of why Education Officials were reluctant to play their role in providing support to Early Career Teachers in schools and add to the debate on the topic.

This chapter is an introduction to the study, and through it, the background to the study is provided, and the statement of the problem is made, the purpose and the rationale of the study are also presented. These aspects of the study are followed by the significance of the study, the explanation of key concepts, as well as, the research aims and questions. The chapter also provides the overview of the research design and methodology, as well as demarcation of the study. Thereafter, the layout of the study chapter is provided and an elucidation of what each chapter entails. Finally, the organisation of the thesis is presented.

1.2 Background of the study

Educator support is a very important factor in the education systems globally (Theodorio, 2023). Early Career Teachers (ECTs) require a lot of support in the early years of their profession because they are still learning the craft of teaching, how to implement policies and reform initiatives (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Early Career Teachers are the teachers who are newly qualified and they are still at the early years of their teaching profession (Schaap et al., 2021). In Canada, organisational bodies at the district and provincial levels have acknowledged the need to address the issue of professional development and growth of ECTs and formed programmes to support the development of ECTs through induction and mentorship (Godden & Tregunna, 2014). When ECTs arrive at a workplace, there are still a lot of things that they need to learn and they need to be provided with full support. Substantiated by Walker and Godden (2019), the ECTs are placed in an active contextual landscape which has influence on their professional development, and which also orders certain professional

expectations because their world of work is very demanding. On the same note, Cochran-Smith (2006) implies that the support in developing ECT is vital as it benefits the educational improvements through the teacher's abilities and qualities. In addition, Serpell (2000) states that induction is the first educator supporting mechanism that can be provided to the ECTs, accompanied by the essential element which is effective mentorship. Additionally, Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) explain that the support received by ECTs in South Africa generally occurs through training workshops. Similarly, according to Stansbury and Zimmerman (2000), inductions and workshops are indeed the vital first step to offer support to ECTs.

Education Officials' responsibilities is to offer the basic curriculum and teaching strategies support and development that is required for the teachers to produce quality results in their subjects (Stephen, 2018). In that regard, Admiraal (2019) explains that educator support is made up of various components such as supervising and guiding the ECT with the learning processes in schools and ECTs are monitored and are guided by educational officials with regard to professional learning at a school level. Tejada-Fernández and Pozos Pérez (2018) allude that educator support also helps the ECTs with enhancing their professional competence to improve their performance as teachers. Sánchez-García and Galindo-Villardón (2018) highlight that educator support should focus more on the shortcomings that teachers may have, in order to help them optimise their efforts to address such deficiencies where this is applicable. Educator peer support can take place at different levels, namely, professionally, socially and emotionally at the school level. Kutsyuruba (2019) divulges that professional peer support should be incorporated within team teaching sessions, teaching interconnected matters are shared, examining subject-related concerns, helping each other with marking of assessments and having casual conversations about the subjects.

The professional peer support seemingly assists the ECTs to develop their own autonomy and helps them to be comfortable with learning from their mentors and be flexible when it comes to the styles they want to use when teaching. Kutsyuruba (2019) corroborates that by arguing that social peer support includes helping the ECTs with socialising and building relationships with fellow co-workers; this takes place through mentors supporting with piloting the school within and beyond the school and supporting the integration of ECT into the work environment and lastly, the emotional peer support, trust is the most vital form of support that can be provided to the ECTs.

1.3 Statement of the problem

As an ECT who did not receive adequate support from Education Officials, it often caused frustration, increased stress levels, I lacked classroom management and I certainly lost confidence in my work. Such an experience is corroborated by various scholars (Brindley & Parker, 2010; Cherubini et al., 2008) that ECTs who did not receive adequate support from mentors (Education Officials) often feel isolated. That is because ECTs transition into being a teacher is difficult, intimidating, and judgemental (Bieler & Thomas, 2009). With my experience as an ECT, I learnt that working in an intimidating environment and not getting support from your mentors (Education Officials) can be draining. It can lead to decreased job satisfaction and it limited me on the goals I wanted to achieve. It was very difficult for me to build relationships with co-workers because they did not offer me empathy, but instead, they often criticised my weaknesses. This led to my feeling overwhelmed and I started to perform poorly and I became less productive. Regarding that, the lack of support from Education Officials can lead to increased ECT workload, which may lead them to feel overwhelmed with their workload (Kelly et al., 2019).

Ehren et al. (2020) indicate that it is unfair to the ECTs when they do not receive adequate support from Education Officials because they have to ensure that they comply and account for their work, even though they are not provided with materials to help them reach the targets that the department sets. Ehren et al. (2020) indicate how ECTs do not benefit from the support services they receive and how it affects their work. Ehren et al. (2020) further indicate that the lack of support given to the ECTs results in the lack of expertise in the subject taught by the teacher because they are not trained enough and they are not mentored and monitored on how to implement the curriculum, which is CAPS.

In some countries such as England, a suitable and sustained quantity of high-quality ECTs is alarming because the employment and retention of ECTs has been an unending challenge due to challenges faced by ECTs in schools. Such challenges included the ECTs not receiving support, which then led to burnout and frustrations (Ovenden-Hope & Kirkpatrick, 2024). The England Department of Education has developed the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy in 2019 to address the issue of increasing challenges in ECTs supply. The strategy focused on areas that were considered to have a colossal impact on improving the ECTs'

experiences in schools (Ovenden-Hope & Passy, 2020). However, it is not clear why some Educational Officials have not used the forms of support available to provide sufficient support to the ECTs in South Africa.

1.4 Purpose and rationale for the study

The purpose of this study stems from the challenges faced by the ECTs that do not get adequate support from the Education Officials in schools. These challenges included the fact that the ECTs were insufficiently trained for their work by the Universities and they also did not get sufficient training from Education Officials when they got to schools. The Education Officials expected the ECTs to effectively meet the requirements and expectations of the Department of Basic Education and of the school even though they were not sufficiently trained and did not receive sufficient support as they should. These experiences raised concerns about the effectiveness of Educational Officials in playing their role through supporting ECTs by using available support programmes and policies in supporting the ECTs. Moreover, the challenges that were faced by the ECTs were that they were expected to work with insufficient resources but were expected to produce quality results in terms of learner academic achievements. Furthermore, the ECTs felt burdened with work due to various reasons such as being overworked by experienced teachers through giving them their work to do. This led to ECTs feeling neglected and burnt-out. The negligence experienced by ECTs through being burdened with work is a grievous matter. This often led to the ECTs being frustrated and having strained relationships with fellow colleagues at the workplace. Moreover, other challenges that made the ECTs feel burdened was when the Education Officials requested work that they did not train ECTs how to do; this caused the ECTs to lose trust in Education Officials and had a negative impact on their relationship.

The experiences of the ECTs not receiving support from Education Officials in schools

Maepa (2017) and Mbatha (2016) reveal that when it comes to practice, most ECTs still fall victim to experiencing unending challenges of implementing curriculum because of the inadequate professional development that is offered by the Department of Basic Education officials. Maepa (2017) and Mbatha (2016) reveal that Education Officials neglect the ECTs by not supporting them adequately when it comes to professional development. Furthermore, ECTs' needs and opinions are not considered when the Department of Basic Education (DBE)

implements a curriculum change; they do not consider the ECTs possible needs, challenges and perspectives at all (Gokmenoglu & Clark, 2015). Existing literature indicates that the DBE does not consider what the ECTs experience, their curriculum needs and the type of support that they require, and how the curriculum change may affect the workload of ECTs (Ramberg, 2014). It shows that change is imposed on the ECTs rather than the ECTs being involved in the curriculum change or even being prepared for the change. Govender (2018, p. S8) revealed that "with regard to the Annual National Assessment (ANA) part of the Foundation for Learning Campaign (FFLC), three-quarters of the participants reported that the assessments increased their administrative duties at the expense of teaching time and added to their workload." Govender (2018) further indicates that because Education Officials do not consider the opinions and perspectives of educators concerning the curriculum change, it often results in the ECTs being overworked. In addition, Govender (2018) further elaborates that excluding ECTs in the curriculum change progressions correspondingly results in the ECTs failing to practise these processes and deliver learning successfully in the classroom. From the data generated I have learnt that when the ECTs do not receive support it greatly impacts different stakeholders including learners and other teachers because it affects the learner performance and the relations between the teachers in the school. Importantly, the ECTs experience determines their efficacies as educators in a workplace.

The impact of Education Officials providing Early Career Teachers with support

Kutsyuruba et al. (2019) unearthed that ECTs valued freedom that they got, which was to be able to decide on information from the Education Officials mostly applicable to their needs, keeping in mind it was important for them to be flexible enough to be able to improve their own style of teaching. Kutsyuruba et al. (2019) also add that ECTs felt that socialisation was a process that helped them gain confidence in their work, as Education Officials would guide them through social interactions and assist them to know the school better and beyond. The above exercises formed part of professional development. In China, ECTs benefited greatly from induction programmes aimed at supporting ECTs (Lee & Feng, 2007). In New Zealand, Education Officials organise state-funded professional development initiatives that help ECTs with reduced teaching commitments of observing other educators teaching and engaging in reflexive writing (Anthony et al., 2011). Lambeth and Lashley (2012) illustrated that professional development is a pivotal influential factor within the support system, aiding ECTs

"through the new teacher seminars with the induction coordinator and the induction coach, and one-on-one meetings with the induction coach" (p. 44). The initiatives mentioned above contributed to the professional development of the ECTs. The benefits that the support provided by Education Officials to the ECTs are shown through amplified teacher efficiency, self-confidence, enhanced job satisfaction, enthusiasm, and dedication, stress level are reduced, better classroom management and increased learner performance (Guarino et al., 2006; Henry et al., 2011; Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Wynn et al., 2007). Consequently, ECTs benefit greatly from receiving adequate support from Education Officials; it has been mentioned that it helps them with classroom management; it improves their self-confidence; it enhances job satisfaction, leading to them being productive. It is evident that the ECTs who get support from Education Officials tend to feel the sense of professional belonging, develop self-efficacy and have good classroom management (George et al., 2018). That is, when the ECTs receive adequate support from Education Officials; this helps them to love their job, and most importantly, it enhances their practice and self-confidence in their profession (Callahan, 2016; Kidd et al., 2015; Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017). The data generated revealed that there are various benefits that are derived from receiving support such as they become happier workers; they are committed and dedicated to their work which, ultimately leads to increased and improved learner achievement. Most importantly, it increases the ECTs confidence which, ultimately leads to self-efficacy and it enables the ECTs to go the extra mile to do their work such as buying resources with their own money and initiating extra-classes to help learners (Alenexi, 2023). Moreover, the ECTs become active and always do their work and submit even before the deadlines. The benefits show the importance of why the Education Officials should provide support to the ECTs in schools.

Exploring the forms of support that are provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials in schools

In education, each year newly qualified teachers are hired by the education system, known as ECTs and these ECTs need support for them to fully adapt on the workplace and to learn how to work effectively (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000). Researchers noticed the complications and complex nature of anticipation of the ECTs in their early years of their profession, with regards to delivering lessons successfully in the classroom, evaluation and professional learning from the department, co-workers, learners and the parents (Kelchtermans, 2017). All

these expectations create much pressure on the ECTs as they are still in need of support to be able to deliver all these expectations effectively. When one becomes a teacher, s/he needs to learn about certain professional values and requirements; hence, it is important to build relationships with co-workers. Therefore, emotional peer support is one of the vital support forms that can be provided to the ECTs.

According to Matheson (2020), the Education Officials help the ECTs to acquire skills, values and norms of teaching and working with fellow co-workers, they also assist them with emotional support by showing empathy when the ECTs feel overwhelmed with their work, they build trust and offer mentoring. Notably, effective social emotional peer support takes place helps to build the ECTs confidence, improves their job satisfaction and competence, which correspondingly, results in improved sense of well-being and job efficacy (Lauer mann & König, 2016). Secondly, literature indicates that some ECTs face plentiful challenges when they try to adopt and utilise digital technologies (Hanell, 2018). ECTs had to learn how to use digital technologies by integrating it in their classroom which has been a challenge and it revealed that they needed Technology support (Masoumi & Noroozi, 2023). Therefore, Technology Support also forms part of the support that ECTs need to be provided with in schools. This is because ECTs have divulged that they feel like they have not been fully supported and equipped to integrate digital technology in their classrooms (Gudmundsdottir & Hatlevik, 2018). ECTs do not know how to effectively and actively integrate digital technology and resources when delivering their lessons, in other words, they are not well equipped on how to deliver it successfully in their classrooms hence they need support. Furthermore, ECTs need to acquire knowledge of the subject that they teach, to be experts in subjects that they teach and this can be achieved if ECTs are trained in subject knowledge (Dunst et al., 2015). Training in subject knowledge can take place through attending inductions and workshops which are considered to be the Instructional Support. ECTs support programmes, also known to serve as teacher induction programmes and workshops, are also ways of supporting ECTs so that they can be exposed to co-teaching opportunities, professional learning community, based on instructional development and provision of curriculum resources (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2000).

High performing countries such as Japan, Finland and the United States have prioritised and significantly invested in supporting ECTs through inductions, teacher trainings and teacher and professional development (Moore, 2015). However, that is not the case in South Africa (SA).

Smith (2011) argues that ECTs in South Africa are not provided with sufficient and suitable support that they need. On the note of importance, policy states that Developmental Support Groups (DSGs) and the School Management Teams (SMTs) are considered to be the on-site sources of support for ECTs in schools and are considered as Education Officials within the school premises (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018).

1.5 Significance of the study

There is always a vital factor underlying conducting an empirical study which entails the study contributed and the study's significance in the field of knowledge. The study was conducted in terms of obtaining deeper comprehension in seeking for solutions to the problem of insufficient support that is provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials in schools of South Africa. They admit that they have a challenge of insufficient support being provided to ECTs by Education Officials which causes other issues for the school (Ndabankulu, 2023). Donkor and Asante (2016) state that another emerging factor that contributes to the ineffective provision of support is that they tend to be more focused on making sure that the ECTs comply with the district regulations; they only evaluate and monitor the ECTs' work without helping ECTs with planning and delivering the curriculum. Mkhize (2023) elucidates that in most cases, Education Officials organise on-site workshops but often end up cancelling them. Furthermore, Mkhize (2023) adds that some Education Officials lack knowledge of the subject specific content, which affects their competency. Even though the government really initiated the teacher development project, it did not reach all schools (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). In the meantime, the challenges of insufficient support being provided to ECTs in school levels remain, and they impact teaching and learning negatively in schools when there is subjective evidence that suggest the existence of the positive influence of Education Officials providing ECTs with support in schools. Therefore, in this thesis the study was conducted in order to elicit deeper understanding of the nature of support that is provided by Education officials to ECTs. It anticipated that such comprehension might offer understandings that may help in responding to the insufficient support that is provided to ECTs in some schools. The insights gained from this knowledge can help with pinpoint gaps in current policies, thus helping in informing the development of new policies in the country.

Echazarra and Radinger (2019) elucidate that schools often experience the challenge of not having opportunities for staff and professional development and training. The ECTs reported that Education Officials were more focused on administrative competence and social control rather than how the school performed and the challenges that the ECTs encountered (Dilotothle et al., 2001). They further add that the ECTs were incompetent, and turned a blind eye to contextual factors that contributed to the underperformance of schools (Dilotothle et al., 2001). Nkambule and Amsterdam (2019) state that the ECTs revealed that Education Officials did not go back to ECTs to 'check' whether the ECTs in schools were on the correct path regarding the implementing of changes in the classroom. In this regard, the lack of competence and Education Officials being more concerned about meeting the departmental regulations instead of helping ECTs with their needs also contributed to the ineffectiveness of the support provided by them. Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2011) indicate that insufficient allocation of resources in schools is one challenge that leads to ineffective support. ECTs in schools need sufficient teaching and learning materials for effective teaching to take place; if the ECTs are not provided with the relevant and necessary resources, this leads ECTs to be overloaded with work and to become ineffective when teaching their subject. Debatably, the responses to the questions of the study can add insights in the field of leadership and management and help in enhanced comprehension of the tussles that ECTs continue to face in receiving insufficient support from Education Officials in school settings of South Africa.

1.6 Clarification of key concepts

Five main concepts are clarified in this study, and they are, instructional leadership, adult learning, educational officials, early career teachers and educator support. These concepts have been utilised to deliver various meanings to different individuals in different settings.

1.6.1 Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership is generally understood to be an important role for school leaders; however, this has progressed in modern years (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Sharif, 2020). The Education Officials practising IL ought to be able to encourage, influence and motivate educators to accomplish beyond their plans, to ensure that all educators know that they are valued equally in a school context. The Instructional Leadership focuses on policies and practices that are implemented at the district level to help support and improve teaching and

learning. As Munna (2019, p. 42) states, "It indicated the importance of Instructional Leaders defining and communicating goals, monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process and promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development." The vision and goal should be driven by focusing on learners' academic achievements and enhancing teachers' productivity. Instructional Leadership promotes the educational management process of monitoring, leading, controlling and organising in the school context. As a result, amid other efforts of this study is to convey fore elongated permanent practices of the Instructional Leadership in the specific contexts of providing the ECTs with support.

1.6.2 Adult learning

Adult learning which is also known as andragogy was made by Malcom Knowles as the skill and knowledge of assisting adults to learn, different to how children learn (Knowles, 1984). There are various purposes of why adults want to learn such as to fill in an educational gap, for their own professional and personal development and for them to attain work related skills (Ngozwana, 2020). Ngozwana (2020) further reveals that adult learners find learning very vital and find it very meaningful as it also contributes to their personal value, helps them to create a learning climate that is filled with trust, mutual respect, where there is collaboration and that is very supportive. Aligning with the concept of adult learning is Adult Learning Theory which I discuss more extensively in Chapter Three. This theory was developed because researchers wanted to establish the interest in the adult learning processes (Knowles, 1978). Knowles (1978), further advocates that adults are really in need to learn because they are more motivated, have different experience and more orientated than learners.

Other scholars argue that adult learning is similar to learner learning as they both have principles that makes them both fall in the lifelong learning "range" (Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019). Some researchers argue that andragogy is pertinent to the principle of Ubuntu and communism, philosophy of education whereby self-determination and education is influenced by an individual's experience (Sefotho, 2018). Sefotho (2018) further corroborated that learners are perceived responsible for their learning, for acquiring experience to self-determination, self-directed and they should be accountable for their own learning. As a result, the aim of the study is to carry out to the fore extensive upended practices of adult learning practised by Early Career Teachers when they receive support from the Education Officials.

1.6.3 Educator support

Admiraal (2019) states that educator support consists of different elements such as supervising and guiding teachers with teaching and learning in schools, the teachers' work is monitored by their mentors which can be regarded as educational officials at a school level. Educator support includes helping to reduce the transfer shock that is experienced by the ECTs through inductions, supporting the ECTs and providing professional development possibilities for them, equipping the ECTs with necessary teaching skills helping to decrease their levels of stress that is caused by work (Pan et al., 2023). Literature by Pan et al. (2023) indicates educator support prioritises the well-being of the teachers and the ECTs in a school context. Educator support assists with enhancing the level of the teacher's preparedness, improving the working condition of the teacher and most importantly improving their well-being through consistently providing support through workshops, programmes and professional developments (Admiraal & Kittelsen-Roberg, 2023). Literature by Coppe et al. (2023) states that the educator support further institutes the available programs that are developed to help the teachers to develop the necessary competencies to be able to meet the requirements made by the Department of Basic Education such outstanding learner performance. The purpose of the educator support is to decrease the challenges faced by the teachers especially in their first years of work, such as dealing with many tasks at once, including teaching, classroom management and instilling discipline (Lindqvist, 2019). Kutsyuruba (2019) corroborated that the educator support includes helping ECTs with socialising and building relationships with fellow co-workers. This takes place through mentors supporting with piloting the school within and beyond the school and supporting the integration of ECT into the work environment and lastly, the emotional peer support, trust is the most vital form of support that can be provided to ECT. The study explores the nature of support and forms of support that are provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials in under the umbrella of educator support.

1.6.4 Education Officials

Education officials are mentors that are supervising teachers and ECTs at schools with the aim to promote a supportive school culture (Meredith et al., 2023). The Education Officials are the Subject Advisors, school principal, School Management Team (SMT) and the senior educators. Supervision is the process of evaluating, inspection, supporting and offering advices; it is a

form of a relations that an experienced and new member in a certain profession have (Stephen, 2018). Stephen (2018) explains that the Education Officials are expected to support teachers in training them how to implement, how to teach and how to deal with the day to day challenges that they face. Supported by Foundations for Learning (FFL) Campaign (Department of Education (DoE), 2008, p22) reveals that “education officials are obliged to visit all schools within the district at least once per term, with more frequent visits to schools requiring stronger support for monitoring, guidance, assist schools to improve their performance and work towards the agreed targets.” According to Foundations for Learning (FFL) Campaign (Department of Education (DoE), 2008) the education officials are expected to make sure that they train teachers to be competent in teaching their subjects. In addition, they need to guide them on how to prepare for lessons, how to teach in certain contexts and monitor the educators progress regularly. They have to monitor educator’s progress through frequent visits to schools. As supported by The National Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts (National Education Evaluation & Development Unit, 2013, p15) recommends the districts of education and circuit offices are required to do “school visits, classroom observation, consultation, cluster meetings, suitable feedback reports and other means; providing an enabling environment and organising provision and support for the professional development of managers, educators and administrative staff members; and holding education institutions in a district area to account for their performance.” It is vital for Education Officials to visit teachers, to provide educators with relevant feedback that will help augment the eminence of teaching and learning in schools but there seems to be a lot of incompetence on the Subject advisors side; they seem to be neglecting their duties of supporting educators. As Education Officials are part of the study, their role in providing support to the ECTs is explored.

1.6.5 Early Career Teachers

Early Career Teachers are the teachers who are newly qualified and they are still in the early years of their teaching profession (Schaap et al. 2021). Wiers-Jenssen (2023) states that ECTs are now divided into two categories, namely the novice teachers which are the teachers who have less than 3 years of teaching experience and there are advanced beginners whom are teachers that have at least been in the teaching field for 2-5 years. Early Career Teachers (ECT) require a lot of support in the early years of their profession because they are still learning how

to implement policies and reform initiatives (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Bernard (2002) divulged that ECTs in schools often struggle to access teaching aids and learning materials such as books. Ehren et al., (2020) indicate that it is really unfair to ECTs that they have to ensure that they comply and account for their work, even though they are not provided with materials to help them reach the targets that are set by the department. In the first years of working as teachers, the ECTs face high levels of stress because of the various challenges that they experience such as feeling that they are not well prepared to be teachers as they are transitioning from being students to being teachers (Admiraal et al., 2023). In countries like Europe, teacher attrition is very common amongst ECTs, and there is high rate of attrition of Early Career Teachers (Federičová, 2021). One of the common causes of the high number of ECTs turnover is the gap between theory (what they are trained or taught in teacher education) and the practise (what they are expected to do when they get to school); it makes the ECTs feel insufficiently supported in the school (Redding & Nguyen, 2020). The ECTs want to apply the theoretical insight they have from the university but they struggle with reality of the classes they have to deal with at the school context such as classroom management (Richards et al., 2019). As Early Career Teachers are part of the study, the challenges that they experience is explored in the study.

1.7 Research aims and questions

In exploring the nature of support that is provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials in schools, the study is guided by the following research questions, which comprise the main question and four subsidiary questions:

Main research question

- What kind of support is provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials in schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district?

Sub-questions

- What are the fundamental values and beliefs that shape the support that is provided to ECTs by the Education Officials in schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District?
- How can ECTs in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District be supported such that these values and beliefs can be achieved?

- Why do ECTs need support from the Education officials in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District?
- What are the challenges and opportunities that are associated with supporting the Early Career Teachers in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District?

1.8 Research design and methodology

The study sought to explore the nature of support that is provided to ECTs by Education Officials in schools. The study employed the qualitative research approach. The study seeks to know the experiences of both ECTs and the Education officials; hence, the study utilised the qualitative research approach (Cohen et al., 2011). I employed qualitative approach because it allowed the participants to freely express their own experiences based on how they experienced them and how they understood them. Subject to understanding the experience of participants is the interpretive paradigm, which believes that participation is how knowledge is created (Siddiqui, 2019). After carefully analysing the different research paradigms, namely: positivism, interpretivism, post-positivism, Critical theory (ideology) and/or Pragmatism. The study employed the interpretive paradigm. As stated by interpretivists, reality is multi-layered and complex (Dammak, 2020) In relation to this study, the interpretive paradigm assisted in helping me understand the meanings and beliefs that Early Career Teachers and Education Officials attach to their relationship. The basis of this study is to comprehend the experiences and perceptions of participants regarding a phenomenon; Yin (2009, p. 18) describes “case study as an empirical inquiry which investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context.” In corroboration, Kemanusiaan (2007) explains that a case study methodology allows a researcher to closely investigate data within a specific phenomenon. This study utilised case study methodology to investigate the experiences of the participants. Priya (2021) states that a case study entails a comprehensive study of the participant’s experiences within its natural setting. The case study should always have the “case” that is going to be studied, which implies that a case study can be measured as a group of people, an individual and even an institution and it can be a single or multiple case study (Gillham 2001; Miles & Huberman 1994). In this study, each school was measured as a case study and this study was a multiple case study as I utilised three schools. Detailed information on these problems are situated in Chapter Four which focuses on discussing methodology issues.

1.9 Organisation of the study

This thesis is structured into nine chapters and below is the summary of what each chapters entail:

Chapter One

In chapter One, I provide introductory details regarding the study amongst other things and I indicate what is educator support and why it is essential for the ECTs to be provided with support by the Education Officials in schools. I then elucidate to other pertinent matters that are important to the study and I also clarify the main terms. Then, I state the statement of the problem, the purpose and the rationale for the study. Moreover, I formally declare the significance of the study. I vividly outlined the four aims of the study and the four questions of the study. In order for the reader to get a clear understanding of the study, I concisely outlined literature that discusses the forms of support, experiences of the ECTs and benefits of ECTs receiving support from Education Officials.

Chapter Two

In this chapter local and international literature is reviewed. I review literature that focuses on educator support and how it can be provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials in schools. I commenced by alluding the experiences of the ECTs in schools, thereafter I proceed to explain the forms of support that are provided to ECTs by Education Officials. Further, I discussed factors that facilitate and hinder the efforts of Education Officials to support ECTs and I conclude by discussing the challenges experienced by Early Career Teachers.

Chapter Three

Theoretical frameworks employed in the study are presented in this chapter, theoretical frameworks which aligns with the role of Education Officials in providing the Early Career Teacher with support and how they provide support. My presentation focuses on the context of the nature of support provided to the ECTs and how the ECTs receive support from the Education Officials. The chapter clearly indicates the theories utilised and provide detailed

elucidation of the theories, assumptions of by other scholars regarding the theory, the tenets of the theories and how the theories are pertinent to the study.

Chapter Four

In Chapter Four, the research design and the methodology are presented that I selected to be able to explore the nature of support provided to the ECTs by education officials in schools and the rationalisation for my selection. I start by outlining paradigm I used for the study. Since I planned generating through understanding the experiences of the participants, the case study methodology was used within a qualitative approach. The semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions in English was utilised to generate data so that participants could be able express themselves freely.

Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven

In these three chapters, the qualitative data that were generated from the three case study sites eHulene Secondary School, eNkonzo Secondary school and Thaba-di-Mahlwa Secondary school. In each of the three sites a School Principal, Deputy Principal, Departmental Head, Senior Teacher and Early Career Teacher was interviewed, including two Subject Advisors. The data generated was capacious, and because of that I decided to it would be suitable to present in three chapters in order to fairly give attention to each site. I separately presented data from one site at a time in a form of a chapter. Before presenting the data, I presented a brief profile of the selected school, and its communities afore outlining that of the participants. The experiences and views, were presented from the schools under seven themes that emerged during the data analysis.

Chapter Eight

In this chapter, data analysis across the three sites (eHulene Secondary School, eNkonzo Secondary School and Thaba-di-Mahlwa Secondary School) is conducted and discover developing patterns from the data and connected them to the literature and the theoretical framework presented in Chapters Two and Three respectively.

Chapter Nine

In this chapter, I outline and elucidate the findings and implications of these findings for various stakeholders and research. Firstly, I present the synthesis of the study and then I discuss the findings under the critical questions that guided the study. Finally, the emerging model of the Education officials as Instructional leaders providing support to the ECTs. I therefore commence sketching the model of supporting and guiding the ECTs in schools by explaining the importance of understanding the challenges experienced by the ECTs at the school and how these challenges are influenced by how support is provided to the ECTs in schools. Hence, the need for the ECTs to know factors that hinder and influence the Education Officials to provide support.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWING LITERATURE ON EARLY CAREER TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PROVIDED BY EDUCATION OFFICIALS

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced and provided a background to this study. This chapter reviews literature relating to early career teachers and how they receive support from relevant stakeholders. There are different views about what constitutes early career teachers. There are those scholars who claim that Early Career Teachers (ECTs) are newly appointed educators who have joined teaching profession for less than three years (Glutsch, 2020). However, Orlando and Attard (2016) put it differently, stating that ECTs are teachers who have been teaching for less than five years. The definition of ECT differs according to explanation by different researchers. Various studies maintain that Early Career Teachers (ECT) are a cluster of teachers which are not given too much attention (Bar-Tal & Biberman-Shalev, 2022; Beutel et al., 2019; Croswell & Beutel, 2017; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Redding & Henry, 2019; Thomas et al., 2019). These group of teachers are often very committed and their aims are to remain in the teaching profession, but they often feel like they are not valued. They juggle for priorities and they are not provided with the opportunities for development (Booth et al., 2021). Booth et al. (2021) indicate that during the first year of work, ECT are very dynamic and ambitious towards their job. To explain who the ECTs are, Schaap et al. (2021) postulate that ECTs are teachers who are newly qualified and are at the early stages of their careers which is the teaching profession. In relation to the discussion by Schaap et al. (2021), Early Career Teachers are teachers that are new to the teaching profession, they have minimal to no experience in the field (Bar-Tal et al., 2020).

ECTs arrive at work with little experience of most things and often struggle with a lot of things as aforementioned by Booth et al. (2021) that they struggle because they lack development opportunities and setting priorities. As much as ECTs are ambitious and enthusiastic, they are certain factors that obstruct them to work at their full capacity and this is corroborated by Booth et al. (2021) that they are not getting adequate support and training which makes their jobs more difficult. It is therefore essential for ECTs to receive support from the Education Officials at schools as elucidated by Vivegnis (2016). This scholar maintains that there are four vital roles that needs to be exercised by Education Officials. These officials have to act as mentors

when they are providing support to ECTs. In order to enhance the ECTs' autonomy and emancipation the Education Officials are expected to administer the following:

(a) Offering ECTs with various support such as by listening to ECTs and providing them with emotional support; (b) Simplifying learning and development such as, by providing assistance that is pedagogical pertinent and giving information that is available about teaching resources; (c). Cultural facilitation such as helping the ECTs comprehend the context of the school and help ECTs to work well at the school and being critical such as bringing new approaches and encouraging research and innovation. Grasping a process is essential as it aids to have an impact on the results of such route, the teacher professional development can be assisted further by capturing the process which they develop professionally and look into the elements that contributes to such development (Tantawy, 2020). The scholar further corroborates that being a teacher is a professional job that requires one to be professional in every aspect such as developing and enhancing their skills more often (Tantawy, 2020).

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature regarding the nature of support that is provided to ECTs by the Education Officials in schools to get a clear understanding of the study and to identify the gap that is available already. As Paul and Criado (2020) alludes, a literature review assists to present the data in an organised way. To begin with this chapter discusses the experiences of ECTs in schools and it further explores the forms of support that are offered to ECTs, moreover it confers about the factors that hinder and facilitate the efforts of Education Officials in offering support to ECTs and lastly talks about the challenges that are experienced by ECTs in schools.

2.2 The roles and responsibilities of the subject advisors in supervising Early Career Teachers as Education Officials to enhance learner performance in schools

Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) regards educator support as coaching, guiding, helping with developing lessons plans and offering constructive feedback to educators. Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) indicate that the role of Subject Advisors is to lead, guide and coach teachers to be able to deliver quality teaching and enhance their productivity. The Subject Advisors are responsible for offering Early Career Teachers and other teachers with support.

The relationship between early career educators and supervisors is built through the supervision of the subject advisor. Stephen (2018) state that policies often direct the education districts to guarantee that there is a collaborative relationship amongst school's stakeholders (principals and teachers) and district officials (subject advisors) so that they can guide and support them professionally so. In this case, the role of a subject advisor is to offer support and guidance to educators with matters that relates to curriculum and the teacher's needs. Similarly, the Foundations for Learning (FFL) Campaign (Department of Education (DoE), 2008, p. 22) specifies that "education district officials are obliged to visit all schools within the district at least once per term, with more frequent visits to schools requiring stronger support for monitoring, guidance, assist schools to improve their performance and work towards the agreed targets." It is the subject advisors duty to visit school to monitor and assist where early career educators commit errors. Supported by the Employment of Educators Act (No 76 of 1998) which states that the role of a subject advisor is to expedite the curriculum delivery in schools and to guide the school on forming and implementing policies.

In addition, RSA (2013) specifies that subject advisors are meant to work together with early career educators with curriculum related matters and beyond (early career teacher's needs). Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) explain educator support as variously described as mentoring, coaching, professional development and feedback upon lesson observations. Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) further add that in South Africa ECTs mainly receive support through the subject advisors organising training workshops. Subject advisors manage subjects and they are responsible for providing the curriculum support and developing teachers professionally because they expected teachers to produce good results in their subjects (Stephen, 2018). The pedagogical content support should take place in a form of in-serve training where the subject advisors train teacher and teach the early career educators about the content that they teach learners.

2.3 The experiences of Early Career Teachers in schools

During the early years of the ECTs, they often face certain experiences such as negative experiences which is discussed in this section. Namely: a. Lack of training and development, b. ECTs being burdened with much responsibility, c. Academic decision and reforms imposed on ECTs.

2.3.1 The lack of training and development of Early Career Teachers

Admiraal et al. (2023) state that when ECTs transition from being students to being teachers this period is often called the period of exploring, adapting and learning. ECTs often suffer from not receiving adequate teacher preparation and getting lack of support and this often contributes to ECTs leaving their profession (Räsänen et al., 2020). Not getting enough support and training daunts ECTs in many ways which often leaves them with the options of leaving their job as afore mentioned by Räsänen et al. (2020). There are a number of obstacles that ECTs experience in their workplaces. A number of researchers divulge that ECTs face various challenges when dealing with technologies such as when they have to integrate technology into their lessons and this affects their competence and self-efficacy (Gouëdard et al., 2023; Gurevich, 2017). Learning to be a pedagogical practitioner is stressful and often causes ECTs to develop self-doubts which impel most ECTs to give up and leave their profession (Redding & Ngyuen, 2020). As they move from being students to teachers, ECTs discovers later in their careers that they are not the kind of teachers they had anticipated becoming (Troesch & Bauer, 2020). This dissonance causes the ECTs to lose their job satisfaction and self-confidence in their job which often leads to faltering the commitment of ECTs in their jobs (Fütterer et al., 2023). Hence, the education literature has unearthed the significance of social networks for the well-being of ECTs (Coppe et al., 2023).

2.3.2 Early Career Teachers are burdened with so many responsibilities

The ECTs are projected to shoulder equivalent everyday jobs and accountabilities to their senior co-workers (Toropova et al., 2021), which puts ECTs under so much pressure when compared to their experience and knowledge in the field. The pressure integrates strengthening enough understanding of students, becoming familiar with the culture of their school, and building a balance in the professional and personal life, the ECTs characterised school teaching as devastating (Herman et al., 2020). The self-efficacy of ECTs can have continuing impact on several features of ECTs professional development, such as the well-being of ECTs and the manner they in which they behave, in addition to conclusions about the profession (Reeves et al., 2022). Transitioning from being a student to be a teacher is said to be the most difficult period and most ECTs tend to become very vulnerable during this period (Jackson & Stevens, 2022). Learning to teach in nowadays active education environment needs extensive effort on

the part of an aspiring teacher if this individual is to accomplish all that the teaching profession requires (Kutsyruba, 2020).

ECTs are projected to shape their personal and professional knowledge and instructional capabilities in delivering curriculum, assessing learners, managing the classroom, knowing about policy frameworks and attending to the needs of learners (Meredith et al., 2023), even so it is rare to locate ECTs learning requisite alone without facing various challenges. Tregunna (2014) divulges that in Canada, government officials in the education department have acknowledged the need of supporting ECTs as they experience many different challenges that affects their productivity, and they have laid out to support ECTs through inductions, mentorship and different professional development programmes of ECTs. Their acknowledgement and realisation portray that their vision is very clear, active, creative and stimulates autonomy but active and autonomous professional tend to be in conflict with the reality of the set curricula and textbooks that need to be utilised, ECTs working in poor conditions and working with inadequate materials which often discouraging experience which could possibly lead to ECTs feeling stressed and dissatisfied with their job (Van Houtte, 2022). As Richter et al. (2022) indicate that ECTs also point out the significance of being offered with opportunities to have conversation with other teachers, to perceive, to co-plan activities and have time to constitute relationships with other teachers.

2.3.3 Academic decisions and curriculum reforms are imposed on Early Career Teachers

Researchers have discovered that ECTs did not receive enough curriculum support from their education officials which immensely affected their work (Jung & Woo, 2022). Liu et al. (2023) elucidate that when ECTs observed their relationships with the education officials as being negative, this affected how they interacted with their mentors as it decreased the number of times they interacted with them regarding academic and curriculum matters (Kutsyruba & Walker, 2020). Consequently, Kutsyruba and Walker (2020) indicate that the undesirable effect was recognised by the observations of ECTs being the last of the totem pole when they looked at the school education officials' arbitrary modifications to reducing the time allocated for induction programs that often affects other school activities. ECTs yearn to be involved in the process of decision-making, most especially when the decision affects their learners directly or brings about changes in the school's policy, but the ECTs observations concerning absence

of autonomy, micromanagement increasing, and lessened decision-making influence the teacher job satisfaction negatively (Sulit, 2020). ECTs' voices matter and their pleas should be heard and attended to. "The amount of voice that teachers have in decision-making on issues directly affecting their ability to do their job well also contributes to teacher satisfaction" (Podolsky et al., 2019, p. 20). Most ECTs get fatigued from constant accountability and discover that a continual attention on assessing the development of learners diminishes the creativity and autonomy that an ECT can have (Jerrim & Sims, 2021). The enthusiasm that fuelled the entry to teaching is substituted with measures of accountability that hold ECTs responsible for learners failing and the learning conditions that are beyond the ECTs control (Jerrim & Sims, 2021).

2.3.4 The lack of resources allocated to Early Career Teachers

Most ECTs do not have resources to help them teach learners and are mostly affected by the background of learners such as various learner's necessities, poverty, and community drug use, and additional external factors (Berry et al., 2021). Van den Borre et al. (2021) discuss that ECTs have experienced too much pressure and anxiety, which have worn out a large number of ECTs' energy leading to less productivity in teaching. ECTs recognised that the conditions under which ETCs work, evolve in a negative direction which does not benefit them at all, such as deficiency of financial resources, and miscellaneous expectations on teaching work (Pan et al., 2023). The teaching profession has become very complicated (Pan et al., 2023). As previously mentioned, ECTs observe that their work puts them under too much pressure (Booth et al., 2021) and at the same time, public appreciation for teaching has lessened (Choi & Mao, 2021). ECTs also notice that they are concurrently and endlessly experiencing new developmental tasks in the arrangement of continuing school restructuring and education innovations but there are not enough resources to support these innovations (Herman et al., 2020). This means that there is less time for ECTs to perform but the amount of work increases. Henceforth, when one works as a teacher they have to have high tolerance of the ongoing changes, uncompleted tasks, personal incompleteness and insecurity (Admiraal et al., 2023).

2.3.5 Poor working conditions affects Early Career Teachers

ECTs are often distracted from their work either by excessive workload or by problems that happen in interacting with the community (Ben-Amram & Davidovitch, 2024). ECTs sometimes have to deal with Education Officials whom are not supportive at all and this daunts them from doing their work effectively (Van der Spoel et al., 2020). ECTs mention that the workload has increased and it affected their job satisfaction (Canipe & Gunckel, 2020). Insufficient preparation of ECTs and lack of support are regarded as prime reasons why ECTs resign from the teaching profession (Paaske et al., 2022). Furthermore, the participants shared that the content of their induction and training programmes, their remarks frequently circled around training programmes recommended to develop their skills; interestingly, participants did not speak of the significance of programs in aiding them learn skills (Schaefer et al., 2020).

Schaefer et al. (2020) further allude that the responses of participants advocated that the absence of cooperative work secluded both ECTs and experienced teachers. ECTs who lack support tend to have very low Teacher Self-Efficacy at the end of their first year as teachers (Bar-Tal et al., 2020). ECTs experience socialisation differently concerning contextual factors involved such as: the background of an individual, pasts, and experiences; organisational culture, different social, economic factors and influences of politics on the teaching professions and of teachers (Lishchinsky & Zavelevsky, 2020). In the past decades, research has suggested that teacher attrition has been increasing due to mental health problems that were associated with their work and mental health treatment was reported to be very expensive and the increase in mental health problems subsequently leads to a decrease in student learning (Kreme & Nguyen, 2022).

2.4 Forms of support provided to Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials

Both the ECTs and the experienced teachers categorise four chief areas in which they need training, namely, the training of special education, technology-improved learning, managing behaviour matters, and teaching migrant learners (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2022). Matsko et al. (2022) allude that emphasising interconnected models of professional learning indicates well to the nurturing of the contexts that advance through mutually respectful relationships, rather than those that prolong individual development and learning or are centrally imposed. Conway

et al. (2020) emphasise that there is job satisfaction that is derived by teachers in schools whereby, leaders and teachers are working collaboratively.

ECTs are expected to improve and enhance their skills continually. Through persistent learning, the degree and performance of teachers can be improved, the teacher professional certificates are considered to be the most essential indicators and tools of teacher professionalism (Gottfried et al., 2024). This section discusses the various support that is provided to ECTs. The support structures are discussed as follows: (a) Professional support; (b) Administrative support; (c) Emotional support and (d) Technological support. This section clearly outlines and unpacks on how each support is provided and the disadvantages of ECTs not receiving these support structures.

2.4.1 Professional support

In discussing professional support, there are three critical areas, and these are orientation and induction, professional development activities and socialisation within the school context. These three aspects are discussed next.

Orientation and Induction

Teacher induction is a comprehensive, sustained and long-term professional development process that is organised to assist ECTs through acculturating, training, supporting and aiding them to develop lifelong learning programmes (Gottfried et al., 2022). Induction programmes are intended for many things, not only assisting the ECT to transition into the new career, they are also viewed as of the sustainable ways to retain ECTs in the teaching profession and to help curb possible complications with managing classrooms and their instruction (Kutsyuruba & Bezzina, 2024). Kutsyuruba et al. (2020) discover that support and training sessions that were offered by mentors were very effective when looking into a division-wide induction programme they studied. It is apparent that the induction programmes often introduce the ECTs to the culture of their working environment, prepares them to what is expected of them by the district and makes them gain sense of belonging in their workplace (Farrugia, 2022).

A number of countries have different perspectives with regards to what facilitates a successful induction programme. There is consensus on the beneficial facets of such programmes, such

as providing dedicated mentors, consenting the ECT to gain professional development and providing many support programmes for ECT throughout the year (Galea, 2020). Furthermore, literature emphasises the positive impact of well-designed induction programmes on teacher retention, professional growth, and learner teaching (Aarts et al., 2020). Strong induction and ongoing support during the initial years demonstrably improve retention rates (Voss & Kunter, 2020). As Podolsky et al. (2019) state, "Strong induction and support for novice teachers can increase their retention, accelerate their professional growth, and improve student learning" (p. 30). Different countries are already effecting the induction programmes to help the ECTs' progress into the second stage of their teaching profession (Day et al., 2020).

There are various positive impacts derived from inductions and high-grade programmes such as it increases the ECTs effectiveness, pleasure, dedication, helps improve classroom administration and improves learner achievement and helps to retain ECTs (Kutsyruba & Walker, 2020). Kutsyruba and Walker (2020) confer that the main purpose of induction programmes is to assist the ECT develop effective strategies that will help them teach learners, that will help them to effectively deliver the curriculum as expected and reduce the burden and challenges of transitioning from being students to being ECTs. The definite aim of induction is ensuring ECTs full incorporation into a professional community of practice and continuing professional learning throughout their profession (Karlberg & Bezzina, 2020). While some induction programmes consist of mentoring as a most important element among other structures, in other cases mentoring serves as the induction programmes (Tonna, 2023).

Professional development activities

Teachers' Professional Development (known as PD) implies the process of re-establishing, developing, and expanding the teachers' knowledge and skills (Skeen et al., 2020). PD is also referred as to be a mental and personal effort that involves teachers' engaging with new ideas, trying new methods, improving teaching, as well as emotional involvement (Han, 2023). There are various strategies and methods that have been tried to support that process of developing the ECTs professional competence, which includes reducing the timetables and providing them with formal support and informal inspiration (Kwok et al., 2022). Skeen et al. (2020) advocate that ECTs should develop professional competence through self-exploration, whereby they expand their knowledge that is often related to the curriculum reforms. Mentoring was frequently highlighted as the most important method for supporting ECTs in the reviewed

studies (Wallace et al., 2021). In various pieces of literature, PD refers to both informal and formal developmental activities that are entirely intended to enrich teachers' professional knowledge, proficiencies, competence, enthusiasm, self-efficacy, and beliefs (Granziera et al., 2022). ECTs also benefit from the professional developments that gives the ECTs the autonomy to choose according to their needs, and areas where they feel like they need to grow in, which promotes and permits autonomy and voice of the teachers (Shuls & Flores, 2020).

Many researchers, districts and schools share a goal of using effective support structures to retain and support ECTs in schools (Golding, 2020). For example, in Texas, the Centre for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education (CREATE) uses this method to help enhance the ECTs skills and productivity (Warsame & Valles, 2018). During the late 1970s, Veeman (1984) scrutinised concepts on how to support ECTs during the early years of their careers. As mentioned that providing ECTs with high-quality mentors within the school is essential, Yang et al. (2021) substantiate that utilising and working with external mentors brought too much confusion between the ECTs and the on-site mentors, especially with matters such as the provision of feedback and so forth. Ryan and Deci, (2000, 2020) indicate that companionship between the schools and the teacher professional developmental programmes can thoroughly prepare the ECTs to learn to work in professional learning environments. Ryan and Deci (2020) further caution against weakening the programmes that prepare ECTs especially for the sake of increasing the ECTs outcomes. Kutsyuruba and Walker (2020) go beyond elucidating that the ECTs do not only need to survive, but that they also need to learn how to prosper and integrate into teacher-leaders. Alemdag and Erdem (2017) discuss that online mentoring benefits ECTs immensely, but also that there are different benefits that come with it which are way different from the known traditional mentoring.

In countries like China, the teacher training programmes are initiated and implemented by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (Ping et al., 2020). Tveitnes and Hvalby (2024) see PD as the programme that is aimed at helping ECTs with personal and professional growth. It aids them to enhance knowledge that is related to their jobs as pedagogical practitioners; it boosts their skills and attitude which successfully leads to ECTs being able to design instructional programmes that help enhance learner achievements (Tveitnes & Hvalby, 2024). Being an ECT entails getting to learn more about the professional ethics and requirements, as well as being instated into particular school contexts (Mhlanga, 2023). It is identified as teacher socialisation (Suyatno et al., 2023). Leadership in schools is

often regarded as the potential tool to modify education and enhance teaching through providing ECTs with professional development continuously (Burger et al., 2021). Hence, it is vital that as researchers, we explore the insights of ECTs into understanding how PD helps them on their teaching skills, knowledge and advancing their career which, consequently, is pivotal to attaining an inclusive comprehension of the existent as well as the probable obstacles that ECTs may encounter.

Shanks et al. (2020) define formal PD as an organised programme of learning where specialists share insights about ECTs and aid them refine their skills, for instance, through the provision of training programmes, conferences and workshops. ECTs should be cultivated with values of sharing and cooperation that vital ingredients for collaborative practice, and also adopt vigilant and responsible attitude to power (Lindquist, 2021). Therefore, obtaining reforms in instructional practices obliges professional development activities that are supportive (Kilg & Sasan, 2024). In that regard, instructional support involves an instructional leader who can help the ECTs to improve their academic and emotional stability and posture by introducing programmes that foster good decision-making, emotional intelligence, combats negative behaviours, apprehend teachers, practise empathy and is centred on teaching and learning (Ainscow, 2020). Ainscow (2020) further argues that ECTs are given the duty to stimulate a healthy learning environment for learners that caters for the learners' emotional and behavioural needs. The ECTs who receive sufficient instructional support are able to offer and deliver instructional support to their learners through learner-teacher engagements which subsequently leads to improved academic performance by learners (Sullivan et al., 2021).

ECT mentoring programmes connect novices with experienced educators in collaborative and supportive environments (Giannini, 2023). Research highlights numerous benefits for having such professional development programmes (Golding, 2020). The challenges like individual mismatch, resource limitations, and inadequate training can lead to their failure (Antonsen et al., 2020). In response, traditional one-on-one mentoring has shifted towards a "multiple relationships" approach, where ECTs benefit from a network of formal and informal mentors (Herzog-Punzenberger et al., 2020). Regardless of format, fostering the protégé's personal learning remains the core objective (Golding, 2020).

The level of formal organisation varied across networks (Olsen, 2021). Notably, time and resources are crucial for professional development (Demo et al., 2021). Expanding on

collaborative work and learning within school-based PLCs, Hvalby (2022) highlights the essential role of teacher research. A growing body of research underscores the importance of social networks for ECTs' well-being (Olsen et al., 2020). Despite this, investigations into the direct link between network characteristics and positive outcomes like self-efficacy remain limited (Olsen, 2021). Existing studies suggest a promising avenue for further exploration, demonstrating positive correlations between network structure and favourable outcomes (Halmrast et al., 2021). Similarly, research examining ECTs' feeling of belonging within their Teacher Education Programme (TEP) and its possible impact is scarce, despite evidence highlighting the centrality of belonging for inspiration and welfare (Sullivan et al., 2021). In this regard, research suggests that structured professional development programmes with specific features can be effective in supporting ECTs. Oliver's (2016) study in an urban Texas school district found that ensuring consistent mentor-mentee pairings, classroom locations, and shared teaching responsibilities promoted positive outcomes. Notably, this study also highlights the importance of fostering integration into the school's professional culture to encourage long-term commitment among ECTs. Furthermore, Colognesi et al. (2020) recommend sustained mentor-mentee relationships, lasting at least two years, with dedicated time for professional interaction. Research by Olsen (2021) supports this, emphasising the impact of senior teacher-ECT collaboration on ECT engagement.

Granziera et al. (2022) highlight the positive impact of professional development (PD) on teacher self-efficacy, drawing on international research. Granziera et al. (2022) argue that PD-acquired knowledge boosts motivation and confidence in the ECTs, empowering them to see themselves as effective educators. Granziera et al. (2022) further highlight that the participants noted that PD facilitated showcasing their unique skills and attributes, attributing it to the close link between knowledge, confidence, and self-efficacy. Moreover, some participants reported increased confidence, leading to validation of their subject knowledge, even prompting some to pursue promotions. Additionally, Granziera et al. (2022) identified various "mediating outcomes," including improved classroom practices and enhanced job satisfaction, associated with PD participation.

Several studies have shown that high-quality PD positively impacts ECTs' content knowledge and teaching practices, leading to improved student outcomes (Golding, 2020; Pehmer et al., 2015; Polly et al., 2015). For example, Kutsyuruba (2020) suggests that PD activities that focus

on classroom dialogue can enhance students' higher-order learning skills by equipping ECTs with the knowledge to foster deeper understanding through productive discourse. Similarly, Kutsyuruba and Bezzina (2024) discover statistically significant relationships between ECTs' content, pedagogical, and personal knowledge and student learning outcomes. This suggests that increased ECT knowledge plays a crucial role in supporting and scaffolding students' deep understanding through engaging classroom interactions that develop critical thinking skills. Coldwell (2017) proposes leveraging the Kirkpatrick model to shift PD focus from reactions to training to meaningful learning experiences. He suggests that such a shift could drive lasting behavioural changes aligned with desired outcomes. Recognising this need, Canadian authorities have implemented programmes at provincial/territorial and regional levels to support the induction, mentorship, and ongoing PD of ECTs (Kutsyuruba & Bezzina, 2024).

Socialisation within the school context.

It is essential to assist the ECTs in settling well through socialisation into the school context and the adapting of curriculum during their transitioning period (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020). Diab and Green (2024) underscore the importance of collegial and supportive relationships in fostering ECTs confidence and efficacy within the profession. These relationships can be facilitated through various work-based learning activities (Ben-David & Berkovich, 2021), in which, the colleagues share their experience and knowledge with each other. Working in teams and sharing tasks as colleagues helps to enhance the professional development of the ECTs as it also fosters social relationships amongst the teachers (Beltman, 2021). These activities can take place through observing fellow colleagues during instruction, sharing work such as planning together lesson preparations, building social relationships outside the school context (Dvir & Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2020). Collaboration and team-work help the ECTs to easily build mutual and social relationships with their colleagues. Effective socialisation technique aids the ECTs to gain confidence and competence, as it is displayed through the improved subject knowledge, inspiration, and dedication, in turn resulting in improved sense of belonging, well-being, reduced burn-out and academic success (Ewing, 2021).

Collaboration among Early Career Teachers (ECTs) has shown positive impacts on their professional development (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020). Sharing challenges and expertise with colleagues fosters trust, allows them to overcome hurdles, and increases engagement, vigour, and dedication (Diab & Green, 2024). Additionally, participants in Schaefer et al.'s

(2020) study reported feeling valued and supported within a team-oriented school environment, leading to improved abilities to respond to student needs. Therefore, the notion of professional development activities that inculcate the culture of sharing knowledge and skills cannot be over-emphasised.

2.4.2 Administrative support

This topic is discussed under two sub-headings, namely, the benefits of Early Career Teachers receiving administrative support and disadvantages of Early Career Teachers not receiving administrative support.

Benefits of Early Career Teachers receiving administrative support

Tosun et al. (2024) identify strong administrative support as a key factor in teacher job satisfaction and retention. Conversely, research by Pineda-Báez et al. (2020) highlights the detrimental impact of unsupportive school leadership on teachers. Al-Mahdy and Alazmi (2023) suggest that ECTs are disproportionately affected by classroom management challenges stemming from a lack of administrative support. Consequently, this increases their likelihood of leaving the profession. Schott et al. (2020) underscore the crucial role that Education Officials play in shaping collaborative environments for both teachers and administrators. These scholars argue that by shielding ECTs from excessive administrative burdens, officials can facilitate meaningful interactions between mentees and mentors, ultimately enhancing ECT retention (Schott et al., 2020).

Resources for supporting Early Career Teachers (ECTs) include assigning those experienced mentors (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020; Sabar, 2004). Additionally, providing dedicated planning time within the school schedule can be beneficial, allowing them to observe colleagues, attend workshops, develop teaching materials, and explore new technologies (Clausen, 2007; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020). Administrative support plays a crucial role in motivating teachers and enabling them to effectively handle daily challenges (Xie et al., 2021). Similar to other professionals, teachers require a sense of achievement, belonging, and influence to thrive and develop into effective educators (Xie et al., 2021). Kutsyuruba and Walker (2020) identify various core tasks essential for successful teacher induction

programmes, including recruitment, hiring, placement, orientation, resource provision, classroom management, relationship building, professional development through formative assessments, feedback mechanisms, and fostering a supportive school environment.

Research also indicates that comprehensive support from school administration reduces job burnout and promotes teachers' adjustment to the school environment (Muhammad et al., 2020). Visone (2020) highlights the significance of leadership support, particularly from the principal, in creating a positive and comfortable working environment for teachers. Continuous administrative support facilitated teachers' adjustment to the school environment and contributed to more effective classroom instruction (Masood et al., 2020). Particularly, this support also plays a positive role in teacher-pupil interactions (Cassata & Allensworth, 2021). Furthermore, induction programmes that offer personalised professional development, allowing ECTs to directly apply new knowledge to their teaching, contribute to increased job satisfaction. This sense of support from the outset helps new teachers feel welcomed, valued, and confident in their roles (Saleem et al., 2020). ECTs require support in navigating new tasks and solving specific problems encountered in their first teaching experiences and reduce stress (Özlok, 2024). This includes basic, yet crucial, aspects like developing lesson plans, preparing for parent-teacher meetings, structuring their gradebooks for marking, and planning introductory sessions for families (Özlok, 2024).

Disadvantages of Early Career Teachers not receiving administrative support

The preceding discussion indicated what the ECTs stand to gain in the administrative support they receive from their respective schools and Department Officials. In this section I discuss the disadvantages for not receiving administrative support. Research also indicates that administrative burdens pose significant challenges for the ECTs in their early years (Tenteriz & Tozkoparan, 2022). These obstacles often comprise a lack of administrative support, teaching resources, and time, as well as large class sizes, extensive administrative duties, and complex relationships with colleagues and parents (Saleem et al., 2020). Principals play a vital part in supporting ECTs in overcoming these obstacles, which can hinder classroom management and limit their overall effectiveness (Bellibaş et al., 2020). Similar challenges related to administration are also reported for ECTs in Pakistan (Ayub, 2018). Despite the available resources, research suggests that administrative support from principals is often lacking in Pakistani schools (Dayan et al., 2018). Novice teachers frequently report inadequate

guidance and a lack of access to supportive leadership (Pineda-Báez et al., 2020). Furthermore, the heavy workload placed on ECTs creates stress and hinders their ability to effectively manage their classrooms (Pineda-Báez et al., 2020).

Adding to the burden, excessive administrative duties are a source of frustration for many ECTs (Thomas et al. 2018). While public school teachers in Pakistan may have fewer classes compared to their private counterparts, they often struggle with mountains of paperwork and other non-teaching tasks, further impeding their classroom management efforts (Chughati & Perveen, 2013; Malik & Jumani, 2016). Research by Saleem et al. (2020) highlights the challenges faced by ECT due to a lack of administrative support, especially from principals in providing teaching materials. This absence of material support negatively impacts their classroom management and creates additional difficulties (Ayvalı, 2021). In Saleem et al.'s (2020) study, ECTs expressed varying experiences regarding administrative support. While some participants reported receiving adequate help from school staff, including the principal, non-teaching personnel, and colleagues, emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts for successful education. Remarkably, these participants indicated that effective teaching requires support from the entire school community. Conversely, other ECTs voiced a lack of support from principals and administration, feeling they had to manage challenges independently (Wang & Huang, 2023). These findings resonate with the majority of the participants who reported inaction from the administration regarding various challenges such as excessive workload, large class sizes, administrative duties, and a lack of teaching resources (Gallant & Rilley, 2017). Teaching in overpopulated classrooms further contributed to difficulties experienced by ECTs (Saleem et al., 2020).

Several participants in Saleem et al.'s (2020) study perceived public school administration as uncooperative and unresponsive to their needs. These ECTs reported being told to "make do" with challenging situations and receiving no support from administrative staff (Bellibaş et al., 2020). Bellibaş et al. (2020) further state that such a lack of support can negatively impact job satisfaction and retention. Research suggests that administrative support acts as a buffer against negative job-related feelings for the ECTs. Additionally, Bellibaş et al. (2020) have identified specific forms of indirect neglect experienced by ECTs, such as withholding resources, rejecting opportunities, dismissing their ideas, and favouring other teachers. These negative relations with school leadership can add to an environment where ECTs feel undervalued and

uncomfortable. Administrative support is also crucial in navigating conflicts between teachers and parents.

2.4.3 Emotional support

In this section I discuss emotional support that ECTs require and the extent to which they received such support. There are two headings under which I present the discussion. The first one describes the kind of support that ECTs receive. The second one focuses on the impact of the lack emotional support provided to the ECTs. The discussion of the two issues follows.

Receiving emotional support enhances positive emotion of Early Career Teachers

Having emotionally supportive relationships with individuals or groups within a community fosters a sense of belonging, which signifies feeling accepted and integrated (Shen et al., 2024). These connections provide individuals with a logic of determination and sense in lifetime (Kopershoek et al., 2020). As individuals become more integrated into a community, their sense of belonging deepens, and they begin to identify with that community (Alhadabi & Karpinski, 2020). Suri (2020) indicates that there is a positive correlation between belonging and ECTs job satisfaction, while also demonstrating a negative link with emotional exhaustion. Additionally, research findings have shown that an emotional and positive relationship exist in the manner in which educators identify with their school (which aligns with belonging) and their self-efficacy (Chan et al., 2008; Valadez et al., 2021). Similarly, research suggests that a strong association with a teaching community can enhance self-efficacy (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, it is pivotal to foster a sense of belonging within a community, where ECTs receive ongoing feedback, praise, and idea exchange, could further bolster their self-efficacy (Bjorklund, 2020). This requires active engagement and mutual interactions amongst peers within the community (Sodughi & Hejazi, 2021).

Mahona and Demetria (2020) identify various strategies that school leaders can implement to support ECT satisfaction, commitment, and retention. These include nurturing effective approaches to student conduct, working together with the ECTs on instructional issues, directing demanding and fair evaluations, and building trust between teachers and principals (Salo et al., 2022). Additionally, leaders can contribute by facilitating collaborations with

mentors and colleagues, providing access to professional development opportunities, and shaping the policy messages received by ECTs (Carmona-Halty et al., 2021). Increased collaboration and emotional support from colleagues and leaders foster work relationships with trust, enabling educators to thrive and persevere in the profession. This idea is also shared by Morettini et al. (2020) who highlight the importance of "mutually emotional supportive, and trusting personal, professional, and peer relationships" in building teacher resilience against challenges and stress (p. 58). Effective emotional support involves active listening and tailoring strategies to individual needs, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach (Baker et al., 2022). In both schools and classrooms, teachers navigate complex emotional demands from superiors, peers, students, parents, and themselves (Zhang et al., 2021). To manage these demands effectively, they need to develop emotional intelligence, including the ability to understand and regulate their own and others' emotions. This fosters positive interactions among stakeholders and ultimately improves teaching effectiveness (Datu et al., 2022).

Navigating complex emotional demands within schools and classrooms, which involve interactions with superiors, peers, students, parents, and even themselves, requires Early Career Teachers (ECTs) to develop emotional intelligence (Schweder, 2020). This includes understanding and regulating both their own and others' emotions to promote positive interactions and enhance teaching effectiveness. Periods of change can be particularly emotionally charged for ECTs (Miller et al., 2021). During these challenges, experienced colleagues can provide invaluable support by acting as sounding boards, normalising their experiences, offering empathy and perspective, and sharing coping strategies to manage stress (Jiang & Zhang, 2021). Creating a space for teachers to share their expertise, collaborate, and work collectively on student-related issues fosters a sense of value and confidence. Podolsky et al. (2019) emphasise that "when teachers are emotionally supported in collaborating and doing what works for children, they feel more efficacious in the work" (p. 18).

Research suggests that nurturing a sense of belonging within the school community plays a crucial role. Studies by Schaefer et al. (2020) indicated that participants who felt belonging, were able to form strong relationships with various teams, including parents, staff, administrators, and students. They propose that this sense of belonging empowers ECTs to express their unique perspectives and engage meaningfully within the professional learning landscape, potentially due to validation from colleagues who share similar experiences. Zhang

et al. (2021) emphasise the responsibility of senior teachers to cultivate a positive and supportive environment that caters to the unique emotional and behavioural needs of ECTs. Similarly, Miller et al. (2021) found that a positive emotional climate fostered by senior teachers' increases ECT engagement, potentially leading to improved student learning outcomes. Transitioning from pre-service teacher to ECT can be daunting, highlighting the importance of emotional connections with colleagues. This sense of belonging assures ECTs they're not alone in facing challenges and this potentially leads to improved evaluations of their teaching ability (Salo et al., 2021).

Building a positive school climate through enhanced emotional support from both principals and colleagues has been identified as a promising strategy to prevent teacher attrition (Mahona & Demetria, 2020). Research on workplace emotional support suggests that strong emotional and social support networks are positively linked to job satisfaction which highlights their value as a crucial resource in educational institutions (Rodríguez-Munoz et al., 2021). Furthermore, the teacher's resilience and well-being are linked with positive outcomes such as improved teaching quality, enhanced self-efficacy, increased commitment, and greater job satisfaction (Sadoughi & Hejazi, 2021). This reinforces the importance of fostering supportive environments and promoting emotional connections within schools. ECTs' well-being plays a crucial role in their resilience journey. Positive well-being influences how they interpret and respond to challenges, and it's also an essential outcome of their resilience development (Zhang et al., 2021). The motivation to maintain and restore well-being acts to protect them from harm that can be long-term, including being depressed, stressed, and burnout (Ainsworth & Oldfield). Furthermore, contextual factors like school culture influence how ECTs experience the emotional support from their colleagues. Different school environments vary in their leadership, collaboration, and social relationships, shaping how they respond to ECT challenges and needs (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

The impacts of the lack of emotional support provided to Early Career Teachers

Suri (2020) highlights the difficulty of measuring ECTs' emotional engagement, suggesting that it is best observed through interactions with colleagues and their expressed levels of fear, anxiety, or enthusiasm. Additionally, observing co-workers, who often hear students' candid opinions about school, can offer further insights into ECTs' emotional engagement (Suri,

2020). Research suggests that ECT emotions play a crucial role in their well-being (Lobo, 2023). Studies indicate that teachers today experience more negative emotions than positive ones (Hassard et al., 2016; Pakarinen et al., 2020). This trend is also observed in China, where recent years have seen a worsening of negative emotions among ECTs (Yang et al., 2019). Negative emotions and limited emotional regulation abilities are consistently identified as key factors contributing to teacher burnout and Early Career Teacher (ECT) attrition (Olana & Terefa, 2022). Research suggests that cultivating positive emotions leads to increased innovation and strategic thinking, while negative emotions decrease motivation (Frenzel et al., 2021). Notably, ECTs' emotions impact both their personal and professional lives, ultimately influencing their effectiveness (Ramano et al., 2021b). Similarly, the sense of belonging plays a crucial role in individual identity formation and maintenance (Yang et al., 2021). Furthermore, it is considered a fundamental human need (Wang 2022).

2.4.4 Technological support

Technological support is discussed under two subheadings, the first being the importance of providing Early Career Teachers with technological support and the second one being 'technostress experiences by the Early Carer Teachers'. Schools face the challenge of assisting ECTs to learn how to successfully integrate technology in their daily lessons (Glutsch, 2020). Supporting the ECTs effectively requires a multi-faceted approach, as highlighted by Giannini (2023). Strong infrastructure, readily available technological assistance, and tailored pedagogical support are all crucial elements in facilitating their ease of use and successful integration of technology into their teaching practices (Giannini, 2023). Additionally, research demonstrates a significant positive connection between social factors and technology adoption intention among educators (Song et al., 2022). This suggests that fostering a culture of mutual help and collaboration amongst the ECTs could serve as a valuable motivator and facilitator in their technology integration journey. In other words, providing ECTs with both structural and social support systems can empower them to leverage technology effectively, ultimately enhancing their pedagogical impact and student learning outcomes (Espino-Diaz, 2020). This section outlines the importance of offering technological support to ECTs, impacts of technostress and how technological support is implemented in schools.

The importance of providing Early Career Teachers with technological support

Galway et al. (2020) highlight that, providing technological training is crucial for building teacher Professional Development Capability (PDC) and ultimately, enhancing their effectiveness in the classroom. Mhlanga (2023) identifies that ECTs participating in a training programme reported increased motivation to integrate technology into their teaching practices. Espino-Diaz et al. (2020) state that this was attributed to the encouragement and opportunities provided by mentors to experiment with various technologies during the training, which subsequently boosted their confidence in using technology effectively in the classroom. While they tend to perceive technology as a tool for lesson preparation, knowledge delivery, or student engagement, their lack of skills and capabilities in employing technology effectively hinders its constructive use (Adipat et al., 2021). This necessitates continuous professional development for teachers to bridge the gap between technological advancements and pedagogical integration (Mahama, 2023). Inadequately designed technologies can further increase misunderstanding and obstruction when teachers lack the ability or willingness to adapt (Alenezi, 2023). Furthermore, support from the school environment is a key contextual factor influencing ECTs' intention to use technology (Suyatno et al., 2023). As Venketsamy and Zijjing (2022) propose, solid infrastructure, technological and pedagogical support are essential for facilitating comfort of use for ECTs. Therefore, school leaders must provide high-quality and sustained technological support. The format and intensity of this support, such as long-term co-design with colleagues (Alneyadi, 2022), may have a mediating effect on ECTs' techno-stress. The programmes of training have to provide added opportunities for practical experience, contextually relevant evaluation, and timely feedback to enhance ECTs' observed knowledge and skills (Alenezi, 2023).

Providing suitable technical support from colleagues proves essential for its development. Notably, while research focuses on improving student learning through technology, Batanero (2021) points out the lack of studies exploring the impact on ECTs themselves. Investing in ICT training, professionalises ECTs and equips them with desired competencies for optimal performance (Sanchez-Cruzado et al., 2021). To address the growing need for digital training, implementing devices specifically designed to develop the required digital competence for ECTs is crucial (Burke & Larmar, 2021). Collaborative and participatory digital resources, such as social networking sites and virtual communities, empower ECTs to connect, share ideas, and collaborate in innovative ways (Khasawneh et al., 2023). These new technologies,

resources, and services expand opportunities for regular classroom teachers to engage in broader educational communities and networks, transcending the limitations of their individual schools (Okoye et al., 2023).

Policies emphasising 21st-century skills highlight the need for an aligned and robust school support systems, including scalable, sustainable ECT professional development opportunities (Adriana et al., 2021) and comprehensive standards for initial and ongoing teacher training. To effectively integrate emerging educational technologies in schools, ECTs require proper training and skills development (Starks & Reich, 2023). DeCoito (2023) identified that poorly trained ECTs often struggle to integrate technology into their teaching in a way that meaningfully promotes student learning. Yurtseven Avci et al. (2020) emphasise the need for ICT training programmes tailored to specific school environments rather than outdated generic models. Additionally, they highlight the importance of effective pedagogies for engaging students using technology in the classroom. Furthermore, Reich (2020) emphasises the role of school leadership in facilitating technology integration. While teachers adapt their practises and acquire new skills, continuous improvement and innovation remain crucial to maximise the effectiveness of ICT use in education.

While integrating ICT into schools offers great potential, it also presents challenges. Implementing effective pedagogical processes supported by technology and interactive tools depends on several factors, one of the most crucial being ECTs attitudes towards digital competence and their perceived opportunities for integrating it within the school structure and culture (Oliveira et al., 2021). Additionally, Karkouti (2021) highlights factors impacting successful professional development for ICT integration, such as ECTs' knowledge of the tools, time for exploration, access to technology, and available support.

Technostress experienced by Early Career Teachers

Technostress refers to a current sickness of adapting triggered by an incapability to deal with evolving technologies in a manner that is healthy (Yalcin et al., 2022) can be a negative consequence of technology integration due to its constant evolution and diverse applications (Bourlakis et al. 2023). Studies suggest that insufficient conservational support, such as technical assistance, organisers, and limited individual capability such as ICT literacy, mental skills, contribute to techno-stress (Fuglseth & Sjørebø, 2014; Salazar-Concha et al., 2021).

Nevertheless, ECTs' capacity to integrate technology effectively remains crucial for educational innovation (Fischer et al., 2021). Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986) highlights that ECTs' beliefs about their ability to manage technology challenges impact their emotional state and approaches towards integrating it (Yesilyurt et al., 2016). Hence, their self-confidence in utilising computers might remain a key inside factor affecting their techno-stress (Dong et al., 2020). While Li and Wang (2021) state that teaching teachers to effectively assimilate technology in lessons reduced teachers' computer-related stress, their study didn't examine the combined effects with other factors.

Teaching teachers to embed technology is considered as an important internal factor influencing ECTs' technostress while exploring potential integrated effects with other factors (Mahama, 2023). The ECTs' self-efficacy principles concerning their capability to use precise technologies are crucial in shaping their attitudes and technology integration practices (Chou & Chou, 2021). Effective professional development plays a crucial role in mediating ECTs' techno-stress. Long-term co-design initiatives with colleagues, as suggested by Penado Abilleira et al. (2021), can be particularly beneficial. Training programmes should prioritise hands-on experiences, context-specific evaluations, and timely feedback to enhance ECTs' perceived knowledge and skills (Louzán & Torrano, 2024). Instead of focusing on detailed procedures for specific problems, equipping the ECTs with general ICT problem-solving skills proves to be more effective (Nisafani et al., 2020). This approach not only builds their literacy concerning ICT, but it also fosters self-confidence in utilising technology, ultimately reducing technostress. Collaborative lesson planning, as stated by Ogakwu et al. (2024) and Arslan et al. (2022), ease the workload and aids learning about technology integration, contributing to improved teacher technology development. It is essential for school leaders to encourage such collaborative teams for technology integration (Chou & Chou, 2021).

Integrating technology in schools can create tension and anxiety for ECTs, impacting their daily lives (Reyes-Rebollo, 2021). The negative effects for ECTs go beyond stress and anxiety. Integrating technology may necessitate changes in teaching methods and pressure to acquire new skills, potentially leading to physical, social, and psychological issues (Solis Garcia et al., 2021). Studies have shown that technostress, defined as "a modern disease of adaptation caused by an inability to cope with new computer technologies in a healthy manner" (Brod, 1984, p. 16), can manifest in various ways. The first among them is negative user's feelings such as anxiety, mental fatigue, scepticism, and feelings of inadequacy (Vergine et al., 2021). The other

is reduced innovation and productivity; directly or indirectly due to dissatisfaction with technology use (Reslan & El Hokayem, 2023). Technostress leads to decreased intention to use technology and the studies suggest a link between technostress and reduced intention to use various technologies (Martínez-Gautier et al., 2021). Negative impacts on job satisfaction and commitment: technostress is associated with lower job satisfaction and commitment (Li & Wang, 2021).

Furthermore, technostress negatively impacts ECTs' feelings towards and purpose to use ICT in instruction (Mushtaque et al., 2022). Research demonstrates a negative association between technostress and individual outcomes, job satisfaction, and technology adoption (Chou & Chou, 2021; I & Wang, 2021). While integrating technology into classrooms has the potential to enhance student teaching (Wahab et al., 2022), it can also create additional workload and stress for teachers, particularly Early Career Teachers (ECTs). Literature highlights the time pressure experienced by ECTs navigating both emerging technologies and innovative pedagogies (Dong et al., 2020). Often, schools mandate technology usage without providing adequate resources or equipment for effective pedagogical implementation. This can lead to conflicts between ECTs, colleagues, and even wider school communities, potentially damaging personal and interpersonal relationships and impacting their well-being (Montenegro-Rueda, 2021).

2.5 Factors that facilitate the efforts of Education Officials of supporting Early Career Teachers

There are various factors that help to facilitate that efforts that are made by the Education Officials to support ECT s in schools. This section will give a detailed review on which factors thus facilitate. Namely, when ECTs are allocated with experienced mentors it boosts their self-efficacy, building positive networks and participative and active ECTs.

2.5.1 Allocating Early Career Teachers with experienced mentors boost their self-efficacy

Morettini et al. (2020) highlight that ECTs benefit from contextualised learning under the guidance of experienced mentors, fostering their competence and capabilities (p. 56). Entering the profession with high self-efficacy predicts increased motivation, perseverance, and ultimately, career-long efficacy and when one is coached by an experienced mentor; it builds

their self-efficacy (Cheng et al., 2022). Furthermore, support from experienced mentors equips ECTs to navigate feelings of isolation and reality shock (Farell, 2024). Similar to its positive impact on coping with challenges, maintaining a positive attitude, and managing burnout in ECTs (Admiraal et al., 2023). These scholars believe self-efficacy can benefit ECTs in analogous ways.

As mentioned that experienced mentors often give the ECTs self-efficacy and it shows that ECTs with high self-efficacy in instructional strategies demonstrate several positive beliefs and behaviours. They tend to have a firm belief in the abilities of all students, dedicating additional lesson time to educational activities, providing additional support to struggling learners, and praising academic achievements, all of which are linked to improved student outcomes (Cracknell, 2020). Studies suggest that ECTs receiving adequate support from experienced mentors often get motivation to teach in the classroom during the first four months of their teaching career (Gudeta, 2022). Assigning mentors with the same subject expertise and fostering strong relationships with these mentors can significantly improve ECTs' experiences, potentially maximising their self-confidence and job-satisfaction (Feng et al., 2019). Furthermore, research indicates that enough support from experienced colleagues provided to ECTs is associated with several positive personal and professional outcomes (Morettini et al., 2020). Such ECTs report lesser emotional exhaustion, burnout, and stress. Additionally, they experience increased engagement of teachers and job satisfaction (Montenegro-Rueda, 2021).

Bandura (1997) and Johnson and Tschannen-Moran (2011) highlight that entering the teaching profession with good relationship with experienced mentors, predicts increased motivation, persistence, and ultimately, career-long efficacy. Similar to its positive impact on coping with challenges, maintaining a positive attitude, and managing burnout observed in ECTs (Gudeta, 2022), is it believed that self-efficacy could have positive effects on ECTs that are similar. Effective mentoring programmes provided by experienced mentors can significantly improve ECT retention by boosting professional development, teacher effectiveness, satisfaction, and commitment, ultimately leading to enhanced classroom instruction and student achievement (Cheng et al., 2022). Research consistently emphasises the crucial role of support from both colleagues and supervisors in influencing teacher well-being, motivation, and ultimately, retention (Cracknell, 2020). Strong perceived support fosters safer and healthier work

environments, motivating teachers to excel and remain committed to their profession (Admiraal et al., 2023).

2.5.2 Building Positive Social networks

While the educational literature increasingly recognises the prominence of social relationships for ECTs' comfort (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017; Fox & Wilson, 2009; Thomas et al., 2019), research suggest that a link between ECTs' social relationship and other outcomes that are positive remains scarce. Despite the "logical connection" identified by Ronfeldt (2021), this area remains underexplored, highlighting a need for further investigation. The concept of belonging is fundamental to the identification of establishment and preservation (Bell et al., 2023). It represents an innate human need, involving a sense of fitting in with others (Kraft et al., 2020). Research suggests that interactions that are positive and genuine relations with peers and educators can enhance ECTs' sense of belonging within the teaching community (Bjorklund, 2019; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Juvonen, 2006). Furthermore, the quality of the relationship between mentors and mentees influences the extent to which new ECTs benefit from mentor support and ultimately develop successful experiences in their first year of teaching (Davids, 2022).

2.5.3 Participative and active Early Career Teachers

Early Career Teachers (ECTs) who get involved meaningfully with induction programmes, both aligning with its goals and contributing their own perspectives, can develop a stronger sense of belonging (Beltman, 2021). This in turn strengthens their developing teacher uniqueness and emotional state of competence (Fokert et al., 2022). Contributing to a shared comprehension of what it means to be a teacher through programme engagement fosters feelings of competence, as their actions align with the program's vision. Understanding the key roles involved in ECT induction programmes is crucial for education officials to maximise their effectiveness and identify factors linked to success during recruitment (Sumer et al., 2020). While many ECTs demonstrate significant improvement in their first few years, addressing teacher attrition should focus on retaining high-quality talent through development investments rather than solely on new recruitment (Farrell, 2012; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2020).

This is because high-quality ECTs tend to be highly cooperative and receptive to induction and mentoring.

2.6 Factors that hinder the efforts of Education officials to support Early Career Teachers

There are many factors that hinder the efforts of Education Officials to provide effective support to the ECTs. In this section I discuss three of them, and these are (a) Inexperienced and undertrained Early Career Teachers; (b) High work pressure for Early Career Teachers with little support; (c) Negative relationships between Early Career Teachers and Education Officials.

2.6.1 Inexperienced and undertrained Early Career Teachers

Research suggests that several factors influence ECTs' motivation to participate in professional learning activities (Hansen, 2021). These factors can be broadly categorised into personal and psychological attributes such as self-efficacy, and perceptions of the workplace environment such as school culture and available resources (Geijsel et al., 2009; UNESCO, 2022). For instance, Bosanquet et al. (2020) state that ECTs with high self-efficacy and a strong belief in their own capabilities, demonstrated greater engagement and enthusiasm in learning activities compared to those with lower self-efficacy.

Teacher beliefs about learning can significantly impact their motivation for professional development (PD). Rao et al. (2021) found that teachers who viewed intelligence as fixed were more likely to give up on new teaching strategies when faced with challenges. Conversely, teachers who perceived intelligence as malleable, displayed greater persistence and a stronger desire to improve their teaching, leading them to be more motivated participants in PD programs. This aligns with the views expressed by Spina et al. (2021) that inexperienced teachers, driven by their higher need for achievement and growth, exhibited greater motivation for PD compared to experienced colleagues. However, external factors also play a role. Herman et al. (2021) highlight that teachers often perceive work pressure as a negative job challenge. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that PD programmes are designed to address these challenges and are not perceived as adding to existing pressure, potentially further demotivating teachers.

2.6.2 High work pressure for Early Career Teachers with little support

Abylay (2024) suggests that high work pressure can negatively impact teacher participation in professional development (PD). Studies indicate that teachers experiencing numerous workplace challenges become more resistant to changing their teaching methods, avoiding mistakes and demonstrating reduced motivation for PD involvement (Greaves, 2021). Several factors can contribute to failed mentoring efforts, including, unsuitable mentor-mentee pairings, dysfunctional dyads, lack of qualified mentors, insufficient mentor training, and individual factors like burnout or professional disrespect (Benson, 2008; Kutsyuruba, 2020). Additionally, Education Officials' involvement in mentoring programmes can be hindered by limitations such as time constraints, resource scarcity, and the absence of a clear implementation plan (Mantai & Marrone, 2023).

2.6.3 Negative relationships between Early Career Teachers and Education Officials

Research by Kutsyuruba and Walker (2020) indicates a strong correlation between negative relationships between mentors and teachers, and the willingness of teachers to collaborate towards organisational goals. This suggests that bad mentor-teacher relations hinder not only individual engagement but also collaboration among teachers themselves. Furthermore, research demonstrates a concern for ECTs who lack adequate support due to strained relationship with their mentors. Studies by Albia and Cheng (2023) suggests that such teachers experience lower Teaching Self-Efficacy (TSE) by the end of their first year, highlighting the crucial role of support in fostering confidence and resilience. Additionally, Putwain and von der Embse (2019) link stressful emotions among the ECT to negative self-evaluations of their teaching abilities, further emphasising the potential harms of inadequate support. The mentors are unable to support ECTs due to their strained relationships and this often leads to ECTs being ineffective and poor productivity. Despite numerous studies demonstrating the benefits of ECT mentorship (Davids, 2022), these programmes can unfortunately fail due to various factors. Common reasons for failure include individual characteristics making teachers or mentors unsuitable for the program, mismatches between mentors and mentees, lack of available mentors, and insufficient mentor training (Hobson, 2016; Johnson & Kardos, 2005). The next section focuses on the challenges that are experienced by Early Career Teachers.

2.7 Challenges experienced by Early Career Teachers

There are numerous challenges that are experienced by Early Career Teachers. These include, Early Career Teachers allocated with overcrowded classrooms; Early Career Teachers allocated with excessive non-teaching responsibilities; Lack of parental involvement; Lack of support received by Early Career Teachers from Education officials; Struggling to build positive relationships with other stakeholders; Early Career Teachers have to work with learners from different backgrounds with different experiences.

2.7.1 Early Career Teachers allocated with Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms pose significant challenges for both teachers and students, negatively impacting the learning environment (Likuru & Mwila 2022). Increased workload and decreased instruction time, supported by research by Marzano et al. (Sumer et al., 2020) which indicates that larger class sizes demand more effort and attention from teachers, leading to higher workloads and a significant decrease in dedicated instruction time. Burton and Bowman (2022) report teachers losing upwards of 15 minutes per class due to managing attendance and discipline in overcrowded classrooms. There are challenges when comes to maintaining discipline and creating a conducive learning environment. Albia and Cheng (2023) state that managing large class sizes often consumes significant time and effort, leaving less capacity for creating a focused and productive learning environment.

As part of the challenges just mentioned is the issue of difficulties in addressing diverse needs. With limited time and attention to dedicate to each student, effectively catering to individual learning styles and addressing the needs of students with varying ages or abilities becomes particularly challenging in overcrowded classrooms (Brami et al., 2023). Assigning low-achieving and overcrowded classes to ECTs, research by Saleem (2020) suggests that ECTs are frequently placed in demanding situations with struggling students and large class sizes, which can be overwhelming for novice educators. Saleem (2020) further argues that these challenging conditions negatively impact the overall quality of education, as ECTs under significant pressure struggle to perform effectively.

2.7.2 Early Career Teachers allocated with excessive non-teaching responsibilities

There is evidence to suggest that there is high workload undertaken by American ECTs compared to their international counterparts (Muhammad, 2020). Studies based on data from 100,000 American teachers reveal a significantly higher workload compared to their counterparts in other countries (Muhammad, 2020). They average 27 hours per week dedicated to classroom instruction, with reported workweeks extending to 45 hours (Spina et al., 2022). This excessive workload is linked to decreased performance in the classroom. This challenge is not limited to developed economies such as that of the United States. ECTs across different contexts face significant challenges due to excessive non-teaching responsibilities, potentially impacting their instructional effectiveness and well-being. Research by Masood (2020) highlights that non-teaching responsibilities drain teachers' energy in Tanzania, leaving them with minimal time for lesson planning and potentially compromising the quality of their instruction. Some teachers even neglect their core classroom duties to fulfil administrative tasks (Burke & Byrne, 2020). Similarly, Stratford et al. (2023) report that Indian public-school teachers experience significant stress due to the high workload stemming from diverse administrative demands imposed by the school administration. The burden of non-teaching responsibilities placed on teachers, particularly in developing contexts, poses a significant challenge to their effectiveness and well-being. Therefore, it is clear that the issue of overcrowded classrooms is not a South African phenomenon only.

2.7.3 Lack of parental involvement

Another challenge relates to the important issue of parental involvement. ECTs often struggle to communicate effectively with parents about their children's performance, thus, creating a barrier to collaboration (Saleem et al., 2019). Dealing with parents who are uninvolved or unresponsive presents another challenge for ECTs (Saleem et al., 2020). The transition into teaching is often fraught with challenges, and ECTs in developing countries face unique hardships that extend beyond the demands of lesson planning and instruction. Research by Masood (2020) highlights one such challenge; namely, the difficulty communicating effectively with parents regarding student performance, conflicts, and behavioural concerns. This struggle can be further compounded by the absence of experienced mentor teachers who could guide them in developing effective communication strategies. Beyond communication

challenges, studies by Saleem (2020) point to systemic issues related to administrative support. ECTs often lack sufficient support in managing overcrowded classrooms, dealing with high workloads, and juggling non-teaching duties. These factors can make a stressful and overwhelming environment, making it difficult for ECTs to fully focus on their core teaching responsibilities and potentially hindering their effectiveness in the classroom.

2.7.4 Lack of support received by Early Career Teachers from Education officials

Some ECTs are left to operate schools by themselves because principals are unavailable. This subsequently requires the ECT to fill in the managerial forms to helping with cleaning the school and academic related issues (Ingleby, 2021). Likewise, ECTs in Pakistan also reported that they have to deal with a lot of paperwork, administrative burdens, and delivering the curriculum across the schools and all these overwhelming responsibilities make the ECTs work harder and more complicated. They believe that their performance would improve if they had less workload (Burton & Bowman, 2022). ECTs in multiple studies conveyed a variety of support from changing administrators, but some “found their school leaders to be uninterested or too busy” (Wang et al., 2020, p.10). “Without significant training in teaching high-needs students, teachers struggle to contribute to consistent and equitable school discipline policies and practices”. One participant revealed, “Every teacher I’ve ever met is highly stressed, overworked, and struggling to get through the year” (Dell’Angelo & Richardson, 2019, p.178). With challenging events taking place, working under difficult conditions, and irrational demands are normally, challenges that ECTs face in their first years of their teaching profession (Greaves, 2021).

2.7.5 Struggling to build positive relationships with other stakeholders

There are various contextual obstacles that often comprise social ones, like struggling to build relations with learner, parents and even co-workers (Beltman et al., 2019). At an expanded contextual level, policy reforms (Cheng et al., 2023), departmental requirements such as assessing and reporting or the expectations from the society are challenges that ECTs often suffer from in schools. Dealing with learners who are under substance abuse often creates challenges for ECTs, and these often use these substances in the school premises and create problems for ECTs and other learners (Sheridan et al., 2022).

2.7.6 Early Career Teachers have to work with learners from different backgrounds with different experiences

Families greatly influence the behaviour of learners, learners who come from unruly homes and homes that lack rules tend to be very unruly and aggressive (Malley-Morrison & Dutton, 2020), because they are not used to being disciplined or told what to do. Some ECTs are unfortunate and are hired at schools where physical violence is a serious problem because the schools are located in violent and crime-ridden neighbourhood (Hines, 2020). Learners end up being violent towards the ECTs and other learners because they are often exposed to violence. This creates problems for ECT as they are not trained on how to handle such encounters. Nhambura (2019) asserts that in schools there are also gangsters who intimidate ECTs and learners, gangs are very violent and often perpetrate gangster associated strategies which raises concern with regards to the safety of ECTs.

According to Admiraal (2023), learners who come from high-poverty communities, look up to gangsters rather than focusing on their education which makes it difficult for ECT to achieve their level potential of helping these kind of learners to achieve in schools. In relation to the afore-mentioned, Mguzulwa and Gxubane (2019) conferred that in South Africa, youth gang violence (YGV) is increasing. The safety and security of the ECTs and learners is really a concern as a result of the mentioned issue. On September 18, 2018, the South African Constitutional Court decriminalised the individual usage of dagga. Consequently, marijuana has become the most abused drug by learners and this leads to learners disrupting lessons which greatly affects the performance and job satisfaction of the ECTs (Van Zyl, 2019).

Nyaope is another drug that is commonly used. This drug is a harmful mixture of different types of pills, substances, and also rat poison that is widely utilised by school learner who are in their adolescence years in schools (Sedibe & Hendricks, 2020). Nyaope is a very dangerous drug and ECTs have to deal with learners who may be addicted to such drugs. World Health Organisation (WHO) (2020) infers that drinking alcohol harms a person's functional and cognitive levels. WHO (2020) further divulges that there are learners who drink alcohol and they perform poorly academically which affects the productivity of the ECTs. Mayshak et al. (2020) state that that most students tend to become very aggressive when they are high and they end to become very intimidating and antagonistic towards ECT and peers and this is shown through these learners swearing, shouting and physically fighting. Learners often use drugs and

alcohol to gain confidence to perpetrate the pre-mediated actions which are mentioned above, because they are very disrespectful and are very irascible towards their teachers and peers. Alcohol has been connected to attacks experienced by ECTs (Hagelstam & Häkkänen, 2006; Mayshak et al., 2020).

ECTs are further expected to work with learners that have different past, experiences and behaviour. Other learners have traumatic past which affects their behaviour in most cases. Ferrara et al. (2019) observed that most learners experience problems and have trouble when it comes to building relationships with ECTs and to trust ECTs; they are resentful to hugs, being held and even being comforted. This makes it very difficult for the ECTs to be emotionally available for these kinds of learners and they need support on how to deal with such learners. Javed and Ali (2021) revealed that there are learners in schools suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder due to their traumatic experiences and this make the ECTs jobs more difficult as they are not trained on how to deal with such predicaments. Literature further corroborates that in America most ECTs work with many learners who suffer from mental and emotional problems such as anxiety and depression because of different reasons (Admiraal, 2023). This is truly overwhelming for the ECT. ECTs are also suffering under these predicaments as these learners often skip school or drop out altogether and poor academic engagement ultimately affects the ECTs emotional well-being and their outcomes (UNESCO, 2017).

As some learners are victims of violence and many other traumas; this causes them to be very submissive, develop extreme paranoia, and they are always cautious which causes them not to concentrate in the classroom and makes it hard for the ECTs to reach them fully when they delivering a lesson (Ferrara et al., 2019). Akiko and Balie (2020) state that these kinds of learners are reluctant when it comes to engaging during the lesson and often like the ECT does not love them and that they are isolated. This makes the jobs of the ECTs to be very difficult as they need to learn how to treat such learners in a cautious way that does not trigger their traumatic episodes. The prime influence of violence on educators in the teaching space is disturbance of instruction in many nations (Akiko & Balie, 2020).

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the experiences of ECTs in developing countries paint a picture of a profession fraught with challenges that extend beyond the classroom walls. Effective communication with parents and adequate administrative support emerge as two crucial areas where interventions and improvements are necessary to foster a conducive environment for these emerging educators to thrive and succeed. By addressing these challenges, we can empower ECTs to focus on their true calling: nurturing young minds and shaping the future through quality education. This chapter has discussed local and international literature on the experiences of the ECTs in schools. The literature reviews different forms of support that is provided to ECTs by Education officials in schools. The factors that hinder and influence the determinations of the Education Official in providing the ECTs with support in schools were also reviewed. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework that was employed in the study, and this framework comprises two theories - Alig-Mielcarek and Hoys' (2005) Instructional Leadership Theory and Malcom Knowles (1980) Adult Learning Theory.

CHAPTER THREE

POSITIONING THE STUDY WITHIN A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter reviewed the available literature that related to the support provided to the Early Career Teachers (ECT) by the Education Officials. It outlined the negative experiences and challenges that are faced by the ECTs in schools. It further unpacked the various forms of support that is provided to the ECTs in schools and moreover; it presented the factors that facilitate and those that hinder the efforts of Education Officials when it comes to supporting ECTs. Therefore, Chapter Three serves to explain the theoretical framework[s] that were utilised in this study. The purpose of this chapter is to review the relevant theoretical frameworks that are be applied in this study.

This chapter will synthesise the origin of the theories that are part of the study, and it will further elucidate the theories as a whole. Moreover, this chapter unveils the assumptions of other scholar with regards to the affected theories. On the note of importance, the chapter clarifies all the tenets/principles of the theories. Subsequently, explaining how the theories are pertinent to this study and lastly, explaining how the two theories relate to one another. This study employs two theories, namely; Instructional Leadership Theory (ILT) and Adult Learning Theory (ALT). The first part of the chapter focuses on reviewing the first theory which is ILT, then the second part focuses on reviewing the second theory which is ALT.

3.2 Theoretical Framework and its benefit

Varpio et al. (2020) stress the multiple benefits of outlining a study with a theory. Among the multiple benefits, these scholars highlight the ability of a theory to give the researcher a vivid path and to transform from perception to a solid foundation of comprehension and conceptualising a problem within the context of the study (Swanson, 2013). Theory is perceived as a generalised statement of philosophies that elucidate, highlights or anticipate the association between the problem of the study within the limits of acute assumptions (Kivunja, 2018). This scholar further explains that a theory covers the themes, ideas and concepts that institute a profound and comprehensive base of knowledge in the discipline (Kivunja, 2018).

It is then employed by academics to structure their studies. I will further discuss the importance of the framework in a study. A framework is perceived as a structure that guides the researcher on how to modify the questions, how to select the pertinent data generation methods and how to plan data analysis (Imenda, 2014). The theoretical framework is utilised in order to embrace or back up a theory in a study, as it is a combination of points of view of the experts in a specific research field (Swanson, 2013). Correspondingly, Varpio et al. (2020) propose that a theoretical framework is established from one or more theories used to frame the study.

In contrast to the theoretical framework which is taken from prevailing theory that are instituted through the experts in a certain field, a conceptual framework consists of the scholar's own point of view and thoughts on identifying the literature that will be examined, along with the study's suggestions and conclusions, method to be used, techniques of data generations to be used, data analysis, and interpretations of findings (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). Therefore, a conceptual framework encompasses all the thoughts and the concepts that the researcher considers envisioning, planning, and gathering information for their research project (Yao, 2024). Consequently, it is the outcome of the researcher's personal reflections on the study, distinct from the theoretical framework since it includes various theoretical perspectives of others that the researcher considers pertinent to his/her research (Kivunja, 2018). A conceptual framework is synthetisation of interconnected components and variables which support in resolving real-life problems (DeMarco, 2020), while the theoretical framework entails the concepts that are utilised to research and assess data (Kivunja, 2018). A clear distinguishing factor between the theoretical and conceptual framework is clearly represented as a set of ideas and definitions about the comprehension of the phenomenon, while the conceptual framework surfaces from research question, giving a contextualised structure for what exactly the research will explore (Kivunja, 2018). To this end, the conceptual framework is essential when the researcher is exploring either a new or an underdeveloped area of qualitative research (Hughes et al., 2019).

A theoretical framework was adopted for this qualitative study. I chose to adopt a theoretical framework because it helped me navigate through my study. It would help me to rigorously contemplate and plan the outline of the study, and of the utmost importance is that the data takes a deeper meaning when viewed through this essential perspective, revealing its underlying importance. The data can be expanded to divulge association that constitute

meaning in addressing the research problem and answering the research questions (Kivunja, 2018). It would then heighten my comprehension concerning the data analysis, the research findings and the recommendations concerning the phenomenon which is exploring the nature of support that is provided to ECTs by the Education Officials.

The theoretical framework would also aid in making sense out of the data findings. As proposed by Yamauchi et al. (2017), a theoretical framework helps researchers to define, analyse, and interpret the findings. On the note of importance, a theoretical framework is more influential when it incorporates theories that include various aspects of the problem of the study (Maxwell, 2005). Therefore, I did not utilise the conceptual framework, but opted for the two theories that would assist in framing my analysis of the generated qualitative data. A theoretical framework functions as the foundation of the study because it provides researchers with the structure in displaying how they define the study philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically (Grant & Onsaloo, 2014). In the context of this study, the theoretical framework helped me to find the appropriate research approach which is qualitative, data analytical tools which is thematic analysis and procedures for my research inquiry (Lester, 2005). The theories that were integrated in the study are, The Instructional Leadership Theory and the Adult Learning Theory. Each of these theories are discussed below in this manner: a) brief discussion of the origin of a theory, b). assumptions by other scholars about the theory and lastly the principles of the theory.

3.3 Instructional Leadership Theory

This section provides a detailed discussion of the Instructional leadership theory (ILT) and outlines the origin, the assumptions by other scholars concerning the theory, the principles of the theory and pertinence of the ILT to this specific study is. This study adopted the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy's Instructional Leadership (2005) model because the dimensions of this model are pertinent to this study. The dimensions are: a) Defining and communication goals, b) Monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning and c) Promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development. These dimensions are pertinent to this study as they connect and relate to the role of school leaders that are regarded as Education Officials in this study.

i. The origin of the Instructional Leadership Theory

In the 1970s, studies were undertaken to research about the factors that contributed to the good performance of schools in the United States of America (USA) (Weber, 1971; State of New York— Office of Education Performance Review, 1974; Madden e al.; 1976 and Brookover, 1977). Explaining these studies, Edmonds (1979) suggests six factors of successful schools; effective managerial leadership, believing in every learner, encouraging and friendly learning and teaching environment, prioritising the academic excellence, availability of teaching aids and resources to support teaching and learning and monitoring the academic progress of learners on regular basis. These suggestions demonstrate why it is important for a school to balance effective management and instructional leadership of school managers and what we also call school leaders. However, there was no clear synthesising of instructional leadership at the time.

In the 1980s, that is where many different scholars competed in conceptualising and synthesising the ILT in a scholarly manner such as scholarly works of (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Bossert et al., 1982; Glickman, 1985; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Ng (2019) postulates that in the early conceptualisation of the theory, the most widely theory elucidation that was used was of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model. This model focused on proposing three scopes for the IL theory: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive school learning climate. The influence of the instructional leadership pictures throughout the 1980s was established in the activities of the United States Federal government (Hallinger, 2010). Hallinger (2010) further adds that Instructional Leadership was contested as an effective strategy to assist with school management and leadership. Policymakers strongly believed that this IL will help many schools succeed (Barth, 1986, 1990; Cuban, 1984, 1988; March, 1978; Weick, 1976).

ii. The assumptions by various scholars concerning Instructional Leadership Theory

Alig-Mielcarek (2003) found three diverse likenesses that arose from a study of the three models discussed (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, 1990; Weber, 1996). They specified the significance of ILs which are: a. defining and communicating goals, b. monitoring providing feedback on the teaching and learning process and c) promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development (Munna, 2020). Alig-Mielcarek (2003)

empirically verified the three mutual tenets that construct his framework of IL. It was discovered that the tenets have an influence that is unintendedly, imposed on student achievement (Munna, 2020). Relatively, the connection concerning leadership of school and learner learning as Hallinger and Heck (1997) suggested, “is inextricably tied to the actions of others in the school” (p. 24) such as hardworking educators, and conducive learning climate, attentive learners who demonstrate respect for the accomplishment of other people and great attainable objectives set for pupils. Socio-economic status of the learners was entailed into the model by Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy (2005), additionally evolving the authentic IL model by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Murphy (1990) and Weber (1996). This study will thereof utilise the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy’s Instructional Leadership (2005), which encompasses three dimensions namely:

- a) Defining and communicating goals
- b) Monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning
- c) Promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development.

A lot of additional models of instructional leadership were also suggested (Ng, 2019). Ng (2019) corroborates the view that even though these dimensions of IL are competing with each other somehow, they share common factors at some point. As other scholars believed that principals are suitable leaders for IL because of the characteristics and power that they possess, vision and direction for the school were believed to be offered by the principals’ instructional leadership practices. Hence, leaders (principals) were considered to be suitable candidates to exercise instructional leadership and manage schools with the objective to accomplish the aims consequent from the vision of the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1991; Glasman, 1984; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Heck et al., 1990; Leithwood et al., 1990; Leitner, 1994; O’Day, 1983).

Instructional leaders were goal-orientated. They led by giving clear direction in schools and encouraging others to put effort towards the learner achievement. For underperforming schools ILT focused more on making sure that the school was effective in a sense of serving and supporting underachieving learners and the direction focused on improving the learner academic outcomes (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Glasman, 1984; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Hallinger et al., 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Heck et al., 1990; Leithwood et al., 1990; Leitner, 1994; Mortimore, 1993; O’Day, 1983). Importantly, Instructional leaders were able

to link the academic mission of a school with strategy and put it to action. As a result, instructional leaders did not only focus on leadership but they also focused on management of the school. The managerial duties included curriculum, instruction, supervising, controlling and coordinating at the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Cohen & Miller, 1980; Dwyer, 1986; Glasman, 1984; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Hallinger et al., 1996; Heck, 1992, 1993; Heck et al., 1990; Leitner, 1994).

Hallinger and Murphy (2013) describe instructional leadership as the capacity of managers to participate in three phases of a school structure: the mission of the school, the teaching programme, and a learning environment that is positive, all resulting to amplified academic success. The capability to be an instructional leader at the foundation level, encompasses a reasonable amount of risk-taking and eventually, inspection by pupils, parents, teachers, colleagues, and district office leadership (Huggins et al., 2017). Huggins et al. (2017) established that principals essentially want to lead their institutions and take on the risk, but they are also tasked with a massive amount of duty, which can repeatedly hinder their aspiration and vision to bring out their role as an instructional leader. Hopkins et al. (1997) demonstrate the systematic review of instructional leadership, which supports the important role of its application to improve organisational capability through the evaluation of the impact of learners' success and learnings. Southworth (2002) discovers confirmation of a resilient linkage between learners' accomplishments and professional development of teachers. Dimmock (2016) contends that instructional leadership is measured through the league table results which watched over by the government policy priorities through the head of the institution such as the principal. Studies by Day et al. (2011) highlight a positive correlation between instructional leadership practices and student achievement. This aligns with Leithwood et al. (2006) who found that effective instructional leadership creates supportive school environments for Early Career Teachers (ECTs).

While past research suggests a lack of in-depth exploration of instructional leadership, supporting ECTs in schools (Ersozlu & Saklan, 2016; Wang & Berger, 2010), recent scholarship reflects a growing interest in this area (Hofmeyer et al., 2015; Kezar et al., 2006; Potter & Devecchi, 2020). This shift highlights the potential of instructional leadership to support Early Career Teachers (ECTs) within school settings. Institutions traditionally foster a collaborative environment, leading to some questioning the legitimacy and application of top-down leadership styles (Clegg & McAuley, 2005; Goffee & Jones, 2009). Leadership in this

context is often seen as "first among equals" – leaders hold more responsibility but share similar standing with faculty (Altbach, 2011; Dopson et al., 2019). This dynamic can pose challenges for implementing instructional leadership practices that effectively support ECTs. Aas and Brandmo (2016) describe a traditional view of Instructional Leadership where leaders control implementation of improvements through a hierarchical structure, informing faculty of their tasks. While Garnett (2012) highlights the long-standing interest in school leadership's link to school improvement, this top-down approach can present limitations in supporting ECTs.

Alimo-Metcalfe et al. (2001) identify desired leadership qualities from a follower perspective, and these are, a genuine concern for others, strong communication skills, and the ability to empower others. Berthoin et al. (2001) suggest that successful leaders should be adept at instructional leadership, balancing personal and variables. Similarly, Yuki (2002) emphasises the importance of variables in determining a leader's success. Building on Yuki's (2002) notion that leadership effectiveness hinges on situational awareness, research suggests that instructional leadership practices constitute a significant impact on student learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2011; OECD, 2005). This highlights the importance of equipping ECTs with the skills to assess their teaching environment and adapt their instructional approach accordingly. While research highlights the significance of leadership influence of instructional leadership, focusing on improving teaching and learning (Yuki, 2002), other perspectives add nuances. For instance, Dimmock and Walker (2000) emphasise the impact of educational policy and practice on instructional leadership, considering for example, how globalisation has influenced educational leadership and management. Similarly, Hallinger and Heck (1997) acknowledge instructional leadership's importance, particularly, in English-speaking countries. It is essential to consider these diverse viewpoints when exploring how instructional leaders can best support Early Career Teachers (ECTs).

While acknowledging the technical aspects of instructional leadership, various perspectives exist as well. In that regard, Leithwood et al. (1999) propose that instructional leadership typically, focuses on observing and influencing teacher behaviour to benefit student learning. Equally, Elmore (2000) emphasises improving teaching as a core objective of instructional leaders. Sammons et al. (2011) highlight the contribution of instructional leadership to effective management, including fostering high-quality professional development, which may require an instructional leadership approach. These diverse viewpoints suggest the need for a nuanced understanding of instructional leadership practices that effectively support ECTs. Hallinger

(2009) identifies the rise of instructional leadership as a world-wide phenomenon and a different form of "leadership for learning" (LfL), thus, encouraging its further development (Barth, 1990; Day et al., 2001). Instructional leadership framework, as defined by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), can potentially, promote this development. This framework outlines leadership activities that foster effective interactions between school leaders (such as principals) and teachers, aiming to progress teaching quality and ultimately, student learning. This emphasis on teacher development and instructional improvement aligns with supporting ECTs in their professional growth (Song et al., 2020).

Instructional leadership framework encompasses various educational aspects, including knowledge base, curriculum, professional development, and institutional vision (Southworth, 2002). These frameworks aim to create inclusive learning environments that foster both student learning and teacher development (Southworth, 2002). Southworth's (2002) three-point strategy emphasises learning-centred leadership, modelling and monitoring, and mentoring, all of which are particularly beneficial for supporting ECTs. Within this instructional perspective, "learning" encompasses both student academic progress and teacher professional growth (Southworth, 2002). Educational leaders play a critical role in fostering this holistic approach to learning, contributing to the overall improvement of both student outcomes and the teaching profession (Locke et al., 1990). Being an instructional leader at the school level necessitates a significant degree of risk-taking (Huggins et al., 2017). However, these leaders face constant scrutiny from various stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, colleagues, and district administrators. Huggins et al. (2017) suggest that while principals may be motivated to take on this leadership role, the immense pressure and accountability can hinder their ability to implement their vision for instructional improvement.

While instructional leadership is often associated with the school principal, research suggests expanding this role to include other leaders within the school system (Wolfe et al., 2023). Wolfe (2023) emphasises the importance of a clear and unified vision for instructional leadership, along with a well-defined process of decision-making that extends from the district office to building leaders and teachers. To ensure system consistency, collaborative process of decision-making cannot be confined solely within individual divisions, but must align with the broader district plan. Wolfe et al. (2023) finds that unclear communication and processes lead to inconsistent implementation across schools and between leaders, which ultimately affects efficiency and contributes to misperception regarding roles and responsibilities.

The pursuit of school improvement is a long-standing endeavour, with principals traditionally playing a key role as instructional leaders, motivating teachers, students, and the wider school community towards positive change (Sally, 2003). However, the evolving nature of this leadership role demands more than just charismatic personality (Alenezi, 2023). Fullan (2002) emphasises the need for instructional leaders to go beyond charisma, while Hallinger et al. (1996) highlight the crucial ability of effective principals to balance the implementation of educational programmes with fostering strong relations with their co-workers. The principal, according to Bernauer (2002), "must exhibit persistence rather than opting for the quick fix" (p. 89), in supporting ECTs at schools. The importance of instructional leadership in fostering teacher development has been extensively discussed and debated by researchers (Blasé & Blasé, 2002). They propose a two-pronged approach to instructional leadership. The first one is teaching leadership focus. Instructional leaders act as teaching leaders, facilitating communication with teachers to encourage self-reflection and professional growth in skills and expertise (Blasé & Blasé, 2002). The second focus is effective communication. Effective instructional leadership hinges on the leader's ability to communicate clearly and consistently with teachers. This involves employing various methods such as providing guidance, offering suggestions and feedback, demonstrating best practices, sharing valuable insights, and acknowledging teachers' achievements and excellence (Sultan et al., 2022).

While traditional functions of instructional leadership remain crucial, such as setting school goals, allocating educational resources, managing the curriculum, and evaluating teaching and learning (Sultan et al., 2022), the role is evolving to encompass additional responsibilities. These include, the integration of technology. In this regard, instructional leaders are increasingly expected to champion effective application of technology in teaching (Sultan et al., 2022). The other relates to enhancing teacher professionalism. Fostering and stimulating professional development of teachers is another key aspect of contemporary instructional leadership (Sultan et al., 2022). The other dimension is that of data-driven decision-making. The ability to analyse and leverage data to inform instructional decisions is a critical skill for effective instructional leaders (Sultan et al., 2022). Research by Hallinger (2003) supports this expanded view, highlighting the critical role of effective school leadership, including instructional leadership practices, in fostering high-quality student outcomes.

The significance of instructional leadership in determining school effectiveness is widely recognised (Zakaria, 2016). Zakaria (2016) emphasises its crucial role by calling it the "main pulse" of a successful school. Sufean (2014) further clarifies the concept by defining instructional leadership as a focus on academic management, with the primary function being the improvement of teaching and learning processes within classrooms. While maintaining overall school excellence remains a key responsibility, instructional leadership prioritises ensuring a strong academic foundation. School leaders who underperform in their instructional leadership duties and roles are deemed ineffective (Mohd et al., 2013). Mohd (2004) stresses the broad scope of a head teacher's role, encompassing leadership, administration, management, and even teaching at least five hours per week. Instructional leaders could be determined to lead effectively but they can sometimes be affected by time constraints that are dedicated to the managerial tasks and absence of knowledge in instructional leadership often hinder an instructional leader from being effective (Hallinger, 2005). Offering strong instructional leadership is usually understood to be a pivotal role for leaders of the school; however, that has changed in recent years (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Sharif, 2020). The Education Officials practising instructional leadership have a duty to be capable of inspiring, motivating and encouraging learners to attain beyond their plans, to ensure that all educators know that they are valued equally in a school context (Sumiati & Niemetd, 2020).

Instructional leadership takes places differently in different schools depending on the situation, such as in a small school an instructional leader will be very active, but in a bigger school they normally invest in developing and enhancing the leadership capacity of their co-workers (Nixon, 2015). The scholar further explains that instructional leadership can take place outside the school premises because she believes that anybody who has an influence on learning outcomes is an instructional leader. There is no single term to define or explain instructional leadership as it takes place in different situations and settings (Wolverton et al., 2005). Literature suggests that how learners learn is mostly impacted by the classroom practices and the leadership approach (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). These suggestions show that influence is a very crucial characteristic of instructional leadership. This type of leadership is a form of educational leadership that focuses on improving teaching and learning (Barth, 1990). It involves providing guidance and support to teachers to help them improve their practice (Aas & Brandmo, 2016).

Instructional leaders use their authority to create a supportive environment for teachers to develop and grow (Garnett, 2012). They also work to establish clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning (Aasen & Stensaker, 2007). School leadership has been a topic of much research and discussion (Dalakoura, 2010; Day, 2000; Middlehurst, 1993). There is a growing consensus that leadership plays a critical role in school improvement (Edmonds, 1979; Fuller, 2007; Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Leadership is a complex phenomenon, and there is no single definition that is universally accepted (Bossert et al., 1983; Dwyer, 1986; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). However, all definitions of leadership share the common theme of influencing others to achieve a common goal (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990). Research has shown that instructional leadership is one of the most important factors in school effectiveness (Azni, 2015; Bibi, 2012; Hazura, 2009). When principals take on an instructional leadership role, it can have a positive impact on student achievement (Rohilah, 2010; Sazali et al., 2007). Instructional leadership is also important for managing change in schools (Carrier, 2011; Shafinaz, 2017; Yusri, 2012). When principals are effective instructional leaders, they can help to ensure that change initiatives are implemented effectively (Nor Azni, 2015; Sheppard, 1996).

Instructional leadership is positively related to the quality of teacher teaching (Ahmad, 2014; Mohd & Aziz, 2014; Mohd, 2012; Zahara & Suria, 2011). When principals provide support and guidance to the ECTs, it can help ECTs to improve their practices and become more effective educators in schools (Bahaman, 2010; Roshilah, 2010). Instructional leadership is also associated with the implementation of changes in education (Fullan, 2007; Izani, 2012; Jamelaa, 2012; Tai, 2013). When principals take on an instructional leadership role, they can help to create a school culture that is supportive of change (Rahimi, 2014). When teachers believe that instructional leadership is an appropriate practice for implementing changes, they are more likely to support and embrace those changes (Hallinger, 2003). This is because instructional leadership can help to build trust and rapport between teachers and administrators, which can make it easier for change to be implemented in schools (Hallinger & Murphy, 2012). When instructional leaders have a positive attitude towards change, teachers are more likely to be motivated and engaged in the change process (Southworth, 2002). Leaders and teachers should be prepared for changes by developing a shared understanding of the change and by identifying the resources and support that will be needed to implement the change successfully (Leithwood & Day, 2008; Sahin, 2011). This will help to ensure that the change is implemented smoothly and that it has a positive impact on the school.

Instructional leadership always plays a diverse role in schools because the duty of instructional leaders to influence effective instruction and learning progressions (Munna, 2019). Therefore, Instructional Leadership Theory focuses on policies and practices that are implemented to help support and improve teaching and learning. As Munna (2019, p. 42) states, "It indicated the importance of Instructional Leaders defining and communicating goals, monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process and promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development". The vision and goal should be driven by focusing on learner's academic achievements and enhancing teacher's productivity. Instructional leadership practices promote educational management process of monitoring, leading, controlling and organising in the school context (Munna, 2020). As supported by Day and Sammons (2013), instructional leadership entails Education Officials supporting, leading, directing and having a shared vision with the teachers. The schools use principals, deputy principals, departmental heads and master teachers to help enhance and promote a positive learning environment by providing efficient support to ECTs (Bellibas et al., 2020).

3.3.1 Dimensions of the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy Instructional Leadership (2005) model

Instructional leadership is properly practised by school leaders to achieve school excellence through educational change and innovation (Wahab et al., 2020). As previously mentioned, this study adopted the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy Instructional Leadership (2005) model. The following is the discussion of the models dimensions. The theory is relevant to this study because the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy Instructional Leadership (2005) model focuses on three common dimensions, which focus on improving learning and it matches the role and responsibilities of school leaders as explained by Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy (2005).

i. Defining and communicating goals

McGuire (2001) indicates that leaders have essential knowledge and skills for effective instructional leadership. According to McGuire (2001), effective leaders possess a clear understanding of the essence and demands of leadership. This entails not only identifying crucial goals but also inspiring and empowering others to dedicate themselves and the necessary resources towards achieving those goals. It encompasses the ability to encourage continuous learning and adaptation within oneself and others to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the desired outcome. Instructional leaders who are Education

Officials in this study encourage the ECTs to engage in lifelong learning which takes place through researching and taking part in professional development programmes. Visionary leaders, articulate and champion a clear vision (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger et al., 1983). They paint a compelling picture of the ideal future state for the schools and actively promote it to all stakeholders. In the context of this model, the Education Officials would share their visions with the ECTs and work together with them to promote the vision throughout the school.

Bridge the past and the future: in terms of this model, instructional leaders build upon existing strengths while guiding the school towards the envisioned future, ensuring continuity and progress. The Education Officials focus on the failures that may have occurred in the past with regards to supporting the ECTs and they would try new ways to effectively support them to bridge the gap. *Effective communicators:* In terms of this aspect of the model, instructional leaders can be equated with masterful storytellers. They can leverage strong writing and presentation skills to clearly express their ideas and inspire confidence (Steward, 2006). The theory assists in understanding and explaining how the Education Officials can communicate directly and give out clear communication of what they expect from the ECTs, and their communication and how they present themselves can also work as a source of inspiration to the ECTs.

Composed and transparent:

In terms of this aspect of instructional leadership, leaders can confidently address even the challenging questions in public forums, fostering open and honest communication. Beyond their visionary and communication skills, effective leaders are also dedicated collaborators and partners. They actively seek deeper understanding through direct and precise questioning, fostering a spirit of continuous learning and growth. They embrace collaboration and cooperation, working harmoniously with others to achieve shared goals (Guskey, 2010). The theory challenges the Education Officials to share information with the ECTs without withholding any information that may be of help to them, such as how to help improve the performance of the ECTs and how to support the ECTs in various ways. The theory encourages Education Officials to practise team work and direct and practise accurate questioning when they need certain information from ECTs that will help improve their support to the ECTs.

ii. Monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning

1. Classroom observations:

- The Instructional leaders are expected to observe the ECTs in the classroom through classroom walkthroughs: Observe how the ECTs and learners interact and instructional practices allows leaders to gain first-hand understandings and identify areas where the teacher needs improvement (Leithwood et al., 2009). The Education Officials have to support the ECTs by perceiving their mistakes in class and helping them to improve by attending those weakness for an improved performance in their teaching strategies.

2. Data analysis:

- Observing the written assessments and even oral assessments of the learners to analyse their performance. They also need to monitor the summative assessments of learners such as classroom activities, and other learner assessments that help identify learner weaknesses and inform the responsible teacher on instructional decisions (Fullan, 2008). The Education Officials need to moderate the learner's assessment tasks to be able to provide feedback to ECTs about the progress of learners, this also enables the Education Officials to identify areas where the ECTs demonstrate weakness in order to assist ECTs where they seem to need assistance.

3. Professional conversations:

- Pre-observation should take place before the education officials go to classrooms for observations; the Education Officials have to meet with the teachers and converse about lesson plans, teaching goals, and any specific areas of focus with ECTs (Glickman et al., 2014). In this case, the Education Officials need to frequently assist the ECTs with writing lesson plans, preparing for lessons and hold discussion on how the ECTs can incorporate lesson plans in their actual lessons every-day.

4. Peer collaboration:

- Facilitating peer coaching and observations: Allowing teachers to engage on reciprocal classroom observations and providing constructive feedback fosters professional growth and knowledge sharing (Guskey, 2010). The Education Officials need to organise peer trainings for ECTs whereby they will be coached by teachers at their level

such PL1 educators as this builds the confidence of ECTs and their knowledge as mentioned by the above scholar.

- Establishing professional learning communities (PLCs): The PLC allows the teachers to co-operate and work together on different pedagogical matter such as sharing teaching techniques, curriculum development, instructional strategies, and resources that nurture collective learning and improvement (DuFour, 2004). The Education Officials have to create PLC as a way to support the ECTs, because it will support ECTs to be able to gain insights on different teaching strategies they can use. They will get to access resources they run short from other PLCs and learn more about curriculum development. They need to create PLC according to specific subject streams.

5. Surveys and questionnaires:

- Education Officials need to administer surveys anonymously to pupils and parents. When they get the feedback from different stakeholders they can offer valuable insights into the learning environment and areas for improvement (Leithwood et al., 2009). The Education Officials need to teach the ECTs how to administer surveys and how to utilise survey feedback to help them know where they need to change their teaching styles and what they need to do to enhance learner performance.

By employing these strategies, instructional leaders can effectively monitor and provide feedback on teaching and learning, ultimately contributing to a more positive and successful learning environment for all stakeholders.

iii. Promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development

McGuire (2001) designates that leaders have vital information and abilities for operative instructional leadership. Leaders are agents of change because supportive leaders are guardians of the long game. Supportive leaders work on establishing lasting institutions; they foster a culture of commitment and endurance. They anticipate and navigate obstacles with a clear vision, and they do not get discouraged by the long haul. They focus on building inner ability, ensure the institution has the resources and skills to achieve and maintain its vision for the long term. The Education Officials need to look into possible challenges that the ECTs may encounter and find ways to mitigate those challenges from recurring. Instructional leaders

comprehend the importance of their followers. They support, grow, and foster their staff, with the aim to set a high bar for ethical conduct. They value diverse perspectives and actively allow their followers to share their own insights and views. The Education Officials need to make the ECTs feel valued in a sense that their opinions are taken into consideration and they are also involved in plans of the school and are allocated certain responsibilities to show that they believe in the ECTs and trust them. Furthermore, they are expected to encourage initiative, innovation, collaboration, and a strong work ethic, fostering a dynamic and productive environment (Stronge et al., 2008). Education Officials have to encourage team work and especially involve the ECTs in team tasks. Instructional leaders themselves, understand the importance of continuous learning and are committed to constantly refining their own skills (Brauckmann et al., 2016). They are lifelong learners who actively seek out opportunities to develop and improve their effectiveness as leaders (Steward, 2006). The Education Officials are expected to organise staff development programmes to support the ECTs and support them in various ways such as programmes that will develop the ECTs with technology usage or instructional support. The Education Officials facilitate programmes that help the ECTs to acquire certain knowledge and skills that will of use in their careers. This dedication sets a powerful example for their staff and underscores the importance of continuous learning within the organisation.

3.3.2 The pertinence of the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoys Instructional Leadership (2005) to this study

This theory is pertinent to this study because it assisted me as a researcher to conceptually, build positive and harmonious relationships between Education Officials (stakeholders) and ECTs. It helped the study to provide insights about how Education Officials support the ECTs' needs, and provide them with relevant skills, knowledge and resources to help enhance learner performance in schools. The theory actively supports Educational Officials to be dynamic and effective instructional leaders in the school setting. It promotes the distribution of leadership roles and does not only focus on principals being instructional leaders; hence, this will help ECTs get sufficient support from various Education officials, not only the school principals. The three dimensions of the theory demonstrate how the theory is relevant to the study. The dimensions and their pertinence are discussed below.

i. Defining and communicating goals

McGuire (2001) indicates how instructional leaders define and communicate goals.

Instructional leaders, according to McGuire (2001), are transparent and accountable and they communicate high expectations clearly and provide accurate information to build trust and confidence among stakeholders. They are not afraid to reach out for support and assistance, recognising the value of partnerships and shared expertise. Moreover, they are generous in sharing credit for successes and accomplishments, fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment. In this case, Education Officials are challenged to take accountability for their actions such as failure to provide the ECTs with materials and other source of support such as guiding ECTs how to incorporate technology into their daily lessons. It further encourages the Education Officials to seek support from ECTs where they feel like they are lacking, which builds trust and harmonious relationships between Education Officials and ECTs. This kind of dynamic builds a balanced working environment whereby the ECTs are supported where they need assistance. They are involved in the school's goals and most importantly their inputs are noted and used to help improve the learner performance and relationship with the co-workers.

ii. Monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning

One way to monitor and provide feedback is through post-observation feedback sessions. Instructional leaders engage in constructive and focused conversations with teachers following classroom observations, offering specific feedback, suggestions for improvement, and celebrating successes (Saphier & York, 2011). Educational Officials need to provide ECTs with constructive feedback on where to improve and provide them with methods and strategies on how to improve where they lack. The Education Officials have to look at the assessments that the ECTs construct for learners, check the standard of the assessment tasks and how learners perform on the assessment tasks so that they can assist the ECTs where they lack. This initiative is to assist the ECTs with setting standardised assessment tasks and guiding ECTs on how to prepare learners for assessment tasks. Furthermore, this will guide Education Officials to support ECTs on how to administer tasks that concern teaching and learning as the feedback they will provide to ECTs will provide them with guidance. Moreover, the monitoring of teaching and learning assists with encouraging the Education Officials to support ECTs by giving them strategies on how to improve their lesson conceptions, setting assessment tasks

and showing appreciation to the efforts of ECTs which enhances the ECTs self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Zee & Koomen, 2016).

iii. Promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development

McGuire (2001) indicates that instructional leaders promote and emphasise the importance of professional development. Instructional leaders are committed to continuous improvement. Instructional leaders foster a culture of continuous learning and development, both personally and professionally, for themselves and their staff. They actively provide and encourage opportunities for growth, recognising the importance of investing in people (Marks & Printy, 2003), accountability and data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, instructional leaders champion a culture of responsibility and trust by holding themselves and others accountable for their actions (Jalapan & Raman, 2020). They embrace comprehensive planning, utilising data to assess the current state of the organisation, identify root causes of problems, propose effective solutions, and measure progress (Barni et al, 2019). In alignment with this model, Education Officials are expected to support ECTs by facilitating professional development programmes that help to enhance the ECTs instructional competency, how to build relationships with learners and co-workers, that helps them how to deal with factors that affects them emotionally at workplaces (Duyar et al., 2013). Furthermore, the Education Officials build relationships with ECTs by acknowledging their mistakes and coaching ECTs on how to be accountable for their mistakes. Most importantly, this model obliges the Education Officials help look for problems such that causes learners to fail or perform poorly, then propose strategies that ECT may use to improve learner performance.

3.4 Conceptualising Malcom Knowles Adult Learning Theory (ALT)

This section provides a detailed discussion of the Adult Learning theory but begins with a brief outline of the origin of the theory, the assumptions by other scholars concerning the theory, the principles of the theory and how the theory is pertinent to this study. The theory encompasses the relationships between educators and adult learners. In this study, educators refer to Education Officials who mentor and the adult learners refers to ECTs. The theory is relevant as it outlines how mentors can assist the ECTs in learning new skills and developing professionally as they learn from them. Subsequently, it provides strategies on how mentors

can influence the ECTs on how to enhance their performance, on how to stimulate the engagement of the ECTs and how to help the ECTs settle at the workplace. Overall, the theory is embedded with how ECTs as adult learners can be supported by Education Officials as mentors and educators. The above-mentioned is discussed next.

i. Origin of the Adult Learning Theory

Merriam (2017) postulates that it was in the early 20th century when most scholars commenced to study the learning in adulthood systematically. The scholars who were interested the most were those whom are referred to as behavioural and cognitive scientist as they were mostly focused and interested in intelligence, memory and how information was processed by adults and more especially, how their age affected the mentioned processes. Merriam (2017) further, elucidates that during mid-1960s people who were adult educators began to gain interest in studying how adult learners learn and this led to various models to be established, not only models but theories and frameworks that alluded to how adult learners could be differentiated from young learners. Merriam (2001) indicates that between 1970 and 1980 Knowles(1984) moved to andragogy (teaching adult learners) versus pedagogy (teaching young learners) position to demonstrating them on a range alternating from teacher-centred to student-centred learning, he discovered that both approaches are suitable for adults and children, it only depends on the situation. Knowles (1984) alludes that for example "an adult who does not understand or know anything about a content will be more dependent on the teacher" (p. 13). With the acknowledgement done by Knowles (1984) it proved that andragogy was more by the learning situation than by learner.

The origins of adult learning theories can be outlined as a cluster dynamic forces methods as part of research during 1940s and 1950s (Lindeman, 1926). Thus, knowledge acquisition could be regarded as either harmless or risky approaches. Knowles's theory of adult learning proposed that adults flourish in circumstances where they are greatly interested, where they can partake in the learning progression, and where content they were learning had real-world applications (Lindeman, 1926). Pragmatic orientation was observed in this moderm. Moreover, Knowles (1984) also discovered that adults find a comfortable setting favourable to learning, and they need precise information of what they are expected to do, opportunities to practise their different abilities and they want to be given feedback immediately (Knowles, 1984).

Adult Learning Theory which is also known as andragogy was made popular by Malcom Knowles as the skill and knowledge of assisting adults to learn are different to how children learn (Knowles, 1984). There are various purposes of why adults want to learn such as to fill in an educational gap, for their own professional and personal development and for them to attain work related skills (Ngozwana, 2020). After Knowles' theory of andragogy emerged, Tough (1971) recounts the outcomes of seven years' work on determinations of adults to learn, change and develop. Tough's (1971) study focuses on both why and how adults learn. He instituted that adults prepared their education determinations around developments, well-defined as a sequence of connected events, and seven hours was the least time used.

ii. Assumptions by various scholars concerning the Adult Learning Theory

Merriam (2001) indicates that between 1970 and 1980, Knowles (1984) shifted to adult learning versus learner learning situation to demonstrating the two concepts on a range alternating from teacher-centred to student-centred learning. For instance, he discovered that both approaches are suitable for adults and children, it only depends on the situation. With the acknowledgement done by Knowles (1984) it proved that andragogy was more by the learning situation than by learner. For Houle (1996, pp. 29-30), "education is fundamentally the same wherever and whenever it occurs. It deals with such basic concerns as the nature of the learner, the goals sought, and the social and physical milieu in which instruction occurs, and the techniques of learning or teaching used. These and other components may be combined in infinite ways. Andragogy remains as the most learner-centred of all patterns of adult educational programming "What is significant, Houle writes, is that andragogy has alerted educators to the fact that they "should involve learners in as many aspects of their education as possible and in the creation of a climate in which they can most fruitfully learn".

Adult education, according to Merriam (2010), lean towards to being very autonomous and self-regulating development. Self-study is a challenging activity that encompasses a multiplicity of accomplishments, information understandings, and a positive level of responsibility to accomplish education goals (Beach, 2017). As most adult learner struggle with digital technology this proves the importance of adult education, as they tend to miss out digital technology opportunities that has been provided through the years (Boeren, 2017). Malcolm Knowles' theory of adult learning as he called it "Andragogy" and adults learned it when they comprehended the pertinence of adult education in their own settings (Knowles, 1984). The

initiation of technology has had a huge impact on education, because it forced teachers to change ways on how they taught adult learners (Horsley, 2010). Subsequently, adult learners were required to change from being passive learners to engaging in active learning (Turcsanyi-Szabo, 2012). This also had an impact on the ECTs role as they had to change (from teacher to moderator) that is why ECTSs are required and often encouraged to the Andragogy's assumptions to the adult education environment. In andragogy there are six assumptions that focuses only on adult learners (Knowles et al., 2005, p. 35), "The need to know the reason why, the learner's self-directed, when it relates with their real-life experience, motivation to learn, learning direction and motivation".

Teachers who comprehend and are enthusiastic to apply Andragogy's assumptions, often get to meet the necessities of the adult learners, more particularly when instruction takes place during online based environment (Cochran, 2015). Andragogy grounded on the incorporation of two diverse and opposite backgrounds which are the humanistic and social traditions that progresses a theory of adult learning where education is generally learner-centred. Knowles (1986) alludes through the general study of Andragogy that the realisation of this tenet was to daunt adult learners from the "dependency on teaching for learning" which was stimulated customarily by the pedagogical teaching practise and was used by many educators, still researching and are not sure of how adults learn. Moreover, andragogy emphasises the "problem-centred approach" where there are similarities between scope of the teacher and the learner, which likewise, defines a more cooperative learning of fluctuating the importance from the teacher to the learner (Kapur, 2015).

Merriam (2017, p.23) stresses that "Andragogy is a European concept (indeed, even today there are academic departments of andragogy in several Central and Eastern European countries) imported to the U.S. by Malcolm Knowles in the late 1960s." Knowles introduces andragogy as "a new label and a new technology" differentiating adult learning from learner's learning or pedagogy (1968, p. 351). Andragogy puts emphasis on supporting teachers and trainers to grasp adult learning (Knowles et al., 2014). According to Knowles (1980), andragogy is a set of principles pertinent to many adult learning situations. ECTs should feel "accepted, respected, and supported", as there is "a spirit of mutuality between teachers and students as joint inquirers" (Knowles, 1980, p. 47). Adult learners who are ECTs in this case also need guidance from their mentors (Henschke, 2011). Andragogy promotes the impression of self-directed learners who need slight assistance from teachers (Merriam et al., 2007). The above assumption

is challenged by Merriam (2001, p. 5), when saying, “Some adults are extremely reliant on a teacher for structure, while some young learners are independent, self-directed learners”. In classrooms where adults are learners, certain adult learners only request minimal assistance and instruction from their teachers, though others struggle to progress without proper guidance. Similarly, adults have extrinsic motivation, whereas children may be intrinsically motivated. The above discussion and debate invite us to consider every possibility and to not think in terms of one dimensionality. Individual circumstances matter and it helps if approaches to support adult learners, including ECTs considers the focus on individual needs.

On the one hand, andragogy espouses for the skills and enthusiasm of adult learners to take initiatives, andragogy fails to explain the dissimilarities amid adult learners, including contrast that rise from socio-cultural background (Merriam, 2001). Teachers and scholars concede that adult learners cannot be categorised by their learning abilities and motivation to learn (McClellan & Conti, 2008). Based on the andragogy model, teachers who offer virtual lessons (online) can propose activities to embolden self-directed learning (Merriam, 2017). Investing effort and time comes as an advantage to teachers when they are designing and developing videos and activities which can aid adult learners to learn at their own pace (Merriam, 2017). The work of teachers is to support the adult learners, persons with different experiences such being parents, business owners or even employees (Clawson, 2008). Clawson further adds that Adults learn differently from children. Adults are more thoughtful in what they are eager to learn, they question a lot, and more annoyed of being told what to learn.

The theory speculates the application of critical self-reflections that are done by people throughout their experience and developments as learning that changes the challenging frames to reference them more comprehensive, emotionally adjustable and reflective (Mezirow, 2009). The perspective of Mezirow's of transformation is centred upon his work with community college re-entry programmes for women. Mezirow (2009) speculates that women learn in a unique manner; they learn about psychological and cultural assumptions that has an influence on women see themselves and their associations. Mackeracher (1996) observes that adult learning as a dynamic interrelated set of practices that are physical, social, emotional and cognitive. Mackeracher (1996) further divulges that Adult learning is also described as a maze and one needs to understand the characteristics of adult learners in order to be able to fully comprehend adult learning theories. Knowles (1984) specifies that adults are unique kind of learners and they require different instructional strategies. Knowles (1984) postulates that this

is the case because adult learners bring a different combination of knowledge, experience and independence.

There are multiple challenges that come with adult learning and that affects their participation such as fears, levels of self-esteem, time, and confidence levels, personal and professional responsibilities (Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990). One way to mitigate the resistance to participation is to make sure that you identify and resolve situational constraints (life situation, time and cost) or even dispositional constraints (attitude, beliefs and confidence) and try to address the institutional norms as well including the inadequate support services (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). There were different criticisms that were said by other scholars with regards to Adult Learning Theory. Other scholars argue that adult learning is similar to learner learning as they both have principles that makes them both fall in the lifelong learning “range” (Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019). Some researchers argue that Andragogy is pertinent to the principle of Ubuntu and communism, philosophy of education whereby self-determination and education is influenced by an individual’s experience (Sefotho, 2018). Sefotho (2018) further corroborates the view that learners are perceived responsible for their learning, for acquiring experience to self-determination, self-directed and they should be accountable for their own learning. Andragogy has been classified "as a theory of adult education, theory of adult learning, theory of technology of adult learning, method of adult education, technique of adult education, and a set of assumptions." (Davenport and Davenport, 1985, p. 157).

Hartree (1984) was not convinced and questioned whether it could really be considered as theory or just as principles that assisted adult learners to learn effectively, principles of good practice and that taught people “how adult learners should be like” (p.205). Knowles himself came to agree that andragogy is less of theory of adult learning and he concurred that it is "a model of assumptions about learning or a conceptual framework that serves as a basis for an emergent theory" (1989, p. 112). Other criticism, which is still ongoing till date, is that all the six assumptions are only characteristics of adult learners, but they argue that some adults are overly dependent on teachers and that some learners are self-directed and independent learners (Merriam, 1996). However, these assumptions were not true of every adult and Knowles revised his philosophy on whether the andragogy was only for adults and pedagogy only for children (Merriam.2001). The principles are discussed below.

3.4.1 The Principles of the Adult Learning Theory by Malcom Knowles

Malcolm Knowles (1984) has been a developer in the area of adult learning and is a strong proponent of the position that adults do not learn like children. In several works (including *The Adult Learner*), he presents a series of assumptions, patterned after the work of Eduard Lindeman, that guide his view of adult learning. Knowles's andragogical model posits six principles regarding the characteristics of adult learners that differentiate them from child learners (Knowles, 1984; Holton & Swanson, 1998).

i. Adults are self-directed. (Self-Concept)

Adult learners often thrive in environments that promote self-directed learning (Morris et al., 2023). This approach, which emphasises learner autonomy and active participation, aligns with the core tenets of andragogy, the theory of adult learning (Knowles, 1980). Studies have shown that self-directed learning (SDL) principles can foster a more engaging and effective learning experience for adults (Bergner & Chen, 2022). ECTs as adult learners, driven by a desire for self-directed learning (SDL), often flourish in environments that empower them to take ownership of their learning journey as teachers (Morris et al., 2023). This aligns perfectly with the core principles of andragogy, the theory of adult learning developed by Malcolm Knowles (1980). Furthermore, research by Morris (2019) suggests that incorporating self-directed learning principles can foster a more engaging and effective learning environment for adults. By creating such an environment, Education Officials can empower adult learners (ECTs) to become self-directed and lifelong learners, ultimately leading to increased motivation, engagement, and successful learning outcomes (Tien, 2022).

However, incorporating SDL principles requires more than simply giving the ECTs their responsibilities. To effectively implement SDL, there needs to be balance between supporting learner autonomy and providing necessary guidance and structure. Study by Morris et al. (2023) suggests that promoting a supportive learning environment is vital for successful SDL. This can involve:

- To encourage the learners to be initiative in activities like problem-solving learning, self-directed projects, and open-ended questions. This will allow learners to discover

their interests, explore real-world problems, and develop critical thinking skills (Brookfield, 2017).

- To provide the learners with the opportunities to engage on self-reflection by writing journals, providing and receiving feedback from peers, and self-assessment tools (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). This allows learners to critically reflect and monitor their learning progress, identify their weakness where they need to improve, and set personal learning goals (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).
- Foster learning environment that encourages collaboration where learners get to learn from each other's experiences, engage in meaningful discussions, and provide constructive feedback (Morris, 2019b). This fosters a sense of community and shared responsibility for learning, further enhancing the overall learning experience. This is in contrast to pedagogy, the traditional teacher-centred approach to learning often used in children's education, where the instructor holds primary responsibility for these aspects.

Furthermore, research by Yang and Park (2022) suggests that incorporating self-directed learning principles can foster a more engaging and effective learning environment for adults. The ECTs as adult learners will be able to effectively learn what they are taught by the Education Officials, as SDL allows the ECTs to learn problem-solving, deal with issues through journaling, learning from their peers through collaboration and feedback.

ii. Adults bring experience and knowledge to the learning experience (Experience-driven)

Adult Learning Theory, particularly the work of Malcolm Knowles, emphasises the experience of adult learners as a crucial factor in their learning process (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). This principle acknowledges that adults (ECTs) come to learning situations with a larger, more diverse stock of knowledge and experience to draw from, compared to younger learners.

- In most cases the Adult learners (ECTs) goals are often associated with the desire they have regarding something such as trying to solve a problem or address challenges or improve performance in their personal or professional lives which are all linked with their experience (Taylor et al., 2006). Education Officials will be able to establish a learning environment that is effective and allows engagement by creating learning activities around the goals and utilising the ECTs' experiences and challenges as a foundation for further exploration. ECTs may have various learning goals to address

challenges that they face at their workplace, mentors can construct a pertinent and engaging learning environment. This promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as ECTs can apply their experiences to analyse new situations and develop solutions.

- **Adult Learning Theory: The Power of Experience**

Adult Learning Theory, notably influenced by Malcolm Knowles, identifies the important part of experience in adult learning. This principle goes past simply recognising that adults have more years of experience than younger learners; it emphasises the complexity, multiplicity, and exceptional perspective this experience brings to the learning table (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). It enables the ECTs to critically evaluate and analyse their own progress looking at their experiences, recognise strengths and weaknesses, and set personal learning goals. By reflecting on their experiences in a learning context, adults who are ECTs in this case can gain new insights and perspectives, fostering personal and professional growth. It is important to talk about that experience is not only about gaining knowledge; it also comprises attitudes, values, and beliefs that adult learners (ECTs) bring to the learning environment (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). It has an impact on how the ECTs interpret data, take part in discussions, and approach new challenges. It is essential for mentors to recognise and respect these diverse experiences in order to be able to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment where all ECTs feel valued and heard.

iii. Adult learning readiness to learn is based on developmental and real-life responsibilities (Readiness to learn)

Naturally, adults enjoy learning experiences where the learning is applicable to what is currently happening in their real-life and their current developmental tasks (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Education Officials need to design learning activities during trainings that are relevant and resonates with the real-life situations that link with the ECTs' lives beyond their professional lives; his can help advance participation. This fosters a meaningful learning experience that goes beyond theoretical knowledge acquisition. As discussed earlier, showing the pertinence and practically applying the learning content to real-world situations that can enhance learner engagement (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). When ECTs see the learning resonating to the real-life experiences outside their workplace, it encourages them to learn and evokes their desire to learn and get motivated to invest their time and effort. It is the Educator's

Role to understand the developmental task orientation, the vital role of creating learning experiences to address the specific needs and motivations of their adult learners (Smith & Jones, 2023).

iv. Adults orientation to learning is most often problem centred and relevant to their current life situation (Orientation to Learning)

Adult Learning Theory, particularly the concept of andragogy developed by Malcolm Knowles, emphasises the problem-centred and relevant nature of adult learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Adult learners are focused on practical application, they are different from children because children are normally content with theoretical knowledge acquisition, while adult learners are more fascinated in solving real-world problems and improving their skills and knowledge to achieve specific goals in their personal or professional lives (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). In this case, the ECTs will benefit as they will be able to apply most skills acquired in their work and this will help them in various ways such as classroom management, delivering lessons and effectively administering assessments. Adults often prioritise learning that has direct practical significance over nonconcrete theoretical knowledge (Taylor et al., 2006). This means Education Officials can cater to this preference by incorporating case studies, real-world scenarios, and simulations into their teaching approaches. This allows ECTs to connect theoretical concepts to practical applications, fostering a deeper understanding and enhancing engagement (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Adult learners benefit from experiential learning approaches that allow them to "learn by doing" (Smith & Jones, 2023). This could include activities like project-based learning, role-playing exercises, or hands-on workshops. By actively engaging with the learning material and applying it to real-world problems, ECTs can improve their comprehension and advance valuable problem-solving skills. This problem-centred and relevant approach aligns well with the learner-centred approach which emphasises Adult Learning Theory. By focusing on practical application and addressing specific needs, educators can increase learner motivation and engagement (Taylor et al., 2006). Ultimately, this approach empowers the ECT to utilise their learning to achieve their personal and professional goals.

v. Adult learners need motivation to learn (Reason to learn)

The fifth principle of Adult Learning Theory, often attributed to Malcolm Knowles' work on andragogy, focuses on the stronger need to know adults typically possess compared to younger learners (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). This principle emphasises the inherent motivation that drives adults to seek learning that is meaningful, relevant, and applicable to their lives. Adult learners need intrinsic motivation and understand why they need to learn, they want to comprehend the purpose of why they need to learn something, different from children easily get motivated by external factors like grades or rewards, adult learners are driven by a desire to understand the "why" behind what they are learning (Morris, 2020). ECTs seek clear insights into the purpose, benefits, and applications of the learning content before they invest their time and effort in the training and inductions that are hosted by the Education Officials.

When adult learners comprehend the reason and importance of the learning content to their lives, they become more engaged and encouraged to partake in the learning process (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). This motivation leads to deeper comprehension, enhanced retention, and a greater commitment to applying the learning in real-world situations for the ECTs. It is important to outline the learning objectives at the commencement of instruction session which permits adult learners to comprehend what they acquire from the learning experience (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). This transparency assists to address the question of why they need to learn something and sets the stage for a focused and motivated learning journey.

vi. Adult learners possess intrinsic motivation (Motivation to learn)

Adult Learning Theory, particularly the concept of andragogy developed by Malcolm Knowles, highlights the inherently motivating nature of adult learners (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Adults are more likely to engage in learning activities that they believe will help those meet specific needs and achieve their personal or professional goals (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). This could involve improving job skills, acquiring new knowledge for personal development, or enhancing their ability to navigate life challenges. When adult learners feel a sense of possession and control over their learning journey, they are more likely to be engaged and motivated (Taylor et al., 2006). This aligns with the learner-centred approach emphasised in

Adult Learning Theory, which encourages active participation, reflection, and self-directed learning.

A supportive and collaborative learning environment that fosters respect, trust, and open communication can encourage active participation and intrinsic motivation among adult learners (Smith & Jones, 2023). This environment allows the ECTs to feel safe expressing their ideas, taking risks, and learning from each other. It is crucial to remember that internal motivation thrives when adult learners feel valued, respected, and capable (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). By incorporating interactive activities, encouraging ECTs autonomy, and providing opportunities for reflection and feedback, Education Officials can create a learning environment that fosters intrinsic motivation and empowers ECTs to become lifelong learners. When learning directly addresses a specific need or developmental task, it stimulates the intrinsic motivation for adult learners (Smith & Jones, 2023). As ECTs want to enhance their skills and knowledge to excellently navigate their current challenges and fulfil their roles. This inherent motivation nurtures commitment and engagement to learning, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes

3.4.2 Pertinence of the Adult Learning Theory to the study

This theory is pertinent to this study because it can be a very useful framework to support ECTs, because the principles of ALT incorporate that adults are more self-directed, that their experience and knowledge benefits the learning process and they have internal motivation as they are relevancy-orientated (Yang & Park, 2022). Therefore, this theory will assist the ECTs to learn effectively from the support that they will be offered by the Education Officials. This is demonstrated in the discussion below:

i. Adults are self-directed

This principle is relevant to this study because andragogy emphasises the inherent autonomy and self-reliance of adult learners, who are seen as capable of actively planning, implementing, and evaluating their learning experiences (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Research further supports this notion, demonstrating that incorporating SDL principles can foster a more engaging and effective learning environment for adults (Yang & Park, 2022). By encouraging

the ECTs initiative, providing opportunities for self-reflection, and fostering a collaborative learning environment, Education Officials can create a space where the ECTs can thrive and achieve their full potential. This stands in contrast to pedagogy, the traditional teacher-centred approach to learning often used in children's education, where the instructor holds primary responsibility for these aspects.

ii. Adults bring experience and knowledge to the learning experience

This theory has numerous in-built positives and relevance for the current study. One of the dimensions for its relevance is the notion of *building on Existing Knowledge*. To that end, adult learners can connect new information to their existing knowledge base, and thus, making learning more meaningful and relevant (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). Education Officials can influence this by incorporating case studies, real-world problems, and scenarios that resonate with the ECTs' experiences during professional development programmes. This allows ECTs to connect new information to their existing knowledge base, fostering deeper understanding and retention.

iii. Adult learning readiness to learn is based on developmental and real-life responsibilities.

The principle is pertinent to this study because Adult Learning Theory recognises the crucial role of developmental task orientation, a concept introduced by Robert Kegan (1994). This principle emphasises that adults are most motivated to learn when the learning directly connects to their current stage in life and their evolving responsibilities. In this regard, ECTs steer numerous developmental stages throughout their career years, each bringing unique challenges and responsibilities. For instance, when a young adult first enters the workforce they tend to be inspired to learn new job skills through relevant training programs (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Conversely, the ECTs might be motivated to learn about how to effectively do their job.

iv. Adults orientation to learning is most often problem centred and relevant to their current life situation

Connecting to Current Life Situations: In relation to connecting to current life situation, adult learners are driven by a desire to address specific needs and challenges they face in their

everyday lives (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). These needs could range from learning new skills for career advancement to improving communication skills for better interpersonal relationships, or acquiring knowledge about personal finance management. By understanding the specific needs and motivations of their ECTs, Education Officials can design learning experiences that directly address these needs and provide meaningful solutions to real-world challenges.

v. Adult learners need motivation to learn

Adults are more likely to participate in learning when they see a clear relationship between the learning content and their specific needs or goals (Taylor et al., 2006). By articulating the real-world applications of the learning content, mentors can address this "need to know" and foster a sense of determination and pertinence for adult learners (ECTs). Educators can increase learner engagement by showcasing the tangible benefits of the learning content (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). This could involve highlighting how the learning can help ECTs improve their job performance, advance their careers, enhance their personal lives, or solve specific problems they face.

vi. Adult learners possess intrinsic motivation

The principle intrinsic motivation is pertinent to this study because it promotes autonomy and responsibility (Knowles, 1984; Holton & Swanson, 1998). It therefore, provides opportunities for autonomy and responsibility in the learning process can foster a stronger sense of ownership and internal motivation among adult learners (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). This could involve activities like choosing learning projects, setting personal goals, or making decisions about learning strategies. The possession of intrinsic motivation implies the need for strategies for fostering internal motivation and ensuring a learner-centred approach to supporting the ECTs. This can be done by vigorously implementing a learner-centred approach that focuses on learners' needs, interests, and goals can foster a sense of ownership and intrinsic motivation (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). This empowers ECTs to take an active role in their learning and shape their learning journey and aids them with professional development. These two theories assisted the study as they complement one another in a sense that instructional leadership is centred on the role played by leaders to support and facilitate the ECTs in schools whilst the

Adult Learning Theory emphasizes the exceptional needs and characteristics of adult learners (ECTs). Together, these two theories offered a comprehensive framework for supporting ECTs, as they worked interdependently on guiding instructional leaders on how to effectively provide sufficient support to the ECTs. Moreover, it can help to stimulate the ECTs' performance, effectiveness and engagement at their workplace and it will also enhance the ECTs' autonomy and self-efficacy as it assists with building intrinsic motivation.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the theoretical framework that was employed in the study, and this framework is made up of two theories which, align with the role of Education Officials in providing the Early Career Teacher with support and how they provide support. My presentation focuses on the context of the nature of support provided to the ECTs and how the ECTs receive support from the Education Officials. The chapter clearly indicates the theories utilised and provide detailed elucidation of the theories, assumptions of by other scholars regarding the theory, the tenets of the theories and how the theories are pertinent to the study. The following chapter discusses the methodology that is used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical framework comprehensively and elucidated how the theoretical framework that was used to show directions of this study, aided me to make sense of the data generated. The research design and methodology that are employed in this study are elucidated in this chapter. Omodan (2019) alludes that a research methodology can be referred to as the procedures that are utilised by the researcher to unearth and scrutinise a problem and the rationale behind it. This keenly demonstrates that a research methodology gives direction to the scholar to establish a procedure on how to go about with their research, with the intention to establish pertinent findings and research about the problem. The study is aimed at understanding the nature of support that is provided to the selected Early Career Teachers (ECTs) by the Education Officials. As an aspect of the study findings, it also sought to come up with recommendations about strategies that Education Officials can utilise to efficiently offer support to the ECTs. The purpose of elucidating the research design and methodology is to clarify for the readers, how and why the study was conducted the way it was conducted. The important issue of fit-for purpose of designs and methodologies are important (Kumar, 2025).

Chapter Four also explains critical issues such as the research paradigm, the qualitative research approach that was employed in this study, as well as other pertinent issues. The chapter commences with the discussion of the paradigm that is employed in this research. The study employed the interpretive paradigm. In addition, the research design/approach that was employed in this study which is qualitative is discussed. As clarified in this chapter, the justification for the use of a case study methodology is provided. In conclusion, the chapter discussed data generation, data analysis, ethical considerations and trustworthiness.

4.2 Research paradigm

Perera (2018) stresses that research paradigms are a group of shared assumptions and philosophies that researchers utilise to comprehend and address challenges. Kuhn (1962) was the first person to utilise the word “paradigm” and he was referring to a philosophical way of

thinking. The word “paradigm” comes from Greek which refers to a pattern (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Furthermore, a paradigm can be regarded as a global interpretation or the plain sets of principles that provides guidance in a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) . This view is corroborated by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), who define a paradigm as a set of beliefs of an academic concerning the world that they reside in and that they want to reside in; it institutes the non-concrete philosophies and values that form how the scholar views the world, how they interpret the world and act in the world (Hazari, 2024).

A paradigm can be explained as the researcher’s theoretical understandings and perceptions of the problem that is being examined (Omodan, 2024). Moreover, there are four main research paradigms, namely, pragmatic paradigms, interpretive, positivist as well as critical paradigm (Scotland, 2012). However, this study adopted the interpretive paradigm because the study pursued to comprehend subjectivity of the experience of the participants from their own perspectives (Cohen & Manion, 1994). To understand the paradigm’s importance, I began by discussing the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and the nature of reality (ontology) which led me to choose this particular methodology and values (axiology) informing my study (Cohen et al., 2011; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I then discuss interpretive paradigm.

Dammak (2020) states that interpretivists believe that reality is many-sided and complex. Dammak (2020) further explains that individuals are innovative and dynamically create their societal reality. The scholar further unearths that society has to be examined in the natural world, through the participants’ own perspective, and without the researcher intervening by imposing his or her own interpretations. In this study, I studied both the Early Career Teachers and Education Officials in their normal workplaces without manipulating the environment in any way. This study utilised the interpretivist paradigm to comprehend the participants' experience with regard to their relationships and the impacts of their relationships. On that note, the paradigm assisted me to understand how Education Officials can effectively support the ECTs from the perspectives of the participants (ECTs and the Education Officials). This paradigm assisted me to be able to grasp the reality of the participants through their own perspective as they shared it with me. Research paradigms have four fundamental characteristics: ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology (Li et al., 2024). These fundamentals are discussed below. Furthermore, relative to this study, the interpretive paradigm also aided me to comprehend that people have philosophies in how the surrounding influences how Education Officials offer support to the ECTs and how I, as a researcher, view

the world as they see it. Interpretive paradigm materialised in this study because the meanings of the ECTs' experiences with regards to the support they received from Education Officials was subject to my interpretations as a researcher after the data generation process. What is critically important is that I always check if my interpretations are consistent with those of the participants. I expand on this discussion in the section on trustworthiness issues.

4.2.1 Ontological assumptions

Ontology is about what the assumptions are that are made by people so that they can believe something and make sense out of it (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). It is more focused on what institutes reality. In other words, it is concerned with answering the question of “what is reality?” Ontology concerns the nature of the social reality, the suggestions of what really exists and how does reality look like (Grix, 2010). Ontologically, interpretive researchers recognise that reality is multifaceted and subjective (Crotty, 1998; Rehman, 2016), and that reality is constructed socially.

Since reality is a social construction by people, it stands to reason that, ontologically, there is no one single reality. Therefore, ontology (the nature of reality or of a phenomenon) depicts different interests and several beliefs and values. These beliefs and values are socially constructed, favouring some views of reality and under-representing others (Cohen et al., 2018). Moreover, ontologically, interpretive researchers have beliefs that reality can be socially generated through relations with humans and by permitting them to share their experiences regarding the phenomenon (Ahlarahsheh & Pius, 2020). Scotland and Usher (2004) argue that ontology is essential to a paradigm as it aids the researcher to fully understand what makes reality and the world. Drawing from that, ontology is vital because it aids the researcher to comprehend and make sense of the data that they have generated. Ontology is applicable to this study because I engaged with different participants to be able to construct multiple realities about the nature of support that is provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials. It is also applicable because it allowed the participants to share their own realities from their own perspectives without me as a researcher intervening. Conducting a multiple case study with three schools selected as a cases, eventually brought forth multiple realities that aided with interpreting meanings in the process of human interactions between myself as the researcher and the participants (Chalmers et al., 2005). Bringing forward multifaceted realities is called

ontology. Moreover, the data was generated through semi-structured interviews and document analysis in a qualitative approach.

4.2.2 Epistemological assumptions

Epistemology is taken from a Greek word “episteme” which means *knowledge* and it refers to the nature that individuals get to acquire knowledge about something and how that knowledge can be constructed, learned and conversed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Scotland, 2012). In comprehending the epistemology, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) stress the prominence of questioning the essential question of ‘how we know what we know’. According to Carlstrom (2022), epistemology comprises the reliability, limitations, and knowledge attainment methods. The scholar continues, to say that it answers to the question, "How is it possible to know reality?" Krauss (2005) emphasise that epistemology has to do with how an individual knows what they know or the philosophy of knowledge. In this case, the interpretivist have a belief that perceiving the subjective opinion in the subjective sense and interpretations is crucial (Pring, 2000). "Epistemology, being the theory of knowledge (Selvam, 2017), describes 'how' a researcher knows about the reality and assumptions about how knowledge should be acquired and accepted" (Kumatongo & Muzata, 2021, p.16). The epistemology is applicable because it allows the subjectivity of participants when engaging about the phenomenon. In this interpretive case study, epistemology prevailed because meaning attributed of the ECTs experiences with being provided with the support by the Education Officials in schools associated with the ECTs’ negative experiences, extreme challenges and looking into the efforts of the Education Officials, was informed by my dynamic engagement with the 15 selected participants (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Consequently, the knowledge which is referred as the epistemology, was socially created by myself (researcher) and the participants who participated in the study, not leaving behind the reviewed documents.

4.2.3 Methodological assumptions

Pertaining to methodology, Keeves (1997) postulates that it talks about the extensive term used for research design, methods, and procedures used in the research process, that are well-planned in advance to generate data. "Methodology (how we research complex, multiple

realities), influenced by communities of practice which define what counts as acceptable ways of researching, and in which mixed methods can feature, as they enable a qualitative dialogue to be established between the participants in the research" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 53). The methodologies in the interpretive paradigm can be listed as qualitative, phenomenological, ethnographic, and naturalistic (William, 2024). Qualitative approaches focus on how one accesses the knowledge constructed (Chilisa, 2011). In this case, the study utilises the qualitative case study research methodology, and knowledge and reality is accessed through semi-structured interviews and documents review.

4.2.4 Axiological assumptions

The ethical issues that are considered when conducting research are known as axiology (Finnis, 1980). This view is shared by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) who say that axiology is about defining, evaluating and understanding the concepts of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (ethical behaviour) that relate to the research process. Axiology in an interpretive paradigm foregrounds the values that are important part of social life; and therefore, no group's values are correct, but are only different (Chillisa, 2011). Axiology emphasises the ethical considerations that have to take place when planning to conduct a study, and it entails making the right decisions (Finnis, 1980). Axiology materialises in this research because I engaged in ethical considerations by making sure that the participants are allocated with consent forms, and that it is explained to them that participating in this study is voluntary. In short, observing axiological assumptions is an orientation that says that the way in which research is conducted complies with ethical standards.

4.3 Research design or approach

This part discusses the research design that was employed for this study. In this study, I make no distinction between research approach and research design. There is no consensus among researchers concerning what institutes a research design. For instance, academics such as McMillan and Schumacher (2001) denote that a research design is methods utilised in conducting a study, while Babbie and Mouton (2005) express it as strategies that are monitored when conducting research. Bailey (2007) and Niewenhuis (2007) highlight that a research design is so far-reaching that it leads the whole lot that takes place in the research process. This

entails confirming that there is a logical connection between the methods and procedures that are selected to be used in research and it is also guided by research questions and it employs particular sampling methods to select the participants.

In research, there are three dominant research approaches, namely, quantitative, qualitative and mixed method research approach. Quantitative research approach encompasses a researcher gathering and analysing numerical data to analyse statistics (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). Qualitative research approach gives the researcher in-depth information about the participants' experiences, opinions and views on a phenomenon. (Cohen et al., 2018). The mixed method approach involves mixing the quantitative and qualitative research approaches in a single study (Creswell & Clark, 2011). On that note, the study utilised the qualitative research design because I wanted to generate data by engaging with the participants and allowing the participants to express their own opinions and experiences concerning the phenomenon at hand. Therefore, the quantitative and mixed methods are not pertinent in this study because the study does not analyse numerical data to analyse statistics but rather the study focuses on analysing the participants experiences and opinions. Barrett and Twycross (2018) postulate that qualitative research allows the researcher to comprehend experience of a participant better. Scholars approve that qualitative research is grounded on utilising views that are used by the participants to define their experiences or practices (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). On the same note, scholars also agree that qualitative inquiry encompasses utilising words while quantitative inquiry analyses and generates findings by using figures and numerical means (Cohen et al., 2011; Rule & John, 2011). For me as a researcher to be able to comprehend the views, sentiments, or experiences, qualitative research generates and analyses non-numerical data (such as text, video, or audio). It can be utilised to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of a topic or to constitute fresh study of concepts (Bhandari, 2020).

I employed the qualitative research approach because "qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experiences they have studied" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 29). I used qualitative approach because it allows the participants to freely share their own experiences based on how they experience them and how they understand them. In this regard, Liamputtong (2007) states that qualitative approaches are suitable because they make it easy for the participants to fully share how they feel, what they experienced, and their understanding

of the problem. According to McLeod (2019), the purpose of qualitative research is to grasp a person, group, or culture's social reality as thoroughly as possible to how its participants' experience or live it. In line with McLeod and Maree's argument, in this study, I elicited sufficient data relating to the nature of support that is provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials and I made meaning of the experiences of the participants. Cohen et al. (2018) explain qualitative research is able to offer comprehension into the "how" and "why," or the phases needed to understand and describe how things transpire. Qualitative research approach assisted me to be capable to know how the ECTs faced certain challenges and how it affected their work and the rationale why they did not get enough support from the Education Officials. As a result, qualitative research enabled me as a researcher to comprehend deeply the experiences of the participants in connection to the research problem and gave me an insight into what forms of support were offered and how. On the note of importance, Omodan (2019) clarifies that the qualitative research method empowers the researcher(s) to obtain discernments of the problem at stake and either deductively or inductively generate ideas and solutions to the problems.

4.4 Research methodology

Omodan (2019) postulates that a research methodology can be considered as the processes that are employed by the researcher to investigate a phenomenon. The elucidation by Omodan (2019) characterises research methodology as a process that monitors the researcher to institute a strategy on how to conduct their study, with the objective to unearth possible findings that relate to the study. Among the methodologies scholars mention include, case studies, narrative inquiry, ethnography, grounded theory as well as phenomenology (Bryman & Bell, 2019). The term methodology refers to the systematic procedure and techniques used by the researcher to select the participants, generate and analyse the data (Maree, 2012; Straus & Corbin, 2008). Kemanusiaan (2007) explains that a case study methodology allows a researcher to closely investigate data within a specific phenomenon.

In the same context, this study adopted the case study methodology because the study explored cases through comprehensive, in-depth and intensive data generation methods (Gustafsson, 2017; Mishra & Dey, 2021; Yin, 2014). Yin (2009, p. 18) describes "case study as an empirical inquiry which investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context." Priya (2021) states that a case study entails fully comprehensive study of the participant's experiences within its natural

setting. The case study should always have the “case” that is going to be studied, which implies that a case study can be measured as a group of people, an individual and even an institution and it can be a single or multiple case study (Gillham 2001; Miles & Huberman 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) and Gillham (2001) further indicate that a case study methodology has to be specific with regards to time and place (Ragin & Becker 1992). A ‘case’ is a problem or a situation that needs investigation (Rule & John, 2011). A case can be an individual, a set of people, an establishment, a community, a nation, a classroom, a programme or even an institution (Schoch, 2020).

In this study, one school is measured as a case study and it will be multiple case study as I will utilise three schools. Yin (2003) differentiates three types of case study, namely exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. He elucidates that a case study is considered exploratory if it scrutinises a phenomenon that has never been studied before and can place the base for further research. On the contrary, the explanatory case study tries to enlighten what materialises in a precise case or why it happens (Yin, 2003). Lastly, a descriptive case study is whereby a phenomenon within its context is presented in a complete description (Rule & John, 2011; Yin, 2003, 2018). In the same context, case study types, there *multiple case study*. This study utilised a multiple case study. In a multiple case study, one problem or concern is selected, but the researcher uses multiple cases to demonstrate the issue (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2018). When utilising a multiple case study, a few cases and studies are classified in some depth by the researcher (Rule & John, 2011). Multiple case study is reinforced by the credence that choosing more than one case effects in a enhanced comprehension of the problem because the researcher can distinguish the connections, dissimilarities and contrasts through the generated data from the cases (Creswell, 2007).

In this study, one school is measured as a case study and it is multiple case study as three schools are part of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Gillham (2001) further indicate that a case study methodology has to be specific with regards to time and place (Ragin & Becker 1992). In the case study methodology a case is purposely selected by the researcher depending how the case relates to the study , it may be because of the rich data that it provided is critical or revelatory (Patton 1990; Stake 1995). The case study methodology is pertinent to this study because it aided me to examine the data within the studied context. It helped me to get a clear picture and detailed information on the experience of the participants and allowed me to choose the case purposefully looking the virtue of its being, in this case is information

rich. Moreover, it allowed me to use two data generation methods which were be semi-structured interviews and document analysis, which assisted in the crystallisation process in order to enhance trustworthiness of the study. .

4.5 Selection and recruitment of the participants

Robinson (2014) emphasises that sampling (selection in qualitative research) is a significant component of data generation in qualitative research. Hejaz (2006) postulates that sampling is simply a procedure of selecting a portion of a group to represent the whole. If the researcher believes and considers a portion of the population are a representation of the whole, the analysis of the findings will be very comprehensive (Hejaz, 2006), but also quantitative. Extraordinarily, while sampling in qualitative studies gets inadequate attention, , the literature indicates that priority is given to sampling in quantitative research (Cohen et al., 2011, 2018). There is a vast gap concerning the sampling in the qualitative research. Gentles et al. (2015) alludes that sampling has to do with selecting the sources from which data will be generated to answer the research questions. In a case study, sampling assisted me as a researcher to comprehend the case and also the phenomenon that is being studied (Stake, 1995). I must hasten to explain here that my use of the term ‘sampling’ is not what Hejaz (2006) describes as obtaining a portion that represents the whole. That kind of sampling is done by quantitative researchers who seeks generalisation of the findings. My use of this term is actually, meaning selection of participants that will constitute a manageable number for a qualitative inquiry.

Kelly (2010) elucidates that sampling is the main component for social research as it offers the foundation of what the participants say about the phenomenon, irrespective of their orientation. In selecting and recruiting the participants and the cases to take part in the study, researchers use different sampling methods to identify the case, the participants and the research site. Scholars state that sampling methods can be convenience sampling, quota sampling, purposive sampling, snowball sampling, volunteer sampling, and theoretical sampling as examples of qualitative sampling techniques or methods (Cohen et al., 2011, 2018; Emmel, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The non-probability sampling (can only be applied in qualitative research) because the researcher works with only the exact cases and participants to study the phenomenon, or when the total population is not known (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This practice differs from the probability sampling that is pertinent to quantitative studies whereby, the researcher selects the subjects that epitomise the broader population (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010). The participants' selection was riddled with how the sites were selected which was purposive and intended at focusing on the known categories of leadership that have an influence (Cohen et al., 2011) in schools.

Since this research design is qualitative, I considered it crucial to utilise the sampling that is non-probability. By employing snowball sampling technique, researchers are capable to identify, understand and gain discernments into the subject (Etikan et al., 2016). Specifically, within non-probability sampling, snowball sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that is utilised in qualitative research; this is type of sampling that allows the researcher to select a small group of participants (who fit the research criteria), and then a researcher can question those participants if they would like to recommend other potential participants that can be part of the study (Parker et al., 2020). Parker et al. (2020) further discusses that snowball sampling can be joined with purposive sampling and this has caused so many criticism with regards to snowball sampling's lack of validity, generalisation and representativeness. Campbell et al. (2020) state that in qualitative research, researchers utilise purposive sampling to help select the participants that fit the purpose. The benefits of snowball sampling is that it enables the researcher to access the participants that have characteristics that cannot be accessed easily (Naderifar, 2017). In the context of this study, I selected 18 participants for the study (5 educators in each school). In this order, 1 Principal, 1 Deputy Principal, 1 Departmental Head, 1 Senior/Master Teacher and 1 ECT in each school. The participants divulged that there was support mechanism beyond the school level, I then requested more participants to be part of the study such as 2 Subject Advisor from Thabo Mofutsanyana district. Moriarty (2011) alludes that researchers use premeditated criteria to handpick participants. The participants were purposefully selected according to the following criteria: a. ECTs-they should have 1-5 years of teaching experience, be within the age group of 24-46 years of age and work for Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Education Officials (stakeholders-SMT) – 3 or more years of working experience as SMT, have at least more than 6 years of experience as an educator and should be based in Thabo Mofutsanyana District. Master/Senior teachers- 10-15 years of teaching experience. The close proximity of the three chosen secondary schools allowed me to easily access the participants.

4.6 Data generation methods or techniques

In the introduction part of this chapter, I emphasised that this research employed an interpretive research paradigm and that the design was qualitative. The case study methodology was utilised, and specifically, it was multiple case methodology. The prominence of the orientation of other concerns in the study with the research methods are significant. These comprise the relevance of the language utilised to outline various characteristics of the study such as the methods utilised and of how data was generated. To that end, it is vital to indicate that while other researchers such as quantitative researchers use 'data collection' term, I used data generation over data collection. However, I am well aware that this might cause a debate looking at how the latter is preferred by other qualitative scholars, such as, Cohen et al. (2018); Creswell (2009); Creswell and Creswell (2018); and Creswell and Poth (2018). Nonetheless, Merriam (2009) warns qualitative researchers about utilising data collection concept as she states that it misleads because it portrays an image that the data is out there waiting for researchers collect it just like a parcel waiting to be collected by a recipient. The idea is further corroborated by Mthembu (2018) who clearly states that knowledge is socially constructed and it cannot be just collected. On the same note, Goldkuhl (2019) warns qualitative researchers that it is really problematic to use the data collection concept in a qualitative study because it may suggest that a researcher just picks up the data that has been waiting to be picked up or to be collected to use in their study. This study chose to utilise the interpretive paradigm as elucidated in Section 4.2 of this chapter. This is grounded in the research's ontological and epistemological assumptions as previously explained in the research paradigm section. In the interpretive paradigm, the knowledge and meanings are constructed through humans engaging with one another, as such, subjective epistemology and relative ontology succeed (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; van Rensburg et al., 2010). It would be against this background that using data collection in relation to this interpretive qualitative multiple case study appeared to be inappropriate. It is evident that data collection is more relative to the positivism paradigm because the researcher engaging in quantitative study adopts the data collection such as using surveys (Goldkuhl, 2019). As a matter of fact, the positivism paradigm stands with the objective epistemology and a realism ontology (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Scotland, 2012). The above reasons contribute to the concept of data collection being rejected in this qualitative, interpretive multiple case study, and data generation is supported.

When engaging on the fieldwork in a multiple case study positioned within the interpretive paradigm, the scholar plays the key role in understanding the phenomenon under study as s/he is typically involved in a continued and serious experience with participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). Koch (1995) believes that both the researcher and the participants are of the equal significance in a qualitative research interview. The interviewer seeks to construct meaning of the phenomenon from the participants' perspectives (Chowdhury & Shil, 2021). This thinking aligns with Wimpenny and Gass (2000), who sustain that meaning is a co-creation between the participants and the researcher during the process of data generation. In this study, data generation methods used were semi-structured interviews (primary source of data generation in this study) and documents reviews (secondary source of data generation in this study) (Cohen et al., 2011). According to Creswell (2020), when the scholar chooses to generate qualitative data, the primary thing they ought to consider is what kind of methods and interview methods would best permit them to understand the main phenomena and provide answers to the study's objectives. Among all the qualitative data-gathering methods, I selected the semi-structured interviews and document review. Explanation by Chowdhury and Shil (2021) reveals that the main data sources in qualitative case study are interviews and official document.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews along with document reviews were selected with the aim to crystallise data generation (Maree 2007, 2010, 2016). Maree (2016) postulates that crystallisation is validating the findings by utilising multiple data generation methods. In crystallising, the inquirer gathers observations, images, texts, interviews and cover organised extensive and diverse data generated from the participants (Stewart & Gapp, 2017). Using more than one data generation method is called crystallisation in qualitative research (de Vries & Reinmann, 2018; Lewis & College, 2011; Maree, 2007, 2010, 2016; Stewart & Gapp, 2017; Stewart et al., 2017; Varpio et al., 2017). Crystallisation is supported in this study because it assisted me to view the components of qualitative research by using different data generation methods thereby, improving the trustworthiness of the study (Maree, 2007, 2010, 2016). Moreover, Ellingson (2014) and Polsa (2013) clarify crystallisation is used to conduct qualitative research. Because this study adopted interpretive paradigm and produced a subjective epistemological stance of generating knowledge and relative ontology such as the meaning was established through interacting of researchers with the participants; this made crystallisation to be the preferred option (de Vries & Reinmann, 2018). Crystallisation inclines on the social constructionism position epistemologically by quality of its highlighting on

construction of knowledge through interactive communication and collaboration between the scholar and the participants taking part in the study while data generation is in process (de Vries & Reinmann, 2018).

It is clear that crystallisation is not a new concept in qualitative research, even though other people may argue that it is not popularly utilised (Stewart et al., 2017). Many researcher have been using, and many are still using triangulation, a term, which is more appropriate, ontologically and epistemologically for quantitative designs. Ellingson (2014) alludes that due to generating deepened and complex interpretation, crystallisation results in rich knowledge about the investigated phenomenon. Consequently, when the data generation is in process, it furthermore allows the researchers' voice(s) (which actively improves active interpretations of data) (de Vries & Reinmann, 2018). I can highlight that crystallisation views both the researcher and the participants as equally important in generating data. I strongly believe that crystallisation postulates that if there is no researcher then there will be no data to be generated, on the same note, if there is no participant, then there is no data to be generated. To this end, crystallisation highlights producing rich and thick descriptions of the phenomenon that is being studied (de Vries & Reinmann, 2018). Producing thick, rich and in-depth data is the heart of qualitative studies, in particular case study (Rule & John, 2011; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018).

The present study chose not to adopt the triangulation under the circumstance that it is precluded in the qualitative multiple case study because of its viewed lenience concerning the positivist paradigm (Maree, 2016). Nonetheless, utilising crystallisation in this study may trigger additional argument since most academics perceive the practice of utilising multiple data generation as triangulation. However, Maree (2010) alludes that triangulation is commonly utilised in quantitative research to confirm and generalise the the research findings. Regardless of many qualitative researchers utilising triangulation in their studies, there is strong evidence that they fail to support their adoption of the triangulation concept within their philosophical paradigm (Maree, 2010, 2016).

Farquhar et al. (2020) and Polsa (2013) elucidate that triangulation was developed to calculate the distance between two or more destinations by making use of the vertices of a triangle and a series of triangles. When one analyses the triangles and conceptualises the statement by Farquhar et al. (2020), it is clear one does not need to be an intellect to grasp that triangulation

is rooted within the positivist paradigm and quantitative designs, since fundamental to its establishment was a practice of triangles, angles, measurements, and numbers. Varpio et al. (2017) share the same views and postulates that triangulation was originally formed to conduct surveys for geographical and navigational purposes to allow the researcher to pinpoint the location on the map. To this end, researchers utilise triangulation to validate quantitative data (Polsa, 2013).

As much as there are multiple scholars who utilised triangulation to validate their study and to ensure trustworthiness, some scholars, such as Maree (2010) and Varpio et al. (2017) caution that triangulation causes methodological and philosophical confusion within qualitative studies since it deals with single realities, rigid structures and fixed points. Crystallisation was used instead of triangulation to establish trustworthiness in this interpretive, multi-case study, acknowledging the challenges and nuances of the research context. Triangulation was purposely avoided due to its potential methodological and philosophical limitations. I selected crystallisation because it enriches the research quality and also promotes a profound comprehension and more difficult findings that reflect multifaceted realities (Polsa, 2013). de Vries and Reinmann (2018) supported me in selecting crystallisation because they comprehend it as a protracted form of triangulation; while Polsa (2013) states that when comparing crystallisation and triangulation, the triangulation is seen as below crystallisation due to crystallisation being a postmodernist deconstruction of triangulation which is valued way above the latter. To this extent, I strongly believe that crystallisation was suitable for this study.

4.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Cohen et al. (2011, p. 349) define interviews as “an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, which sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production”. Corroborated by Merriam (2019) together with Kvale (2015) who stress the matter of interviews as being discussions between the participant and the researcher whereby one of them probes questions while another replies. As postulated by Maree (2010), interviews offer the researcher with rich detailed data that helps him/her to comprehend the participants’ construction of (epistemological assumption) knowledge and (ontological assumption) reality. Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2018) define an interview as an interchange of

sights between two or more individuals in a matter of mutual interest. These researchers further regard interviews as a flexible tool for data generation, allowing multi-sensory networks in the form of verbal, non-verbal, seen, spoken, and heard data to be used (Cohen et al., 2018). To this end, some researchers including Cohen et al. (2018); Creswell and Creswell (2018); and Lincoln and Guba (1985b) allude a multiplicity of interviews including standardised interviews, in-depth interviews, structured interviews, unstructured interviews. Cohen et al. (2018) postulate that in the qualitative research, a researcher goes to the research site during normal working hours to conduct their interviews. This study utilised semi-structured interviews for generating data.

Cohen et al. (2011) elucidates that semi-structured interviews can be viewed as a data elicitation technique utilised by a qualitative researcher whereby, they construct a set of questions. There has to be sufficient open-ended questions so that the researcher can be provided with rich descriptive data regarding the phenomenon and researchers are also able to ask probing questions. Merriam (2009) states that semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to re-arrange the questions they have set, to how it seems fit for the interview. It allows flexibility in a study and it is very convenient for a researcher. With regards to this study, I used the semi-structured interview because it provided me as a researcher the flexibility in a sense that it allowed me to prepare and construct questions that guided the conversation and discussions that I had with the participants during the interviews. However, it also allowed me as researcher to do follow up questions from the responses I received from the participants on the phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2018). This argument is also shared by numerous academics as well (Jamshed, 2014; Leech, 2015). These academics further highlight the fact that semi-structured interviews are appropriate for qualitative research. Semi-structured interviews were relevant because the study is qualitative in nature. Semi-structured interviews was selected because the participants are allowed to express themselves, their views and experiences freely (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews allowed me as researcher to use to solicit Principal, Deputy Principal, Departmental Head, Senior Educators and Early Career Teachers (ECTs) views about the nature of support that is provided to ECTs by the Education Officials. I conducted the face to face interviews and I went to the research site to conduct the interviews. Prior to the interviews beng conducted, I contemplated on the most suitable time to conduct the interviews. I kept in mind that it should not disturb the work time of the participants. I then arranged with

each participant the appropriate time for them to have conversations about their views and experiences regarding the phenomenon. I took the advice of Van Nieuwenhuis (2013) who stated it is advisable for a researcher to conduct interviews in an environment where there are no interruptions and disruptions. Pseudonyms were utilised as a way of maintaining the participants' confidentiality and anonymity and of the research sites (Coffelt, 2017). Audio recorded with a smart phone was used for every interview conducted with the sampled participants (Matlala & Matlala, 2018; Ratakumwa et al., 2020).

Semi-structured interviews also have disadvantages. Researchers such as Cohen et al. (2011), Bertram and Christiansen (2014) debate that the interviews can be expensive and thus, taking too much time. Moreover, semi-structured interviews are likely to lead researcher biases and anonymity is problematic to maintain (Cohen et al., 2018). To deal with the problem of researcher biasness. I utilised different techniques such member-checking whereby I checked with my participants if my own interpretations were accurate to what they shared and consistent with their views and experiences. In that way my interpretations will not minimise their expressed experiences and views. Also, after recording and transcribing data, the transcripts were sent back to the participants. In that way, I ensured that they checked that our discussions are accurate. I also assured the participants about the confidentiality and anonymity issues.

4.6.2 Documents reviews

The second technique documents review was utilised to elicit data for this study. According to scholars such as Bailey (2007) and Nieuwenhuis (2007), documents can be utilised in addition other data that is collected by other means such as interviews. Documents are recognised for providing supplementary data that helps in gaining a comprehensive representation of the phenomenon (Yin, 2003). Documents have a supplementary value is providing us with further evidence that support the data generated (Burke & Christiansen). Moreover, documents provide a perception concerning what is happening in an institution (Cohen et al., 2011). Documents remain the most significant basis of data to any individual in search of endorsed proceedings as evidence that the event took place (Cohen et al., 2018). The documents consent the scholar to trace events that took place, when they took place and who was involved when the events took place (Chowdhury & Shil, 2021). Moreover, Bowen (2009) suggests that documents reviews are a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents (either printed or electronic) with the intention of investigating and interpreting data to elicit meaning, gain in-

depth comprehension and develop empirical evidence. Furthermore, documents reviews feature specific events and include public records, minutes of the meetings, reports, correspondence, personal papers, visual documents, physical materials, and artefacts (Maree, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In the context of this study, the documents that were utilised were professional development programmes, departmental reports from Departmental Heads and minutes of departmental meetings. Moreover, I was also heedful of the likelihood of being able to get access to documents that supported the findings of the interview (De Vos et al., 2005). To avoid this unfortunate encounter, I asked principals for permission to be able to access and analyse the documents pertaining to records of their measures of support provided to the ECTs. Also, school principals were informed about the precautions and ethical considerations such as erasing the schools' names on the documents. Upon receiving, under the consent of the participants, I made copies of such documents.

4.6.3 Data generation instruments

This part presents information concerning the use and application of the instruments that were used to generate data for this study. It is advisable for a researcher to prepare themselves intensively when conducting a qualitative multiple case study research. Mohajan (2018) advocates for this notion warns that such are designs often consume too much and demand a prolonged time for data generation, analysis and interpretation process. To circumvent such occurrence, I guaranteed that intensive preparation took place before, during and after data generation. Firstly, I developed the Interview Protocol (IP) that was used to guide the interview process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Designing the IP was significant in making sure that the interview process was as planned and not disrupted. The design of the IP was informed by the research questions, emerging themes from literature, and the theoretical framework. Prominently, the Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) approved the IP as it was submitted to it for approval during the ethical clearance application. This evidently demonstrates all the questions that were asked during the interviews were suitable for this study.

Secondly, that all the interviews that were conducted with sampled studies were audio recorded utilising the audio recorder and using a smart phone with every participant's consent (Matlala

& Matlala, 2018; Ratakumwa et al., 2020). According to Khan (2014), audio recordings permit the protection of the correct account of the interviews which can be replayed for analysing the data generated. I used audio-recording so that I could become familiar with the generated data as I was able to replay the audio recording as many times as I wanted. Lastly, I developed a Document Review Schedule (DRS) which gives out information about the type of documents that were reviewed in relation to the the nature of support provided to the Early Career Teachers such as invitation to training, minutes of the meetings, monitoring tools and programmes of training. This then verifies that the questions that were asked during the interview process were appropriate in this present study. Documents that were evaluated using DRS are explained in Section 4.7.2 of this chapter. Since the study was within interpretivism paradigm it has guided the study to generate data through interviews and document reviews because it seeks to understand the meaning, experiences and perspectives of the participants in the study hence the study utilised the above-mentioned data generation instruments because they directly link to the interpretivism paradigm.

4.7 Data analysis method

Data analysis includes arranging, defining, accounting for, and elucidating data in terms of the participants' explanation and comprehension of the matter by perceiving all the patterns, themes, and categories from the generated data (Cohen et al., 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Percy and Kostere (2015) state that qualitative data analysis is an interpretive research method to categorise themes after capturing major information groups for evaluation. To be able to make meaning of the generated data, the study used the thematic data analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for classifying, analysing, and reporting themes within data patterns (Braun et al., 2018). Dawati (2020, p.62) stated that "Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that researchers use to systematically organise and analyse complex data sets." Furthermore, Dawati (2020) explains that it involves identifying themes in the generated data that can represent the data sets. Moreover, Dawati (2020) explains that for the researcher to be able to identify themes, they have to engage in intensive reading of the transcribed data (King, 2004). Sharing similar views, Cavedish (2011), reveals that thematic analysis involves reading the transcribed data systematically, which is the vital aspect of thematic analysis because it helps the researcher produce good quality with their study. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis assists researchers in being flexible when it comes to classifying, defining and interpreting patterns (themes) within a data set in a comprehensive manner.

Thematic analysis gives the researcher an opportunity to perceive and comprehend the collective experiences and meanings that are shared by the participants through data generation (Braun & Clarke, 2012). For a study to be relevant, coherent and to maintain rigour, the researcher will have to apply the six-step guide proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). I adopted the six steps to help me analyse data, group the data into relevant themes, and, most importantly, meet the study's objectives. The six-phase, according to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 90), are "guidelines that should not be compromised or used in place or replaced as linear, prescriptive and flexible rules during analysis, but rather used according to their connection to the research question(s) and objectives alongside the available data."

The study adopted the six-phase guide provided by Braun and Clark (2006), which functions as a crucial plan for steering the analysis. The steps are as follows: Phase 1: Become familiar with the data. This phase incepts the researcher getting familiar with data by critically and intensively reading the data. This step also helps the researcher to know the type of themes that will emerge from the data and the possible number of themes that will emerge from the data (Dawati, 2020). Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2012) argue that this phase involves the researcher reading and re-reading the textual texts, such as interview transcripts and, listening to audio recordings, and then transcribing them. In my case, I transcribed the audio, I comprehensively read through generated data and wrote down notes. Phase 2: Generate initial codes – Coding entails researcher identifying the relevant data in each data set, then coding them or labelling them with a phrase of a few words that represent the meaning of the data fragments to the researcher (Terry et al., 2018). I highlighted sections of the transcribed data and then provide codes for them to outline their content. Phase 3: Search for themes - Braun and Clarke (2006) clarified that this phase will begin with a list of codes picked up from the data segments. The importance of this phase is to help the researcher spot the patterns emerging across the whole data set (Chamberlain, 2015). Therefore, I had to analyse and combine the codes to form an overarching theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Brown and Clarke (2006) point out "a theme captures something important about the data in relation to a research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (p.10). I looked through the highlighted codes and connect the pattern out of them. Then, I began with creating overarching themes out of the patterns discovered. Phase 4: Review themes - The phase of reviewing themes is essential, as the themes are now shaped,

clarified more or even rejected by the researcher (Terry et al., 2018). Terry et al. (2018) further state that the "reviewing phase is like a quality control exercise to ensure that the themes work well in relation to the coded data, the dataset, and the research question. In some instances, the review of themes alongside the dataset confirms that they actually do work well and tell a distinctive and meaningful story that answers the research question." (p.63). Quality checking forms part of this phase; the first thing to do is to check whether the themes relate to the transcribed data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I reviewed whether the discovered themes are useful and error-free. Then, I chose the relevant themes that relate to the transcribed data. Phase 5: Define themes- This phase has to do with defining and naming the themes, that is, "identifying the essence of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.92). In this phase, the researcher has to clearly indicate what is different and specific about each theme and formulate sub-themes if necessary (Braun & Clarke). After compiling the themes, I named and defined each of the themes. I clarified the uniqueness and relevance of each theme and formulated sub-themes if need be.

The last and 6th phase of thematic analysis is to write a report. Braun and Clarke (2006) elucidate that in thematic analysis, the report should demonstrate the validity of the analysis. In this phase, a researcher should make sure that the analysis is coherent, logical and, most importantly, meaningful (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Braun and Clarke (2012) further discuss that when a researcher lacks sufficient data, the report will be weak and not coherent. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to write a report with enough data to convince the reader that the data is really in the pattern you claimed it to be. Consequently, I wrote the analysis of the collected data, considering that the data should be logical, coherent and relevant to the focus of the study. Thematic analysis is pertinent to this study because it helped me make sense of the generated data as it assisted me into categorising data into suitable themes and analysed the available data. To thoroughly analyse the documents, data was reviewed and interpreted for the extraction of meaning and developing empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009). Documents were reviewed using Document Review Schedule. I analysed and synthesised data from documents, making sure that it was accurate through notice of meeting against the meeting's agenda and minutes.

4.8 Issues of trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the point to which the findings are a true reflection of the opinions of the participants who were interviewed (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). Krefling (1991) corroborated the same view that trustworthiness is about making sure that the findings in a qualitative research are authentic and quality. Qualitative researchers utilise the trustworthiness concept as a wide concept that includes criteria that guarantees trustworthiness of the study. In this multiple case study, I borrowed from Lincoln and Guba (1985a) who are regarded as inventors of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) established the four criteria of makes sure that trustworthiness in qualitative research. Curtin and Fossey (2007); and Lincoln and Guba (1986) present credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as alternative concepts which are suitable to determine the trust in qualitative research and they are discussed next.

4.8.1 Credibility

Credibility requires the researcher to institute the authenticity of the research study's conclusions and directly associate the findings with reality (Moran, 2022). Krefling (1991) postulates that progress of truth in findings reveals the credibility of the study This element is very vital in this study as it encouraged me to be vigilant against any biases that I might have had; therefore, I made use of member-checking when conducting the research. To make sure that the study was credible, I made sure that all the findings from the three selected schools (participants) was honest. I ensured that I prolonged member-checking process with the participants and also engaged in peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985a). In these schools, all participants were given time enough time to read the transcripts of the interviews and the analysis of the documents to confirm if it authentically reflects their inputs. On top of that, I integrated member-checking to guarantee the credibility of my study. Member-checking includes providing the participants with the interpreted data for them to institute credibility (Candela, 2019). In this case, I gave the transcribed data to the participants to verify if the data is correct. This allowed me to go through the transcribed data with participants to check whether it is accurate or not.

4.8.2 Transferability

Transferability fundamentally means that researchers should offer comprehensive information of their study to permit readers to comprehend the research procedures and potentially replicate it in similar contexts (Cohen et al., 2011; Maree, 2007). I provided detailed descriptions of the study's context, including providing the school's profiles, methodology, research sites the theoretical framework, and the participants. This information influences comparability and allows readers to comprehend the study's context. I thoroughly explained the research process, the utilised data generations, and thoroughly explained how the process of data analysis was utilised step by step so that it will be easier for other researchers to examine whether this study is suitable for their context or not.

4.8.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to an assessment of the quality of the integrated process of data generation, data analysis and theory generation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition, dependability refers to the consistency of reviewing the findings that are similar (Merriam, 1998). Peer examination is used in this study to establish dependability, and the final product was submitted to internal and external reviewers for observation and examination. Research peers were also allowed to have a look at the findings and provide their own suggestions, opinions and criticism of the study.

4.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability processes show how well the research's findings are supported by the data generated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The fourth criterion Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed is confirmability. In qualitative research, confirmability is a method that is utilised to avoid the researcher presenting findings based their own biases and personal preferences, but to allow it to be based on the participants' views and experiences. To ensure confirmability, I applied the confirmability audit and I provided other researchers with the methodological process of how the research was done (Seale, 1999). I made sure that the participants checked my interpretations to check if they are consistent and accurate to their expressed views and experiences. To ensure confirmability, I explained all the research steps in this study and kept

all the records of the of activities that were conducted in this study. Furthermore, during the interview process, I ensured that member-checking took place, which meant that the participants checked whether my interpretations were aligned with what they shared. I also gave the participants the transcripts for them to check to read and confirm that the transcripts were accurate to the data they shared. The participants were allowed to remove some information if they felt like it would expose them to some sort of risk.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Research ethics can be clarified as the values about what is right or wrong (Kumar, 2011). It is very important to be sensitive when it comes to participants, to protect them from harm and to respect them while conducting a study. The participants were told that participating in this study is voluntary and no harm will come to them if they decide to withdraw from the study. The participants were informed that the study will use pseudonyms to protect their identity. I formulated consent forms and letters that participants signed to show that they agree to be part of the study. Furthermore, I drew letters asking for permission from the school's principals to conduct my research in selected schools. In addition, I asked for permission from the Free State Department of Education to conduct my research and was granted permission, and lastly, I requested permission from the UKZN ethics committee.

I informed the participants that they were allowed to withdraw at any stage from the research process and they will not be disadvantaged in any way. I prioritised keeping all the information provided confidential and that the identity of the participants remained private and confidential. The researcher's password-protected laptop was used to store all information electronically and only my supervisor and I can access the information. The safety of the participants was priority, hence I made sure that they were not harmed in any way, both emotionally and physically. The participants were provided with all the transcribed documents so that they could check and verify whether all the data is accurate and represents what they shared. The final research report will be made available to them on request. I highly consider sensitivity and neutrality regarding departmental information.

4.10 Limitations of the study

It is vital that the limitations do not negatively disturb the credibility and the overall trustworthiness of the findings (Hofstee, 2006). Most teachers are unavailable during working hours as this will affect their contact time with learners, I requested to meet with them during lunch-breaks and during their free periods to avoid disturbing their work. I work far from my research site, it also affected my working hours and I tried to tackle this by applying for a study leave to conduct my interviews and research-related matters.

4.11 Delimitations

The study only focused on the schools that were within the Thabo Mofutsanyana district and the study only focused on schools that have ECTs.

4.12 Conclusion

The chapter presents the research design and the methodology that I chose in order to explore the nature of support that is provided to the ECTs by education officials in schools and the justification for my choice. I started by outlining the different paradigms available and discussed the interpretive paradigm that was adopted for this study, clearly explaining the ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology for the study. Since I intended generating through understanding the experiences of the participants, I utilised the case study methodology within a qualitative approach. Furthermore, I discuss the data generation methods and instruments that were utilised during data generation. Then, I discussed the data analysis method that was employed which is thematic analysis. Moreover, I discussed the trustworthiness issues and ethical considerations employed in the study and I conclude by discussing the limitations of the study. The following chapter discusses the data interpretations and analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS:

EHULENE SECONDARY SCHOOL

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented a comprehensive discussion of the research design and methodology. In this chapter, I present data analysis of the data generated in eHulene Secondary School (ESS). This chapter presents the analysis of one research site which is the eHulene School. As mentioned in the previous chapter that this study utilises the multiple case study, each school is presented as a case and each school is presented as a chapter. Therefore, Chapter Five presents analysis and findings from the data generated at eHulene Secondary School while Chapter Six presented the findings from data generated at Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary School (TMSS), and Chapter Seven presents findings from data generated at Nkonzo Secondary Schools (NSS) respectively. As alluded in Chapter One, I communicated a multifaceted understanding of Early Career Teachers (ECT) experiences in receiving support from the Education Officials in order to comprehend how the latter is executed during the time of providing support to the ECTs, considering the forms of support that are offered to the ECTs, the factors that hinder or facilitate the support provided and considering the challenges and benefits of the ECTs receiving support from Education Officials in schools. In generating and presenting data in this Chapter and the next two chapters (Chapter Six and Seven), I was guided by the Interview Protocol (IP), the research questions and the underpinning theoretical framework.

Inherently, the presentation and analysis of findings in this Chapter and Chapter Six and Chapter Seven are double-edged. The beginning part of these three chapters, I commence by presenting the profiles of the participants who took part in the study. I then provide a detailed analysis of themes that emerged after the interview transcript. In doing this, I used thematic analysis to analyse the data generated and to explore the nature of support that was provided to the ECTs.

The study adopted the six-step guide provided by Braun and Clark (2006), which functions as a crucial plan for guiding the analysis. These steps assisted in making sense of the generated

data and to navigate how the Education Officials offer support to ECTs and where they lack to provide support to the ECTs. When discussing the emerged themes, I utilised the work of Corden and Sainsbury (2006) and Eldh et al. (2020) who postulate that it is essential to utilise the *verbatim* quotes when presenting the data that is generated from the participants. The aforementioned scholars further clarify that *verbatim* quotes have various benefits, as they comprise impression, evidence, representation, elucidation, offering unambiguousness of the text, improving the readability and firming up the findings (Corden & Sainsbury, 2006; Eldh et al., 2020). In addition, the documents that were obtained from the participants are used to substantiate or detect available inconsistencies that may be found in the generated data (Chowdhury & Shil, 2021).

5.2 Profiling of the participants

The profiles are detailed, as they comprise the participants' name, age group, gender, position, qualifications, teaching experience, and years of experience in their current position, the type of the school and the name of the school, as well as the location of the school. In this essence, to guard the identity of all the participants and of the schools, I used *pseudonyms*. Coffelt (2017) corroborated the idea that *pseudonyms* are utilised to preserve anonymity and confidentiality of the research sites and of the participants. The selected participants were 6 from 1 of the 3 selected schools. They held different positions in their workplace ranging from Post level (PL) 1 to Post level 4. Some of the participants were acting in the position they occupied. The experience of the participants ranged from 4 years to 25 years. The biographical details of the participants are presented as demonstrated in Table 1 below:

Participant's name	Gender	Position	Highest Qualifications	Teaching experience	Years as Education official	Name of school	Location
1. Annabelle	Female	Subject Advisor	Advanced Diploma in Education Leadership and management.	15 years	7 years	eHulene SSS	Semi-urban area
2. Mrs Khensani	Female	Principal (Acting)	PGCE	11 years	2 years	eHulene SSS	Semi-urban
3. Mr Tinyiko	Male	Deputy Principal	Advanced Diploma	25 years	9 years	eHulene SSS	Semi-urban

4. Ms Ntsako	Female	Departmental Head	PGCE	5 years	1 year	eHulene SSS	Semi-urban
4. Mrs Whatu	Female	Senior Teacher	Advanced Certificate	23 years	6 years	eHulene SSS	Semi-urban
6. Ms Octavia	Female	Early Career Teacher (ECT)	PGCE	4 years	0 years	eHulene SSS	Semi-urban

Table 1. Biographical information of the research participants.

Table 1 above presents a brief biographical detail of the participants. The 6 participants were selected for participation in the current qualitative multiple case study (as earlier vividly explained in the previous chapter) and they are from one selected school given the pseudonym eHulene Senior Secondary School. The eHulene Secondary School is located in a semi-urban area. The next part presents the profile of the participants associated with eHulene Secondary School.

Mrs Annabelle: The Subject Advisor

Mrs Annabelle is a female subject advisor at the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She worked with the eHulene-Secondary school that is located at semi-urban area in QwaQwa. She holds Senior Teacher Diploma, and her highest qualification is Advanced Diploma in leadership and management. Mrs Annabelle was a teacher for at least 15 years and 7 years' experience as a subject advisor. Amongst the sampled participants (Subject Advisor), she is the most experienced subject advisor. Prior to her appointment as a subject advisor, she was a Departmental Head of Geography and Life Sciences where she served for 2 years. She is now a subject advisor for Geography.

Mrs Khensani: The School Principal

Mrs Khensani is a female principal at the eHulene Secondary School located at the Semi-urban area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and her highest qualification being PGCE certificate and she was a teacher with 11 years' experience and 2 years' experience as a school principal (Acting). Before being appointed as a School Principal, she served as a Departmental Head for English for 4 years and then was later

appointed as a Deputy Principal and served for 3 years. Out of the sampled participants in the cohort of principals she is the least experienced.

Mr Tinyiko: A Deputy Principal

Mr Tinyiko is a male Deputy Principal at eHulene Secondary School located at the Semi-urban area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. He has a Senior Teaching Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Leadership and Management. He had worked as an Educator for 25 years and has served as a Deputy Principal for 9 years. Before being appointed as a Deputy Principal, he had served as a Departmental Head of Languages for 8 years at the same school. Out of the selected participants in the cohort of Deputy Principals, he is the only male and he is the most experienced Deputy Principal.

Mrs Ntsako: A Departmental Head

Mrs Ntsako is female Departmental Head at the eHulene Secondary School in the Semi-urban area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She holds the qualification of Bachelor of Education degree FET phase majoring in English and Sesotho. She has been an educator for 5 years and has served as a Departmental Head for only 1 year. She is a Departmental Head of English. Out of the sampled participants in the cohort of Departmental Heads she is the only female and the least experienced.

Mrs Whatu: A Senior Teacher

Mrs Whatu is a female Senior Teacher at eHulene Secondary School in the Semi-urban area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She holds Secondary Teaching Diploma and her highest qualification is Advanced Certificate in Business Studies. She has worked for 23 years as an educator and has been appointed as a Senior Teacher for 6 years. She mentors the ECTs who specialise in Business Studies. Out of the selected participants in the cohort of the Senior Teachers she is the most experienced Senior Teacher.

Mrs Octavia, an Early Career Teacher

Mrs Octavia is a female Early Career Teacher (ECT) at eHulene Secondary School located in the semi-urban area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She has a Bachelor of Arts and her highest qualification is PGCE certificate. She has 4 years' experience as an Educator. She teaches Business studies and Life Orientation. Out of the selected participants of the cohort of ECTs, she is the least experienced ECT.

5.3 Presentation of findings thematically discussed

Utilising audio recordings, field notes, and documents, I transcribed data and set it into portions that were smaller to develop themes that were emerging from various cases while being steered by the research questions and theoretical framework. I utilised the *verbatim* quotes and documents attained from the participants. It helped me as a researcher to add-on, validate or even to identify contradiction from the generated data (Chowdhury & Shil, 2021). Moreover, my analysis was buttressed by the principles of thematic analysis. Dawati (2020) explains that it involves identifying themes in the generated data that can represent the data sets. I followed the following phases to analyse the data: Phase 1: familiarised myself with the data; Phase 2: Generated initial codes; Phase 3: Searched for themes; Phase 4: Reviewed themes; Phase 5: Defined themes; the last and 6th phase of thematic analysis is to write a report. Four broad themes emerged during the data analysis and they are named below:

Correspondingly, in developing and presenting these themes through thematic analysis, I constructed four broad themes namely, (a) The perspectives of the ECTs and Education Officials regarding Educator support, (b) The experiences of ECTs in being provided with support by Education Officials, (c) The forms of support that is provided to the ECTs by Education Officials, (d) The rationale for the ECTs needing support from the Education Officials. Similarly, sub-themes emerged from these themes. For example, the sub-themes that were developed from the perspectives of the ECTs and Education Officials regarding Educator support included conducting inductions for the ECTs, supporting the ECTs in attending workshops and providing the ECTs with mental support. Secondly, the sub-themes that emerged from the experiences of the ECTs in being provided with support by the Education Officials included the challenges that are faced by the ECTs; the benefits for the ECTs receiving support; factors that affect support being provided to the ECT. Thirdly, the sub-

themes that emerged from the forms of support that are provided to ECTs by Education Officials are Professional Development, Administrative Support, Emotional Support and Technological support. Lastly, the sub-themes that emerged from the rationale for the ECTs needing support from the Education Officials included the following; to enhance the ECTs' smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher; to assist the ECTs to be more conversant about their subject; to build the ECTs' confidence in their work. To this end, in analysing data that was generated from the participants in the present study, I utilised the Braun and Clarke (2012) elucidation as they highlight that an inductive approach to analysis, developing themes through the generated data itself without considering the themes that are part of other reviewed studies. The emerged themes and sub-themes are presented as indicated below.

5.3.1 The perspectives of Early Career Teachers and Education Officials regarding Educator support

Educator support has to do with the Early Career Teachers being provided with support such as attending trainings, observing other colleagues and being provided with teaching and learning support materials. The evidence from the participants suggested that most Education Officials had a limited understanding of educator support, and therefore, they did not do it correctly in the selected schools. To this end, this broad theme ended up developing three sub-themes. The sub-themes that emerged are (i) Conducting Inductions for the ECTs; (ii) Supporting the ECTs in attending workshops; (iii) Providing the ECTs with mental support. I have presented these themes and the sub-themes below and I have utilised *verbatim* quotes.

(i) Conducting Inductions for the Early Career Teachers

Induction has to take place in a manner where an ECT is showed how to do their work, such as how to use available resources and facilities. The participants disclosed that it was important for induction to take place for the sake of the ECTs. A Departmental Head from school eHulene Ms Ntsako emphasised the importance of sharing information with the ECTs. She further divulged how induction took place in their school:

Educator Support is information given to a new educator about how things are done at school. The ECT gets orientated about their duties as an educator, they get to know their role as an educator towards learners. The

ECT get to be trained and informed about the systems used by the department on how to deliver curriculum coverage and everything and how to manage curriculum, how to deal with social problems that learners deal with, which influenced their performance at school.

Mr Tinyiko, Deputy Principal from school eHulene shared his narratives about how the tools of quality teaching was also made part of educator support and induction programme. Mr Tinyiko echoed his views below:

Educator Support is helping teachers to provide quality education to learners. When we educate educators on how to assist learners with different learning barriers and assist them how to use available tools (Textbooks, charts, computers and projectors) to help them in teaching. Quality teaching is when a teacher teaches relevant content that aligns with the objectives and aims and they use efficient resources to help learners. Moreover, when the teacher encourages critical thinking and problem solving in the classroom.

Mrs Khensani, who is a school principal at school eHulene emphasised the idea of allocating mentors to the ECTs during induction period and providing them with tools. This is how she put it:

My understanding of support is that here is new teacher in the school. The immediate supervisor allocated by me as a principal should support the person to make sure that they carry out their duties without any hassles. They need to provide them with materials and so on. Showing them how to monitor and control books, show them to how to effectively manage a classroom and how to plan and prepare for their lessons. The materials are textbooks, laptops, overhead projectors and white boards. Principal (Khensani) from the school eHulene.

Mrs Whatu from the school eHulene who is a Senior Teacher also shared the sentiments on tools and procedures that can be used to induct the ECTs. This is how she put it:

The first one is through Quality Management System (QMS), whereby as a senior teacher you might visit the ECT informally whereby you apply the SWOT analysis. You check their Strength, their weaknesses, the opportunities and the threats they are exposed to. We normally focus on their weakness and not to judge them but to guide them.

Asked about the educator support and induction programme this is what Mrs Annabelle, a Subject Advisor responsible for school eHulene shared her views. Mrs Annabelle echoed:

As a Subject Advisor, my duty is to assist teachers with the content, teaching and assessment of Geography in Grades 10 to 12. During induction, I assist the ECT with content through teaching them how to teach a specific topic and how to set objectives so that they can clearly deliver the content well prepared. I have noticed that contents such as geomorphology is a bit challenging due to lack of resources and the content is complex and this topic covers a lot of things, therefore during induction stage we normally do mock teaching to show the ECTs how to tackle the content. I as a Subject Advisor normally induct the newly appointed teachers by introducing them to the Annual Teaching Plan and how they need to follow it. I show them how to write lesson plans and how to use the ATP to plan for lessons. I induct the ECTs on how to set formal tasks but it is not something that happens consistently. When they employed during the year, I go to their school during school hours and request to induct them about content and assessments.

Finding from the generated data reveal that the participants comprehend that Educator Support goes hand in hand with induction as it entails supporting ECTs with smooth transition from being students to being teachers. The generated data divulged that the induction focuses on making the ECTs comfortable and familiar with the workplace through introducing them to the staff and showing them facilities utilised at the school.

(ii) Supporting the Early Career Teachers in attending workshops

Educator support includes the school-based workshops and department-based workshops that are aimed at developing ECTs professionally. These workshops normally cover different aspects such as content-based issues. The data generated revealed that the ECTs are supported through workshop attendance. An ECT from school eHulene revealed that she was satisfied with the support that she received from the Education Officials such as through attending workshops that were organised by the Subject Advisors and shared what took place in these spaces. Ms Octavia an ECT from school eHulene echoed that:

My experience was satisfactory in my case. Because I am being supported through attending workshops and I get developed in these workshops, so I feel like that is enough. These workshops address the content-based issues in most cases, we are supported on how to teach certain topics such business functions and top-quality management and how to bolster learners so that

they can pass difficult topics. They basically develop us by giving us teaching strategies and developing our knowledge of the subjects we teach. As much as my experience is satisfactory, there are incidents where I was not treated well, for example during my first year I was not supported on how to set a question paper but the Departmental Head would come and request a question paper and they would criticise how I set the question paper but I was not supported on how to set a standardised question paper.

The data generated revealed that workshop attendance was enough and efficient support for the ECT at the selected school. However, the ECT was not satisfied with how she did not receive support with setting a standardised question paper. Which made her feel mistreated and neglected by the Education Officials. The schools are also expected to offer support however, in this case only the department organised the workshops for ECTs.

(iii) Providing the Early Career Teachers with mental support

Mental support is vital in a work environment and mental support can be provided through informal conversations and allowing the ECTs to confide about their work and personal problems. All Education Officials can provide mental support through informal conversation and creating a healthy working space for the ECTs. The data generated revealed that healthy working environment is also a way of providing mental support to the ECTs. A Senior Teacher (Mrs Whatu) from the school eHulene emphasised how they made sure that mental support was provided to the ECTs in the selected school. Mental support took place through protecting ECTs from being bullied and overworked by older colleagues. She shared that:

Trying by all means to create a healthy working environment by making sure that older teachers do not bully the ECTs in a sense that they give the ECTs their responsibilities and bully them verbally. We normally report such cases to the principal if we become aware of such. This is one way to provide mental support through a healthy working environment.

Mrs Whatu was further questioned on what she meant when she said older staff bullying the ECT, what kind of bullying was she referring to and she shared that:

The older colleagues like to give their responsibilities to the ECT by always delegating duties to the ECTs to do, such as attending virtual meeting, capturing marks for them and supervising their classes when they have free

periods. They blackmail the ECTs and call them young blood implying that ECTs should be active and go wherever they are asked to go.

The above excerpts revealed that the ECTs need mental support as some of them experience being bullied by older and experienced teachers in various ways. The data generated revealed that constituting a healthy working environment is also a way of providing mental support to ECTs.

5.3.2 The experiences of the Early Career Teachers in being provided with support by the Education Officials

During the initial stages of the ECTs' career, they get to encounter different experiences that affects them in various ways. Therefore, the findings from the data generated unearthed various experiences that are faced by the ECTs in the participating schools. Four sub-themes emerged under this main theme during data analysis. And the sub-themes are discussed below. Namely: (i) Challenges that are faced by the Early Career Teachers; (ii) The benefits derived by Early Career Teachers from receiving support; (iii) Factors that affect support that is being provided to the Early Career Teachers; (iv) Available support programmes and policies for Early Career Teachers.

(i) Challenges that are faced by the Early Career Teachers

ECTs come across different challenges at their workplace that affects them in various ways. The findings from data generated revealed that there are various challenges that are experienced by the ECTs in the school context concerning the nature of support that they received and did not receive. Challenges such as a). A lack of support; b). A lack of training; c. A lack of resources and existing poor working conditions; d). Academic decisions and reforms are imposed on the Early Career Teachers; e). Early Career Teachers burdened with many responsibilities; f). Early Career Teachers are assigned to work with overcrowded classrooms.

a. A lack of support provided to the Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials

A lack of support has an undesirable impact on the productivity and affects the effectiveness of the ECTs. It also negatively affects the relationship between the ECTs and the Education

Officials as ECTs end up not trusting the Education Officials due to the negligence of not being trained in certain areas, but the Education Officials demand work that they did not train the ECTs to do. Data generation unearthed that the lack of support has a negative impact on the work ethos of the ECTs and strains the relationship between the ECTs and the Education Officials. A participant who is a Senior Teacher revealed how she did not offer support through guiding the ECT in compiling a lesson plan. Mrs Whatu said:

I did not train the ECT on how to write a lesson plan, and when they are requested to submit the lesson plan then it becomes a problem. It frustrates the ECTs and it often creates tension between the Departmental Head and the ECT. And we are to blame because even now we have not trained them on how to write the lesson plans effectively. She was very hurt and looked discouraged after the incident.

Seemingly, it is not only Mrs Whatu who failed provide support to an ECT through guiding them on how to write a lesson plan. Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head from the same school as Mrs Whatu, divulged how she failed to offer support. She said that:

I did not train an ECT on how to write a lesson plan, and we usually request the teachers to submit the lesson plans by the end of the week. When I requested the ECT to submit the lesson plan, she told me that she did not know how to write the lesson plan, I then snapped at her in front of other colleagues and told her she was taught how to write a lesson plan at the university. I was showing others that I am a member of the SMT and that as a subordinate she has to do as expected. But when I reflected on the whole situation I noticed that I was wrong and I was the one who failed to offer her support by guiding her on how to write a lesson plan in the format we use in our department of languages.

A participant from eHulene revealed that sometimes, the ECTs ended up facing problem with issues that could have been dealt with upon their arrival; issues that they could have been supported with. A Deputy Principal at eHulene School Mr Tinyiko shared that:

Sometimes you experience that an ECT comes up to you with a problem and because we did not offer support to ECT from the get go, such as when the ECT is not performing well and we noticed that the average is very low, we are to blame as the SMT because we did not develop and give the ECT efficient teaching strategies to utilise in order to get good results.

A participant shared how she failed to offer support to the ECTs. She is a principal at eHulene School. Mrs Khensani shared that:

From my side, what I am not doing right. Once I have a new teacher and see that my learners are taught, I normally detach and leave them at the hands of the assigned immediate mentors. I will now sit down with the ECT and hear out their challenges. It is just a matter of meeting in the school premises and greeting each other and that's it.

The data generated divulged that a lack of support from the Education Officials did not only affect the ECTs, but it also affected the ECTs' productivity, and also affected their emotional well-being as it put them under pressure.

b. Lack of training

The findings from this school suggested that when the ECT were not sufficiently trained and worked under poor working conditions, which negatively affected their work and goals. Insufficient training daunts the ECTs. The participants revealed how insufficient training affected them. The findings unmasked how it affected the ECTs in different areas in their work. Mr Tinyiko a Deputy Principal at the eHulene School stated that:

It does discourage them especially the ECTs who took education as shortcut, those who turned to PGCE, they are not fully equipped like those who studied education straight. When they get to the school setting and find all the responsibilities they have to attend to, then they easily get discouraged because they are not well trained.

In corroboration with the preceding *verbatim* quote, a Senior Teacher from eHulene School further shared how the lack of training discouraged the ECTs. Mrs Whatu from eHulene divulged that:

The lack of training does discourage the ECTs. With my experience, we do not offer ECTs with enough training. We do not orientate them about important factors such classroom management and things they are expected to do and not expected to do. We just take them to the classroom assuming that they were trained at the university which is not the case. Now they might have to deal a large number of learners and we did not train them on

classroom management and they become discouraged, because it is really frustrating.

An ECT from eHulene School was asked how she could describe the training from her own perspective. Ms Octavia shared that:

Training can be defined in different ways, training can take place by being taught how to compile a file, how to deliver a lesson and how to handle learners with different barriers. So, if one is not trained, then all these becomes a challenge and affects the ECT which leads them to feel discouraged. For example, with QMS, whereby someone comes and observes you teaching in the classroom and just criticise instead of helping me and advising me.

In contrast to what other participants shared, a Principal of eHulene School did not share the same sentiments. She believed that the ECTs received enough training from varsity and did not need any more training. Mrs Khensani shared that:

I don't know how much more training they need because they are trained during teaching practice. I don't think they need any more training because they go to teaching practice for four years and twice a year and that is enough training.

Mrs Khensani was further asked about the kind of training she was referring to. This is what she said:

They are trained on how to write lesson plans, they are trained on how to prepare for lessons, they are trained on how to deliver lessons and how to teach and assess learners. Others are even trained on how to mark examinations. They are taught about how to teach that specific subject from university for four/five years.

The participants revealed that when the ECTs did not get enough training, they ended up being discouraged which led to incompetence and poor performance. The elucidation by one participant revealed that some Education Officials did not offer ECTs training because they believed that they were efficiently trained from the University.

c. A lack of resources and existing poor working conditions

A lack of resources was identified as one of the factors that hindered the ECTs from effectively delivering their duties effectively and efficiently. This lack of training undermined their efforts

of providing quality teaching to the learners because they were not able to work to their optimal potential due to unavailability of resources. The participants revealed that the lack of resources did not only affect the ECTs, but learners as well. A participant from eHulene school shared views concerning how the lack of resources affected productivity among the ECTs. Ms Octavia, an ECT at eHulene School shared that:

The lack of resources is really a challenge, it affects my effectiveness as an ECT. My subject might request certain teaching aids and they are not available at school for example in Business Studies the business games and stimulations would assist a lot. The management team is not willing to improvise and support us with these needed resources such as games, diagrams and flowcharts. They just want us to figure it out on our own on how to look for alternatives to teach learners without the needed resources which is very stressful for me as an ECT.

Another participant shared how the lack of resources made the work of the ECTs difficult as they did not know how to improvise with the minimal resources that were available. Mrs Whatu, a Senior Teacher from the school eHulene shared that:

It is challenging because the ECTs do not know how to improvise when there is a shortage of resources. In this school, there is lack of infrastructure such as tables and chairs. Sometime learners might have to share which leads to chaotic classrooms and it is difficult for the ECTs to handle. We also have a shortage of textbooks and learners have to share textbooks and that makes it difficult for ECTs to perform well.

Mrs Whatu was further asked how the ECTs were expected to improvise with shortage of desks and chairs. Her response was:

They need to set up seating arrangement that might allow many learners to share a desk and in this way it will make her lessons to flow and be effective.

Another participant, a member of the SMT confirmed and revealed that the lack of resources badly affected the quality of work produced by the ECTs. Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal at eHulene School revealed that:

Lack of resources makes it difficult for the ECTs to put out their full potential and deliver quality teaching. As the SMT we always promise the staff that we will provide those materials but we are unable to because of the insufficient budget that is provided by the DoE.

As much as so many participants complained about how the lack of resources affected the quality of their work but, a Principal at eHulene School shared a different view. She shared that as much as there was a lack of resources, but there were available resources that the ECTs did not utilise at all, and this could be attributed to another challenge as they were expected to utilise these resources to assist them and enhance their productivity. Mrs Khensani disclosed that:

We do not have sufficient resources and it affects their productivity. But I also want to blame the ECTs and teachers as whole, they do not use the available resources. I will make an example, Telkom has provided us with two smart TVs to be utilised by teachers and the ECTs are not using those TVs. So, it is really a problem when they do not use the available resources. I have Business study teachers demanding business games and stimulations, also lack sufficient chemicals for experiments and mathematical instruments.

Furthermore, a participant revealed that a lack of resources was topped with poor working conditions which made it worse for the ECT to produce good results. Another participant, a Departmental Head at eHulene disclosed how the lack of resources was topped with the ECT being expected to work with large numbers and improvise. Mr Ntsako disclosed that:

The lack of resources affects the ECT. When they get to the class they have to deal with a large of numbers with learning barriers. There is lack of resources that is not enough to accommodate these large number of learners, the ECTs cannot be creative because they do not have teaching aids and so on. This is discouraging for the ECTs.

The participants revealed that as much as the ECTs try to be innovative and try to be creative as teachers, the lack of resources hindered them to working to their full capacity and it limited them from meeting their set objectives.

d. Academic decisions and reforms are imposed on the Early Career Teachers

Academic decisions and reforms taken by the department affected the ECTs because these reforms were imposed on the ECT without engaging with them. They affected the premediated plans of the ECTs. The participants disclosed that the department often imposed their own changes to the ECTs and schools as a whole. A Deputy Principal from eHulene supported the statement that the expectations and academic decisions that were made by the department were, sometimes, unrealistic. Mr Tinyiko shared that:

This really affects the ECTs because sometimes the academic decisions that are implemented by the DoE are unrealistic. For example, the ECTs are expected to teach and assess and also to control and monitor the learners work during the period of one hour and that is not sufficient at all. This creates too much pressure for the ECTs and they struggle to cope and it really frustrate the ECTs.

A participant from another school corroborated the above findings, saying that it was not always the case that the curriculum changes occurred, but she explained that sometimes, it was the tasks that were changed. A Senior Teacher from eHulene School shared how these tasks also made it difficult for the ECTs to cope. Mrs Whatu stated:

They do not change the curriculum specifically but they change tasks that are supposed to be done by the learners for example they change the assignment and demand weekly tests, not considering that teachers work with a large number of learners. When are they going to get time to mark the weekly tests?

A participant clearly explained that, as much as the ECTs were called to workshop where information about these reforms was cascaded, she explained that these workshops were totally ineffective considering the large number of attendees which made it hard for the ECTs to learn anything. She elucidated that the academic decisions and reforms that took place within the language department and explained how it affected the ECTs. Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head from the school eHulene School explained:

That is normally the issue but it is not tricky with language subject. Because language deals with the similar content, it is only frustrating when they change the literature. Because now new materials have to be used, the ECTs and other teachers have to read and learn the new prescribed literature. Set questions papers that are usually rejected because they do not meet the standard yet there was no training to support the ECTs with setting question papers. It turns to be frustrating. And as much as they organise workshops to cater for the curriculum changes are not effective. Firstly, they call a huge number of teachers and the ECTs hardly grasp anything. And the times they host these workshops are abnormal, because they normally host them during holidays whereby the ECTs are busy marking and cannot attend.

The Principal of eHulene Secondary School shared how academic decisions imposed upon the ECTs and other stakeholders, had recently affected them directly in their selected school. She shared that they had already premeditated how they were going to conduct their holiday classes

and the department just sent out communication that instructed them otherwise which was frustrating for the ECTs and teachers who were part of the programme. Mrs Khensani revealed that:

Department of Education likes imposing their own academic decisions and it really affects the whole set up and the school's planning. Now we have winter classes and had planned to begin with the term three curriculum because term 3 is very short and has a lot of work. But now the department has sent their own winter class programme whereby they instructed us to just revise term 1 and term 2 work. So the teachers and ECTs are stressed because their initial plan was to begin with term 3 curriculum.

Another participant, an ECT from the same school shared how policy reforms concerning disciplinary measures had negatively affected the ECTs and teachers in schools. Ms Octavia shared that:

It has affected us a lot. For example, the DoE has changed the disciplinary measure of using corporal punishment to discipline learners and this change has brought so much chaos in schools. Learners are now rebellious and ECTs are stressed because we are getting disrespected because we are new in the school. This even affects our productivity.

The participants revealed that the department sometimes hosted seminars and workshops to train the ECTs and to cascade information regarding the academic reforms that are taking place. However, there were participants who revealed that those seminars were totally ineffective due to the department summoning a large number of groups at the same time.

e. Early Career Teachers are burdened with many responsibilities

The ECT in the participating school were expected to perform many duties which ended up like a burden to the ECTs. Even though they were allocated duties that were in their job description, sometimes it is unfair to the ECTs to be given unrealistic time frames to finish their duties. The data revealed that the ECTs were not really burdened with responsibilities but were allocated suitable duties and responsibilities that were within their rights. Another participant, a Departmental Head shared that, as much as the responsibilities allocated to the ECTs by the SMT were within their job description, the ECTs were often given other responsibilities by experienced teachers which instituted a burden for the ECTs. Ms Ntsako shared that:

I cannot say ECTs are burdened because all the jobs allocated are within their job description. But they are usually manipulated and used by experience teachers, who tend to give their duties and jobs to be done by the new teachers because they are afraid to say no. Which creates frustration. For example, the experienced teachers will ask ECTs to type a question paper for them, to record marks for them and to even monitor their learners. So as an ECT unexperienced as you are then having to do the job of two people that is a burden. And normally they fall victims because they are not knowledgeable about their responsibilities because they are not well informed upon arrival. They do not know when they are being abused and overworked.

The participants revealed that the ECTs were not burdened with responsibilities because all the responsibilities that were allocated to them were in their job descriptions. Mr Tinyiko, a Departmental Head at eHulene Secondary School claimed that:

I cannot say they are burdened because all the duties that they are allocated with is within what is their role and responsibilities as teachers. Rather they can complain about unrealistic time frame that they are allocated with to complete tasks. They often complain about supervising learners during break time and supervising morning and afternoon studies.

Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal from eHulene shared that:

The ECTs are expected to teach and assess, to keep in contact with parents, support learners with emotional and social growth but they are not expected to offer personal counselling such as therapy, to show biasness or favour over learners.

A participant shared that she could say they were burdened but she believed that it was unfair for them. She shared that the ECTs were normally allocated with overcrowded classes but expected to perform well. Mrs Whatu, a Senior Teacher at the same school revealed that:

I will not say they are burdened, but I will say it is not fair. That they are only allocated with those classes with a large number of learners and expect them to produce results but they do not have experience. This might be a burden to them because they are new in the field and they already have to work with so many learners, it is not only about teaching and assessing. They have to

control and monitor books and worse to administer and mark examinations.

As much as it is aligned with their job description, it is somehow a burden.

Another participant, a School Principal shared that the responsibilities that were allocated to the ECTs were aligned to their job description hence she believed that it cannot be called a burden. Mrs Khensani stated that:

The ECTs are not burdened; it is because they have a tendency to cry that they are burdened but when you look at the job description, they all aligned with the job description. ECTs lack knowledge about the job description and they are expected to do. For example, during break-time you will find teachers eating and when you ask them to monitor learners then they will tell you that when will they eat. But when you check the job description it states that wherever there is a learner then there has to be a teacher monitoring.

Mrs Khensani, the School Principal was further asked if the ECTs were well informed about their job description. Mrs Khensani responded that:

When ECTs are given their appointment letters and contracts, they are made aware of their job descriptions by the principal.

The experiences and the articulation of the experiences of the ECTs differed on this issue. For instance, an ECT at the same school shared her own views, which were closer to those of the principal, and she revealed that she did not feel burdened with responsibilities as the job description guided and instructed her to do the allocated responsibilities. Octavia disclosed that:

I cannot say I am burdened with responsibilities, with my experience all the responsibilities that are allocated to me are within my job description. I am expected to do administration such as capturing marks and filing, teaching and assessing and being a classroom teacher is aligned with my job description. I have never experienced a case where I was allocated with a responsibility that is not in my job description.

The participants' shared that the ECTs were not burdened with responsibilities as these responsibilities were within their contracts and job description. The data generated revealed that the SMT believed that the ECTs were not burdened at all. As much as the ECTs were not burdened with responsibilities, other participants disclosed that it was unfair for the ECTs as they were allocated with responsibilities that exceeded their capabilities such as with a large number of learners but are expected to perform well, this could be considered as a burden.

f. Early Career Teachers are assigned to work with overcrowded classrooms

ECTs are sometimes allocated with classes that have a large number of learners and this is a challenge to the ECTs. This is a problem because overcrowded classrooms have different challenges such as ill-discipline and limiting the movement of the ECTs in the classroom to be able to effectively instil classroom management. The participants shared how working with a large group of learners affected their productivity and how it affected classroom management. An ECT shared her experience vividly and the challenges she experienced with working with overcrowded classroom. Ms Octavia shared that:

As ECTs we are allocated with overcrowded classrooms and this is a challenge as one is not trained on how to handle such big numbers. As an ECT teaching in an overcrowded classroom is really difficult because you might be teaching and there are learners who are making noise at the back, and you cannot move around because it is packed. We cannot even help slow learners or even control and monitor books efficiently. The other challenge is that parents are not involved in the education of their children. It is really a challenge for me as an ECT because basically I have to know the background and experiences of the learners I am working with, to make my job easier in supporting these learners. So, if the parents are not involved, you really do not know how to deal or handle that specific learner and with my raw experience then it is really hard and exhausting.

Ms Ntsako shared that:

The ECTs have to deal with overcrowded classes, and overcrowded classes are straining because there is always a discipline problem in overcrowded classrooms. Now this is a challenge as ECTs are not trained on how to enforce discipline which leads to the ECTs committing a misconduct such as using corporal punishment, kicking them out or even telling learners to kneel down in the classroom. This affects the effectiveness of the ECTs because they cannot achieve their set goals, because disruptive learners perform poorly. Secondly, the lack of parental involvement, parents tend to be defensive when they are called to address the behaviour of a learner. This promotes the rebellious behaviour of these learners and now the ECTs become victims.

A participant shared that it got even worse when an ECT taught a large number of learners and they went to class unprepared. Mrs Whatu, a Senior Teacher shared that:

ECT is not prepared for the lesson. The other challenge might be the seating arrangement in the classroom, you might find that the ECT does not know how to manage an overcrowded classroom and these classes end up being chaotic and they are not able to deliver lesson effectively. As ECTs, they do not know how to maintain discipline because they do not have experience. They are not able to identify whether all learners are listening or playing. The ECT is unable to see if all the learners wrote their work because control and monitoring is not effective. The other issue is that parents are not involved in their children's education and we work with different backgrounds and experiences which influence their behaviour. We have encountered an incident whereby an ECT was slapped by a male learner because she was requesting her homework. We looked deep into the issue and discovered that the learner's parents were going through a divorce process and this had caused the learner to have anger problems. So if the parent had made the school aware that we should be sensitive when it comes to that specific learner, then the ECT would have not encountered such an unfortunate encounter.

A participant from the same school divulged that overcrowded classes affected how the ECTs delivered content to the learners. Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal stated that:

ECTs are faced with overcrowded classes because they might experience a challenge of delivering lessons effectively as the large classes have discipline problems, so you might find the ECT spends most of the time trying to discipline learners instead of teaching. Also marking is a problem and it makes them to be ineffective in a way that they do not practice quality marking anymore because they are rushing to meet the deadline and there are many learners that they have to mark.

Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal further shared how they identified whether a class was overcrowded or not. This is how he put it:

The first challenge associated with supporting ECTs is the overcrowding in our school. By policy the ratio should be 1:30 in the classroom there must be 1 teacher and 30 learners but unfortunately that is not doable in our schools. In our school you might find that in each class we have 50 learners and this

becomes a challenge to the ECTs. Overcrowded classrooms result in discipline problems.

Mrs Khensani, a Principal shared that working with a large number of learners was stressful for the ECTs. This is how she put it:

The amount of work that is given to the ECT is a problem on its own which is the demands of the department. It will be topped by the number of learners they have to work with, it adds to their stress. For them to get to parental involvement and get to learners with barriers it is almost impossible because they are always focused on meeting the demands of the department. Hence it is hard to identify learners with barriers.

The data generated revealed that overcrowded classes made it difficult for the ECTs to execute their duties effectively; it made their job harder and heavier as they revealed that overcrowded classrooms were disruptive and a teacher cannot make any movements to monitor if all learners are listening and cooperating. The participants further revealed that overcrowded classrooms often consumed the teaching and learning time as the ECTs spent most of their teaching time trying to discipline disruptive and noisy learners.

(ii) The benefits derived by the Early Career Teachers from receiving support

There are various benefits that the ECTs get from receiving support such they become very active and happy employees. Furthermore, when the ECTs are supported they tend to gain agency in doing things their own like disciplining learners. Most importantly, it improves the learner performance. The participants revealed that when the ECTs received sufficient support from the Education Officials, there were various benefits that they derived from receiving support. The statement was supported by Ms Octavia, an ECT, who went on and highlighted the following:

I get developed in different areas because now I am able to handle and discipline learners. I am also able to teach my subject effectively as I am knowledgeable about the subject and have come to believe that I have become an expert of the subject, the learner performance has improved and I am able to teach different learners with different learning barriers. Most importantly, I have developed job satisfaction and self-efficacy.

Her insights were also buttressed by Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head, who stated that they become happy because they felt appreciated at work. Her remarks are quoted below:

The ECT end up being happy employees because they feel validated, appreciated and noticed. Because they share their opinions and we take them and use them then they become happy and notice that we do not only prioritise the department regulations. When the ECTs are happy, they become very effective and energetic and end up producing good results and building good relationships with fellow colleagues and this creates a healthy working environment. The performance increases and the curriculum delivery becomes exceptional. Lastly, they develop job satisfaction and become confident in teaching their subject.

Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal shared the same sentiments. This is how he put it:

The benefits of providing the ECTs with support are visible when the ECTs show extra efforts whereby they want to organise extra classes to help the learners. They develop passion for this profession whereby they even use their own money to buy resources such as charts. They begin to look for sponsorships and even volunteer to do duties that are not their responsibility.

Findings from the above excerpts indicated that when the ECTs were sufficiently supported they went the extra mile to make sure their job is outstanding. A Subject Advisor even shared that the ECT went the extra mile of bringing their own materials and resources to teach learners.

Mrs Annabelle's remarks are quoted below:

They become very effective teachers in a sense that they bring their own materials to support learners. They derive job satisfaction and enjoy their work. You can see by improved results and extra efforts from their side such as organising extra classes to help learners. They even frequently ask for assistance where they need it.

Ms Khensani, a School Principal, shared how she used to provide support to the ECT and how she would notice the benefits that the ECTs derived from receiving support. Her statement is quoted below:

The ECTs that I usually give support to those whom are teaching Grade 12, because I would coach and coach them. Then you will see that they are improving through learner performance. I also get to notice that they develop job satisfaction and I can see that they enjoy their work through them being energetic and putting extra efforts. They show improvement in managing the classroom and them being able to enforce discipline on their own without the SMT intervening.

Mrs Whatu, a Senior Teacher shared the same sentiments on the fact that there was improvement in learner performance. This is how she put it:

The results of the ECTs improve and not only with learners who are hard workers but also with learners that have learning barriers. This is because we supported the ECT on how to assist learners with barriers and this resulted in a positive impact where their productivity, and high performance was achieved.

Mrs Whatu was further asked how she noticed if there was high performance. Her response is quoted below:

In Business Studies the ECT produced good results in 2023 final results and was invited to Bloemfontein by the department for good performance. She was able to get 7 distinctions in Business studies.

The generated data revealed that when the ECT received sufficient support it benefits not only the ECTs but other stakeholders such as the learners and the SMT. This was because the participants divulged that when the ECTs are provided with support they tended to go the extra mile to an extent that they bring their own resources to help learners.

(iii) Factors that affect support being provided to the Early Career Teachers

There are different factors that can encourage or discourage the Education Officials from offering ECTs with support. The data divulged that there were factors that limited the Education Officials from providing support to the ECTs or encouraged and influenced the Education Officials to provide to the ECTs. The factors are discussed below, namely: a. The factors that hinders support to be provided to the Early Career Teachers by Education Officials; b. The factors that facilitate support to be provided to Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials;

a. The factors that hinders support to be provided to the Early Career Teachers by Education Officials

There are factors that discouraged the Education Officials from providing the ECTs with support such as the bad attitude that the ECTs give to the Education Officials and time is also a contributing factor as the ECTs have limited time which leads to the ECTs being unable to assist them. The data generated unearthed that as much as the Education Officials wanted to

provide support to the ECTs, there were factors that that discouraged them. An ECT highlighted that time is the main factor that interrupted support from taking place. Ms Octavia stated that:

I feel time is factor that normally hinders, because you might find that the Education Official asks me to remain behind after school because they maybe want to support me with something but you find that I want to push work and have already organised extra classes with learners. It is really a challenge because I cannot cancel extra classes and I would rather compromise not receiving support. Also, when we do not get along with the Departmental Head, like I said with my former Departmental Head I would get annoyed when I saw her and it was difficult for me to approach her and seek for support.

Similarly, the opinions outlined in the above excerpt were further buttressed by Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal who clarified that time frame was always a challenge in the selected school:

Time frame becomes a problem. You might ask an ECT to remain behind after school and you find they will not be able to because they have other plans. It is sometimes almost impossible during working hours because they are expected to be in the classroom. When the ECT is not interested in being supported and does not have the passion for teaching, they will not consult or even ask questions, they are just not interested and just come to work for the sake of pushing curriculum and getting paid. Lack of resources hinders me from supporting the ECT, how can I offer support maybe I want to show an ECT how to conduct a certain experiment but there are no resources such as chemicals for that experiment. Lastly, as top management we have a lot of work and you might find that I am unavailable most of the time, even though I want to offer support but I cannot because of my work.

Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head shared that the ECTs did not take advice from the Education Officials and it ended causing problems for the ECTs. Her utterance is quoted below:

ECTs sometimes do not take our advice as their Departmental Heads. They normally just do things their own way which ends up escalating matters instead of resolving matters. It is really difficult to support someone who makes it clear that they do need your advice and they actually look down on you. Especially I, I am a young Departmental Head then ECTs feel that my support will not be beneficial for them because they take it as if I am not

experienced and do not know anything. They get angry when you show them how to do things and when you warn them about wrong things that they do, now you become their enemy and how do you support a person who get easily agitated. The experienced teachers do not allow the ECTs to do their work in their own way, they want the ECTs to do things the way they prefer which sometimes leads to an experienced teacher doing the work for the ECT or even worse the experience teacher tell the learners that ECTs do not know anything because they are new.

Similarly, the ECTs were not welcoming and made it hard for the Education Officials to offer support, Mrs Whatu, a Senior Teacher shared how an unwelcoming ECTs made it difficult for Education Officials to offer support. This is how she put it:

If the ECT is not friendly and welcoming, then it is hard for us to go and informally observe their classrooms. In this manner, I am unable to identify their weaknesses and help develop them. The second one is when an ECT is lazy and is not willing to apply the strategies they are advised to utilise. Also when the ECT is a stubborn person and will give you that nasty attitude when you try to support them. You end up not being comfortable in consulting that ECT and to offer them support especially when you do not have a good relationship with them.

On a different perspective, Mrs Whatu, a Senior Teacher shared that the ECTs who did not prepare for their lessons made it hard for the Education Officials to offer support because they could not identify where they need help. She disclosed that:

When I go to observe their classroom, I sometimes find that the ECT did not prepare for the lesson and this causes the teacher to be confused and disorganised and not to be able to deliver content effectively. It is a challenge to identify their weakness if they are not prepared for the lesson.

Astonishingly, the participants revealed that as Education Officials or SMT they could not directly support the ECTs because they had delegated certain individuals to do so. This is how Mrs Khensani, the School Principal explained it:

It is because I have assigned Departmental Heads and senior teachers to mentor and support the ECTs. I will not go over the assigned mentors and support the ECTs. This might end up creating unnecessary tensions. Secondly, other ECTs are already tired and very lazy. Other inherit issues that they do not even know where they started, you might find the ECT

already does not like you because when they arrived they joined or befriended a group of teachers that dislikes you. These kind of ECT become very stubborn and rebellious so it is really difficult to support such ECTs. They do not bother to ask for assistance and this affects their work and their results.

It is evident that the Education Officials sometimes had their hands tied from providing support to ECTs because of the hostile attitude and adverse behaviour they received from the ECTs. The participants revealed that the ECTs sometimes undermined other colleagues and did not want to take advice from them which sometimes led to unpleasant outcomes.

b. The factors that facilitate support to be provided to the Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials

As much as there are negative factors that affected how the Education Officials provided support to the ECTs, there are also positive factors that influence and encourage the Education Officials to provide the ECTs with support. Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head shared her views concerning the ECTs willingness to learn and when ECTs prepare for a lesson. Her utterance is shared below:

When the ECTs show willingness to learn then it makes my job very easier to want to offer support to ECT. When the ECTs shows that they know their job and always prepare for lessons then it is encouraging and gives me enthusiasm to support the ECTs. During support session when they are very active and participative and most importantly when they use my advice and apply the teaching strategies I have recommended to them. When we have a positive relationship with the ECT then it is easier for me to offer support and give them strategies to use in the classroom.

Mrs Khensan a School Principal shared the same opinion. She stated that:

When the ECT shows potential and they push you to actually teach them somethings. An ECT that is very active and would do anything to learn whatever they want to learn. Their positive attitude really encourages us to support them. When they are excited about their job. Initiative by ECTs to develop themselves and ask for help.

Mrs Whatu, a Senior Teacher shared that when the ECTs engaged in team work activities and supported other colleagues it made it easier for the Education Officials to provide support to the ECTs. Her utterance is shared below:

When the ECTs are very supportive and are big in team work spirit. When they are good with working in teams. Secondly, when they are honest people and will let you know when they made a mistake and need your help. Lastly, when the ECT is a humble person who is willing to get assisted and supported then I get encouraged to support the ECT.

The participants suggested that how the ECTs behaved and their work ethic also influenced support to be provided, as the participants revealed that when the ECT showed eagerness to learn through doing certain things by themselves, before seeking for assistance and doing their own research.

(iv) Available support programmes and policies for the Early Career Teachers

There are available support programmes and policies that assist the ECTs; these policies are not specifically aimed at assisting the ECTs only but teachers in general. The data generated revealed that there are policies that are there to support every educator, not only ECTs. Mrs Whatu, a Senior Teacher further explained the functions of the policies mentioned on the preceding *verbatim quote*. This is how she put it:

Those policies are indeed available but not only aimed at ECTs but all Educators. However, they do support Educators to know their roles, the misconducts they should not commit and their rights. PAM and ELRC documents are often used to support ECTs as they outline all the essential information that the ECT has to know about their occupation.

Mrs Khensani, a School Principal revealed that they have a support programme that helped teachers with technology.

There is ECASA programme that is sponsored by TELKOM whereby ECTs are trained on how to use technology when teaching learners. How to log in and operate computers and how to capture marks. We do not have any policies that support the ECTs.

Mrs Annabelle, a Subject Advisor, had this to say:

Normally, when the ECTs attend my workshops, I normally provide them with Education Labour Relation Council (ELRC) and Personnel Administrative

Measures (PAM) policies to help them know their job descriptions as a way of supporting them. But this does not happen regularly as sometimes we experience shortage of hard copies but I advise them download the soft copies of these documents.

Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal revealed that there were no support programmes and policies that specifically support the ECTs. This is how he put it:

There are no available policies and support programmes that specifically support the ECTs.

It is evident that there are no support programmes that were available to assist the ECTs in schools. The participants shared that the policies available were not strictly for the ECTs but they were policies that were available for everyone.

5.3.3 The forms of support that are provided to the Early Career Teachers by Education Officials

There are various forms of support that are provided to the ECTs. The participants revealed various forms of support that are provided to the ECTs, the forms are discussed below. The forms of support are as follows: (i) Professional Development; (ii) Administrative support; (iii) Emotional support; (iv) Technological support.

(i) Professional Development

Professional development takes place when the school organises its own training that focuses on training the ECTs on a certain aspect such as policies in this case. The participants revealed that professional development mainly took place through inductions and workshops. Ms Octavia, an ECT is quoted below:

In this school the School Management Team (SMT) organises school-based workshops whereby where are developed with available policies such as PAM and EEA that we should follow and abide with. They also workshop us with how the job description work to mitigate the issue of ECTs who feel like they are burdened with work but that is aligned with their job description. We also attend departmental workshops. Where we get developed with

content and subject we are teaching as I have mentioned that we get trained with how to teach contents like Micro and macro environment.

Another participant revealed that they hosted their own school-based workshops to assist the ECTs with professional workshops. Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head disclosed that:

We normally host school-based workshops to educate the ECTs and other teachers about policies, we also hold departmental meeting whereby we discuss issues faced by the ECTs and teachers in departments. For example, not so long ago we hosted a school-based workshop whereby we educated ECTs and teachers about leaves, how they work and how do they apply for leaves and so on. Most of the planned school-based workshops are normally disturbed by the department of education by their demands. There are usually minutes of the meeting that are given to each ECT after the meeting as evidence.

Below is a copy of the minutes of the meeting that the Departmental Head held to support the ECTs and other teachers as explained by Ms Ntsako.

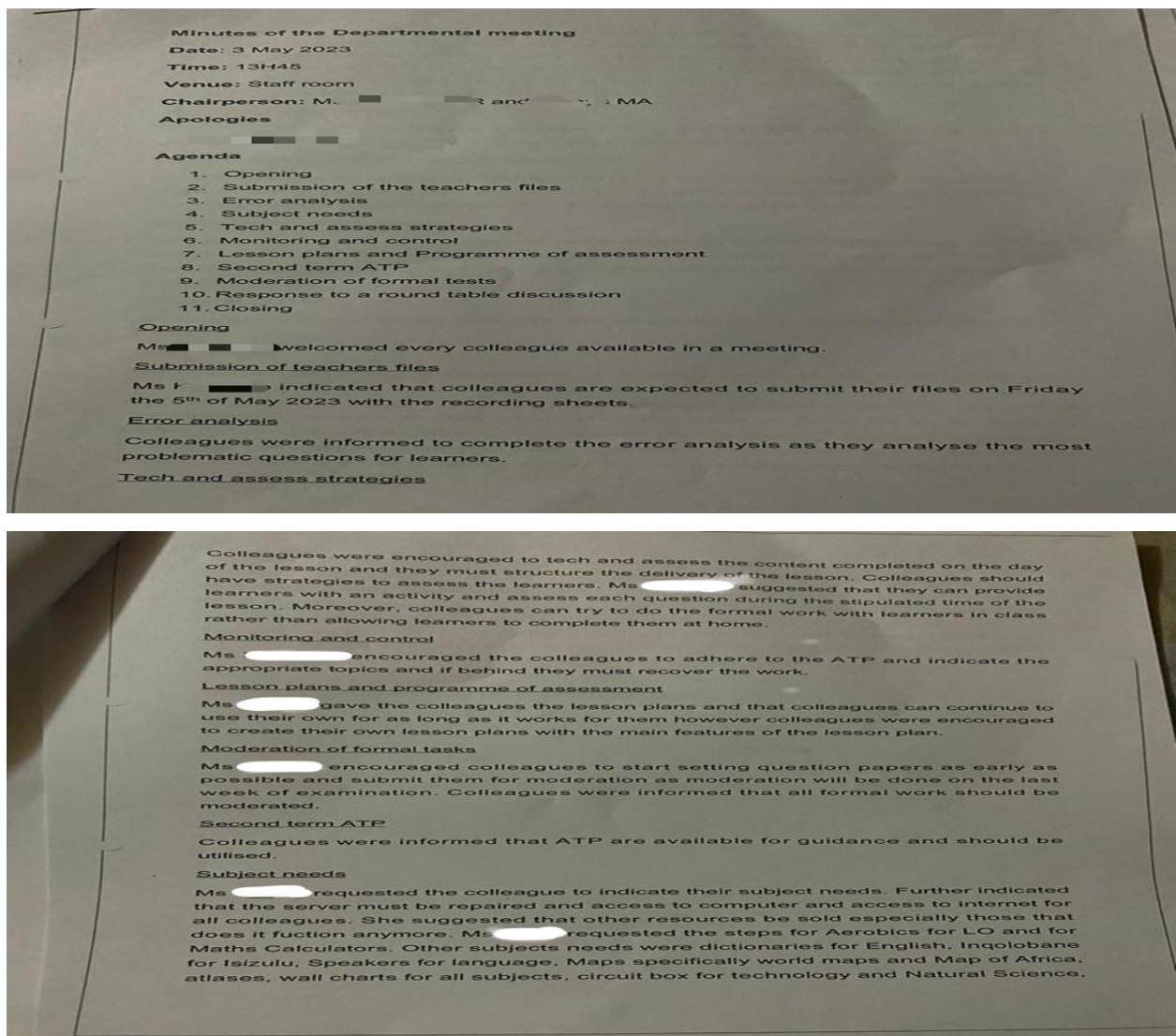


Figure 1. Minutes of a departmental meeting

Figure 1 demonstrates that departmental meetings are held in the selected schools, it shows that they discuss challenges and issues within the departments. The excerpts above shared how inductions took place in selected schools and how they were considered to be part of the professional development. However, other participants shared how they are not satisfied with the inductions that takes place in the selected school. Mrs Khensani, the School Principal shared that:

To be honest, the inductions that takes place for the ECTs are not enough and not effective because they take place in a form whereby we just introduce them to the teachers, learners and to show them facilities and that is really not enough or fair. They attend the workshops that are organised by the department which might not be effective too because they might be focusing

on how to navigate the ATP, curriculum coverage or lesson plans but not content-based or addressing general issues that are faced by the ECTs and teachers in general. I normally provide the ECTs with the programme during the workshops.

Below is a copy of workshop programme that was organised by the Subject Advisor.

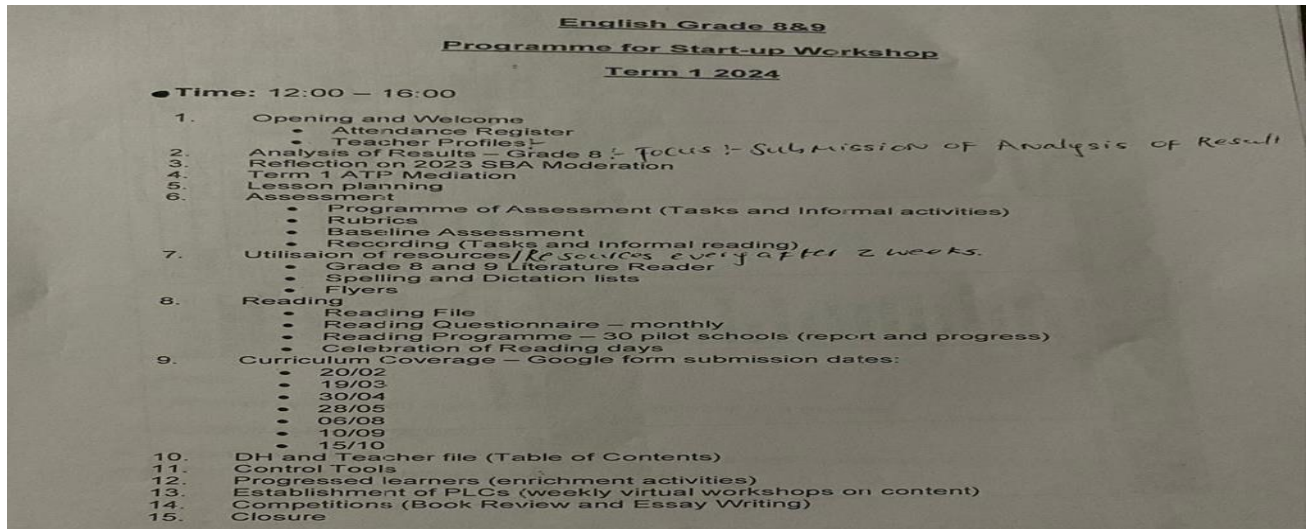


Figure 2. Programme for start-up workshop.

Figure 2 provides strong evidence that the workshops that are organised by Subject Advisors mainly focus on paper work which is what was mentioned by Mrs Khensani. Mrs Khensani, a School Principal was further asked of the correct ways of inducting the ECTs according to her own perspective. Her reply is quoted below:

I believe building support network connections such as helping the ECTs to build relationships with colleagues and stakeholders. Regularly evaluating and monitoring the progress of the ECT and guiding them.

The participants shared views and information that inductions and workshops that were organised by the schools and the department were the only way that the ECTs received professional development as a form of support.

(ii) Administrative support

Administrative support takes place when the ECTs are allowed to observe the teaching strategies of other colleagues and when they are provided with time to prepare for and plan their lessons during school hours. The participants shared how administrative support is

provided to the ECTs. A participant shared that she allowed the ECT to observe her when she taught learners and she regarded this as an administrative support. Mrs Whatu who is a Senior Teacher shared that:

I allowed the ECT to observe me when I delivered my lesson so that they could develop teaching strategies. After a certain number of times then I would ask the ECT which topic are they comfortable teaching so that I can observe the ECT. After observing the ECT, I was then able to guide the ECT and correct their errors they commit during the lesson delivery.

Mrs Khensani, a School Principal shared similar information where she disclosed how she allowed the ECTs to observe other colleagues as form of administrative support. This is how she put it:

Within departments we normally call other colleagues whom are experienced to teach the learners of the ECT so that they can grasp different teaching strategies. They also get developed on how to manage the classroom and how to influence learner participation.

The preceding excerpts suggested that the ECTs were provided with administrative support through, observing other colleagues teach. The excerpts shared below suggested that administrative support can also be provided through providing the ECTs with time within the work schedule to prepare for their lessons. Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head's utterance is quoted below:

We have what we call an administrative period in our timetable, where the ECTs and teachers are allowed to plan for their lesson and to prepare for their lessons, maybe gather the resources that they need to utilise during the lesson delivery. If there is one thing we want to achieve as a school is for us to have time whereby subject teachers meet and engage.

Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal shared the same views. This is how he put it:

Each teacher has one free period that is called the administrative period and that is not enough for the teacher to do all the administrative duties such as planning for lesson, preparing for a lesson and controlling books. So, they are not allocated with administrative support. And they are also not guided to observe other teachers to learn new strategies because of time.

Another participant, an ECT shared that she was satisfied with the administrative time provided in a form of free periods. Ms Octavia disclosed that:

Time allocation is sufficient and it allows me to be in contact with my Departmental Head to discuss certain issues and also for moderation of my work. It also allows me to prepare for my lessons during school hours and to even plan for future lessons. In addition, I was allocated with a mentor who is a senior teacher for me to observe and develop teaching strategies. That was very helpful because I was able to grasp a lot of strategies.

It is evident that in the selected school, administrative support was provided through allocating the ECTs with time to do administrative duties and to engage with their supervisors to discuss subject-related matters. The data generated further revealed that the ECT were allowed to observe other colleagues and inherit new teaching strategies.

(iii) Emotional support

Providing emotional support to the ECTs is very vital because it boosts their confidence and helps them enjoy doing their work. Education Officials often fail to provide emotional support due to the ECTs not reporting their problems to the Education Officials. The participants divulged that the ECTs sometimes experienced emotional problems due to different issues such as work-related or even personal issues often triggered emotional issues for the ECTs. In this case, the ECTs need to be provided with emotional support regardless of what caused their emotional problems. Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head revealed that sometimes they were unable to provide emotional support because the ECTs did not tell them about their problems. This is how she put it:

Providing emotional support is tricky, because the ECTs do not tell me about their issues. They prefer sharing it with their PLI educators and you will find out about an issue during staff meeting which could have been addressed in the office by two people. Then is it difficult to offer emotional support if you are not told about issues that the ECTs are facing. I believe it is important for the ECTs to receive emotional support, because dealing with different personalities as a new educator and it can be overwhelming. If they are not offered with emotional support they end up snapping at everyone and this ends up creating a toxic work environment which also affects learners in the long run. For example, there was once an ECT who was dealing with a sick parent whom was hospitalised, because I was unaware then I added her on the extra class time table, she experienced burnout and had to take sick leave.

If I was aware of the situation, I would have provided her with emotional support and reduced her workload by not adding her on the extra class time table.

Mrs Khensani, a School Principal revealed that her position and workload made it impossible for her to offer emotional support to the ECTs personally. Her statement is quoted below:

With my position, I am really unable to offer support to ECTs. Because I have allocated them with immediate supervisors such as the Departmental Head and the senior teacher. I expect these people to offer emotional support because I have a lot of work and do not work directly with the ECTs.

Mr Tinyiko, the Deputy Principal shared the same sentiments. This is how he put it:

It is difficult to offer support as I am part of the top management, so it is really not ideal for me to build mutual relationships with ECTs or even other teacher because I have to push discipline and command. So, if I build mutual relationships with them then they end up losing respect and tend to be reluctant when you instruct them to perform certain tasks. So, I do not offer any emotional support.

The data generated provided evidence that was it difficult to provide emotional support to the ECTs in the selected school due to circumstances like the ECTs did not inform their Education Officials about their problems and it made it difficult for the Education Officials to provide them with support. Tellingly, the Education Officials in the selected schools were unable to provide emotional support to the ECTs due to their position rank, they were unable to have social and mutual relationships with the ECTs.

(iv) Technological support

Technological support makes teaching to become easier and effective for the ECTs such using computers and internet to teach learners. Technological support can take place through Education Officials assisting ECTs how to incorporate technology during their lessons. The data generated suggested that as much as the ECT were well trained with technology and did not need any training upon their arrival at workplaces. However, some Education Official still offered the ECTs with technological support. There were participants who shared that they still offered technological support to ECTs. Mrs Khensani whom is a School Principal revealed that:

We have partnership with Telkom has provided us with devices and also offered training. The trainings are honestly a technological support we provide to ECTs and all other teachers

Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head shared how they used visual centres as a form of providing technological support to the ECTs. This is how she put it:

We have a visual centre, I encourage the ECT to take learners to the visual centre whereby there will be different examiners presenting topics and this encourages the ECTs and boost their job satisfaction. They are also taught how to use visual boards and how to integrate technology in their lessons.

Ms Octavia, an ECT shared that they received technological support through how to use google forms. Her statement is quoted below:

We do receive technological support as we attend ICT workshops whereby we are taught how to utilise google forms, how to use computers and they want to help us transition into being paperless educators who do not use papers but technology only. I am even now the part of ICT committee so I do receive the technological support.

As much as the ECTs were well trained and did not need support with technology, the Education Officials still offered them with support in various ways such as how to fill in google forms and often encouraged the ECTs to utilise visual classrooms that are available at the selected schools.

5.3.4 The rationale for the Early Career Teachers needing support from the Education Officials

The rationale for the ECTs needing support was based on the view that it boosted their confidence, improved their job satisfaction, enhanced their performance and served as a guide to making sure they adapted well at their new workplaces. The data generated revealed that there are various benefits that the ECTs derive from receiving support from Education Officials. Namely: (i) To enhance Early Career Teachers smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher, ii) To assist the Early Career Teachers to be more conversant about their subject; (iii) To build the Early Career Teacher's confidence in their work.

(i) To enhance Early Career Teachers smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher

It is a difficult stage when an ECT transitions from being a student to being an Educator; hence, it is very pivotal for them to be provided with support where needed. Essential training can include being introduced to policies available and to be trained how to do their work effectively. The participants emphasised that the support provided to the ECTs helps them transition well in the first years of their work. Mr Tinyiko, a Deputy Principal emphasised that support provided to the ECT helped them to transition. He echoed that:

The ECT need support because they are new in the field and get introduced to things they were not exposed to when they were in the university. They have to be gradually supported because they need to know the new policies that they need to abide to and that protects them as ECTs. They also need support because now they have to deal with different learner's everyday so they need to be guided on how to handle and manage the classroom and how to effectively instil discipline. Most importantly they need support so that they know how to build positive relationships with learners.

In addition, another participant shared her view concerning being provided with support promotes smooth transition. Ms Ntsako, a Departmental Head divulged that:

The ECT need support so that they can know how to effectively deliver support and know how to create a safe learning environment for all learners. They also need support because they are transitioning from being a student to being a professional teacher. Also, they need support on how to conduct themselves so that the learners can respect them, for example guide them with the dress code and things they post on social media. As they are from university they do not know how manage time then they need support on how manage time when teaching learners. And emotional support is vital because the ECT will take out their issues on learners and learners will retaliate which will cause more problems for the ECT.

On the same view, Mrs Khensani, a School Principal revealed the frustration of a new workplace especially when one worked with learners or people in general and importance of receiving support to adapt. Mrs Khensani utterances are quoted below:

In any job when you start a new job, you need training. With teaching is even worse because we work with people and we are working with kids. So, the

ECT constantly need guidance on how to deal with various issues. So that they do not commit any misconducts that might end up costing them their job. The ECT cannot do things on their own because they might end up doing mistakes and you might find that some mistakes are irreversible. So, they need someone who will tell them if this happens then you need to do this.

The excerpts above unearthed that the ECTs needed support because they were still new in the field and trying to navigate their way through, so it was easier for them to adapt when they receive support. It also helped to prevent ECTs making irreversible mistakes.

(ii) To assist the Early Career Teachers to be more conversant about their subject

When the ECTs receive training and sufficient support it assists them to become knowledgeable about their subject, they become experts, which then, bolster their confidence. It is essential for the ECTs to receive training and support as they do not have any experience when they get to the field and they need guidance to adapt and grasp the whole process. Mrs Khensani who is a School Principal shared her own view as indicated below. This participant emphasised that it helped the ECTs to produce good results. She stated that:

We want the ECT to produce good results. As much as they were trained at the university, that training was not enough and we need to train them so that they can be good with the subject that they are teaching. Secondly, when they receive emotional support then they become happy and enjoy their work which leads them to being highly effective ECTs and that is good for the school and learners.

Another participant, an ECT, shared the same thoughts concerning being provided with support bolstered their performance. Ms Octavia put it like this:

I need support because I am not experienced yet. I need guidance on how to deliver content and how to effectively teach learners and produce good performance. I also need to have a good emotional well-being so that I can bring a positive energy in the classroom. I need support so that I can know how to effectively utilise the available resources.

Another participant shared that it also encouraged the ECT to be lifelong learners. Mrs Annabelle, a Subject Advisor stated that:

So, they can become lifelong learners by doing research or earning more about their subject. To bridge the gap between their academic training and the reality of the South African education system.

It is evident that the ECTs need support so that they can be happy employees which lead to them to producing good results. Furthermore, the participants revealed that ECTs need support so that they can get interested in learning more.

(iii) To build the Early Career Teachers' confidence in their work

When the ECT are provided with support they tend to gain confidence which positively affect their productivity. Mrs Khensani, a School Principal shared that when the ECTs were provided with support, it boosted their confidence and positively impacted their job satisfaction. This is how she put it:

I have noticed that when the ECTs receive sufficient support, they become very confident in their work. I see this through how innovative they become and they also become very creative which leads to a high level of job satisfaction. I had seen an ECT who was efficiently supported by a Senior Teacher, the ECT became very active and would even be creative to a point that she would teach learners through singing. You could see that she enjoyed her job.

The preceding excerpt showed the significance that support brings to the ECT's job satisfaction as it also built their confidence to a point that they became creative and innovative which had a positive impact on the learners.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings from data generated through semi-interviews and documents reviews which were conducted at the eHulene Secondary School with 6 participants which were made up of 1 Principal, 1 Deputy Principal, 1 Departmental Head, 1 Senior Teacher, 1 ECT and 1 subject advisor. The IP, research questions and theoretical framework guided me in data generation and presentation in this chapter. This chapter revealed that the ECTs were provided with support in the selected school but in all forms. The data generated revealed that there were certain times ECTs were not fully and sufficiently provided with support due to different circumstances. Nonetheless, the participants divulged that it was highly

significant for the participants to receive support as it benefited them in various positive ways. The data generated further revealed that when the ECTs received efficient support, it benefited many stakeholders like the learners as the learner performance improved. The next chapter presents data analysis of the second selected school which is Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary School.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: THABA

DI MAHLWA SECONDARY SCHOOL

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the analysis and findings from the data that was generated through semi-structured interviews at eHulene Senior Secondary school. This chapter does the same, but from a different research site, anonymised as Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary School. The structure and the outline are the same as the previous chapter.

6.2 Profiling of the participants

The profiles are comprehensive, as they contain the participant's name, age group, gender, position, qualifications, teaching experience, and years of experience in their current position, school name and type, as well as the location of the school. In this principle, to protect the identity of all the participants and of the schools, I used *pseudonyms*. The selected participants were 6 from the second school of the 3 schools named Thaba di Mahlwa. Every participant holds a different position in their workplace ranging from Post level (PL) 1 to 4. The experience of the participants ranged from 5 years to 22 years. The biographical details of the participants are presented as demonstrated in Table 2 below.

Participant's name	Gender	Position	Highest Qualifications	Teaching experience	Years as Education official	Name of school	Location
1. Eunice	Female	Subject Advisor	B.Ed. Honours	11 years	2 years	Nkonzo and Thaba di Mahlwa Senior Secondary School (SSS)	Township area
2. Mrs Moshoeshoe	Female	Principal	B.Ed. Honours	22 years	7 years	Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary	Rural area

3.Mrs Mopeli	Female	Deputy Principal	Advanced Certificate	22 years	7 years	Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary	Rural area
4.Mr Makaota	Male	Departmental Head	PGCE	11 years	5 years	Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary	Rural area
5.Mrs Mokodumela	Female	Senior Teacher	B.Ed. Honours	18 years	2 years	Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary	Rural area
6.Mr Mmuso	Male	ECT	B.A Honours	5 years	0 years	Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary	Rural area

Table 2. Biographical information of the research participants.

Table 2 above briefly presents a summary of the biographical details of the participants. The 6 participants were selected for participation in the current qualitative multiple case study (as earlier clearly explained in the previous chapter) and they are from one selected school given the pseudonym Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary School. The Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary school is located in a rural area. The thorough presentation of the participant's individual profiling (utilising pseudonyms for participants and schools) is shown in the below discussions. The next part presents the profile of the participants associated with Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary School. These participants are Mrs Eunice, The Subject Advisor; Mrs Moshoeshoe, a School Principal; Mrs Mopeli, a Deputy Principal; Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head; Mrs Mokodumela, a Senior Teacher and Mr Mmuso, an Early Career Teacher.

Mrs Eunice: The Subject Advisor

Mrs Eunice is a female Subject Advisor at the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She works with the Nkonzo and Thaba di Mahlwa Senior Secondary School. Thaba di Mahlwa SSS is located in rural areas in QwaQwa. She holds Bachelor of Education degree and her highest qualification is Bachelor of Education Honours degree. She has been an educator for 11 years' experience and 2 years' experience as a subject advisor. Amongst sampled participants of the Subject Advisor cohort, she is the least experienced. Prior to her appointment as a Subject Advisor, she was a Head of Department for languages where she served for 4 years. She is a subject advisor of English First Additional Language (FAL) and Home Language (HL).

Mrs Moshoeshoe: The Principal

Mrs Moshoeshoe is a female principal at the Thaba di Mahlwa SSS that is located at the rural area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She holds Senior Teaching Diploma, Advance Certificate in leadership and management, Advance Diploma in leadership and management and her highest qualification is Bachelor of Education Honours degree. She has 22 years' experience as an Educator and has 7 years as a School Principal. Prior to her appointment as a School Principal she served 6 years as a Departmental Head for Sciences and 4 years as a Deputy Principal. Out of the three sampled School Principals her experience is average compared to the other two principals.

Mrs Mopeli: The Deputy Principals

Mrs Mopeli is a female Deputy Principal at Thaba di Mahlwa SSS located at the rural area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She holds Secondary Teaching Diploma and her highest qualification is Advanced Certificate. She has worked for 22 years as an educator and have served 7 years as a Deputy Principal. She was a Departmental Head of commercial stream for 8 years before she got appointed as a Deputy Principal.

Mr Makaota: Departmental Head

Mr Makaota is a male Departmental Head at Thaba di Mahlwa SSS in the rural area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. He holds Bachelor of Arts degree and his highest qualification is PGCE certificate. He has worked as an educator for 11 years and worked as a Departmental Head for 5 years. He is a Departmental Head of Geography. Out of all the sampled participants, he is the most experienced Departmental Head.

Mrs Mokodumela: Senior Teacher

Mrs Mokodumela is a female Senior Teacher at Thaba di Mahlwa located in the rural area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She holds a Primary Teaching Diploma, Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in Geography and her highest qualification is Bachelor of Education Honours Degree specialising in curriculum studies. She has worked as an educator for 18 years and has served as a senior teacher for 2 years. She mentors ECTs who

specialise in Geography. Out of all the sampled participants of the cohort of Senior Teachers she is the least experienced Senior Teacher.

Mr Mmuso: Early Career Teacher

Mr Mmuso is a male ECT at Thaba di Mahlwa SSS located in the rural area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. He holds the Bachelor of Arts, PGCE and his highest qualification is Bachelor of Arts Honours degree. He has 5 years' experience as an educator. He teaches Geography and Life Sciences.

6.3 Data Presentation thematically discussed

After I had completed the data generation process, which was conducted through the semi-structured interviews and documents review of the selected school, I then proceeded to analysis of the data. Audio recordings, field notes and documents assisted me during the data analysis process. I have explained the whole process in Chapter Four and also in the preceding chapter. Therefore, I will not repeat it here. The themes and sub-themes that emerged after the analysis are the following.

(a) The perspectives of the ECTs and Education Officials regarding educator support, (b) The experiences of the ECTs in being provided with support by the Education Officials, (c) The forms of support that were provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials, (d) The rationale for the ECTs needing support from the Education Officials. Similarly, the sub-themes emerged from these themes. For example, the sub-themes that were developed from the perspectives of ECTs and Education Officials regarding Educator support included (i) conducting inductions for ECTs, (ii) supporting the ECTs in attending workshops and (iii) providing the ECTs with mental support. Secondly, the sub-themes that emerged from the experiences of the ECTs in being provided with support by the Education Officials included (i) the challenges that are faced by the ECTs; (ii) the benefits for the ECTs receiving support; (iii) factors that affect support being provided to the ECT. Thirdly, sub-themes that emerged from the forms of support that are provided to the ECTs by Education officials are (i) Professional Development, (ii) Administrative Support, (iii) Emotional Support and (iv) Technological support. Lastly, the sub-themes that that emerged from the rationale for the ECTs needing support from the

Education Officials included (i) to enhance the ECTs' smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher; (ii) to assist the ECTs to be more conversant about their subject a and (iii) to build the ECTs' confidence in their work.

6.3.1 The perspectives of Early Career Teachers and Education Officials regarding Educator support

In seeking to understand the perspectives of the ECTs and Education Officials regarding Educator Support. I analysed the data that was generated through engaging with the participants. Findings from the participants suggest that the Education Officials believed that Educator support has to do with induction and workshops taking place to support the ECTs. The sub-themes that emerged are (i) Conducting Inductions for ECTs; (ii) Supporting ECTs in attending workshops; (iii) Providing ECTs mental support. I have presented these themes and the sub-themes below and I have utilised *verbatim* quotes.

(i) Conducting Inductions for the Early Career Teachers

Conducting Inductions for the ECTs should take place through the Education Officials training the ECTs on how to use Annual Teaching Plans, how to conduct a lesson and how to discipline learners. Data generated revealed how the Education Officials believed that conducting inductions formed part of educator support. The data generated indicated that the participants showed abstruse understanding of Educator Inductions and believed that the induction should be done once off and on the day of the teachers' arrival. The findings further revealed that the Education Officials (not only SMT) conducted the induction programmes. Mr Mmuso from Thaba di Mahlwa revealed that:

It is the support that is provided to Educators that are new in the school. As they get into the field, tell them how things operate in the schools such as academia and extra-mural activities. And other factors that are needed within the education system. The support that will help them excel in their work as educators. The support should be provided by the SMT, Senior Teachers and the Subject Advisors. I was provided with a mentor in the form of a Departmental Head and a peer teacher but one who is a veteran and experienced in the field of teaching. I had to observe the mentor and copy

some skills and strategies. I also attended a workshop back in 2021 where it specifically invited the ECTs to be informed and inducted about the policies like ELRC and leaves and so on.

Similar views were also shared by Mrs Mokodumela, a Senior Teacher at Thaba di Mahlwa School. She further alluded on how they conduct the inductions for the ECTs.

Inductions entails supporting and guiding teachers might be ECTs or other teachers. Support I am referring to is orientating the ECTs such as introducing them to the school premises, the whole staff and showing them the school's policies and procedures. It does not end there, we also induct the ECTs through mentoring them and we do this by making sure that the ECTs get full experience through observing the mentors.

Mrs Moshoeshoe, a Principal of Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary School corroborated these views by saying:

The assistance that the new teachers get from their other colleagues such as the other teachers and the SMT, also the other stakeholders such as the Subject Advisors. Assistance of going to class with the ECT to check their weaknesses so that you can guide them not to criticise them. Their Departmental Heads check their work and the learners work and provide them with feedback through monitoring tools. We also conduct policy inductions of the first day of the ECT arrive at work.

As Mrs Moshoeshoe mentioned that Departmental Heads provide ECTs with feedback through monitoring tools, below is a sample of the monitoring tool used in the selected school.

INTERNAL MONITORING AND CONTROL TOOL

EDUCATOR:	Ms. T. M.		
SUBJECT:	English 9-12		
GRADE:			
# OF LEARNERS:	141 50		
DATE:	04.05.2023		
COMPONENT:	CURRICULUM COVERAGE		
Learners Name:	Classwork/Homework		Informal Test
	Expected	Actual	Expected Actual
Findings:			
Curriculum Coverage:			
Topic required have been covered.			
Teach and Assess:			
The learners are taught and the work is marked.			
Recommendations:			
Dates should also be written on ATPs to show that the work has been completed			

Educator: _____ Date: 04.05.2023
 Supervisor: _____ Date: 04.05.2023

FREE STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
04-03-2023

Figure 3. A monitoring tool signed by a Departmental Head

Figure 3 provides a solid evidence that the ECTs were not provided with sufficient and constructive feedback because the above monitoring tool is not filled in other spaces such as classwork and homework. Through reviewing this document, it is evident that the ECTs receive insufficient feedback that did not help to develop them. Mrs Moshoeshoe was further asked how they conducted the policy induction. She echoed that:

Policy induction entails teaching teachers about the available policies and how they work. For example, PAM document informs a teacher of what they are expected to do and so on. Such as how many hours a teacher is expected to work. Their roles and duties as educators.

Another participant, a Departmental Head at School Thaba di Mahlwa, Mr Makoata revealed that educator support also included helping the ECTs to settle and allocating them with mentors. Mr Makoata shared that:

Providing the ECTs with all the support that they need such as making sure that they are settled, that they know their classes, allocating them with Senior Teachers to mentor them and also making sure that they are allocated with the relevant equipment and materials, such as the timetables and textbooks that they need to use.

Mrs Mopeli, a Deputy Principal at school Thaba di Mahlwa expressed how the ECTs were inducted when they are new at the workplace. Below is what Mrs Mopeli said:

Educator support is basically the support that is supposed to be given to teachers who are newly appointed. Whereby you are briefed on what to expect and issues that you will be dealing with. Guided on how to handle challenges that you might encounter, it is like an orientation of some sort.

Evidence provided by the participants in the above *verbatim* quotes indicated that most of the selected schools conducted inductions through showing the ECTs around the school and showing them facilities. Asked about the Educator Support and inductions this is what Mrs Eunice whom is a subject advisor at school Nkonzo and Thaba di Mahlwa had to say. She put it like this:

Supporting newly appointed educators by inducting and giving them materials that they need to utilise when they are teaching learners. Inductions entails supporting and guiding teachers might be ECTs or other teachers. As a Subject Advisor of English language both First Additional Language and

Home Language, I normally provide the ECTs and other English teachers with English literature books. I also provide them books that helps them to analyse poetry with the learners and lastly, I often send them soft copies of certain activities that they can do with learners to enhance learner's comprehension and reading skills. As I mentioned that I am Subject Advisor of English FAL and HL, the content differs and depends on what the ATP requires but in most cases the ECTs are inducted on poetry and literature as these seem to be challenging content for most teachers whom are new in the field. We also induct ECT on how to teach listening skills such as how to conduct listening comprehensions for learners in the classrooms, for example an ECT will be told that they need to read the comprehension and learners just have to listen and write down notes.

When Mrs Eunice was asked about how she attended the schools that she worked with as she worked with a number of schools. She echoed that:

We are always given a schedule that is prepared by the department, the schedule is fully detailed and has the following information. The dates when are we supposed to visit certain school, the circuit, the town where school is located and what are we supposed to do when we get to schools. So, the schedule determines and gives us time on when to go to schools. We fill in logbooks when we are done supporting teachers, whereby we state what we found and leave recommendations for teachers.

Mrs Eunice shared that they fill in logbooks and leave recommendations for the ECTs, below is a sample of the logbook filled by Mrs Eunice.

THE INTERM SCHOOL

Eng. No. _____
 Cell. No. _____
 E-mail: _____

LOG BOOK

NAME OF OFFICIAL _____
DESIGNATION _____
DATE _____
TIME _____

PURPOSE OF VISIT

 VISITED THE SCHOOL TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK IN ENGLISH GRADE 8
 AND PROVIDE SUPPORT IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

FINDINGS

 LEARNERS WERE PREPARED FOR TOWHEL TEST IN TERM 2
 → INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES ADMINISTERED WERE APPROPRIATE AND WERE CONSIDERED
 → EDUCATORS HAD HIGH CURRICULUM COVERAGE FOR TERM 2 AND THIS
 HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE
 → EDUCATORS ADMINISTERED 4 ACTIVITIES PER WEEK INSTEAD OF 3 IN TERM 1
 → SOME QUESTIONS THAT ARE ASKED IN CONTROL TEST WERE LEARNERS SAW FIRST
 FOR THE FIRST TIME IN CONTROL TEST

RECOMMENDATION

 → EDUCATORS SHOULD TRASH RECORDS TO AT LEAST ONE ADMINISTER A
 MINIMUM OF 3 ACTIVITIES PER WEEK
 → REVISION AND REVISION FROM FOR TERM 2 SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO CH (SEE
 REPORT)

SIGNATURE _____
CELL NUMBER/TEL _____

Figure 4. A logbook signed by a subject advisor after moderating an ECT's work.

Figure 4 provides significant evidence that indeed, Subject Advisors go to schools to support the ECTs, and however it also shows that they just leave recommendations without clearly guiding the ECTs. Mrs Eunice was further questioned on whether as a Subject Advisor the policy allowed her to work directly with the ECTs or not. She revealed that the policy allowed her to work directly with the ECTs and quoted from the policy. This is how she put it:

The policy now states that we should be called Senior Education Specialist (SES) but we are still commonly called Subject Advisors (laughs). The ELRC Collective Agreement No.4 of 2017 Section 4 Subsection A states that my job purpose, among other duties it is to render support and development to educators, then under Section 4 sub-section B states that I should “provide guidance through implementing systems that permits for effective management. This can take place through conducting regular visits to schools to teachers in schools”. I believe this statement is vividly clear that I work with all teachers not only Departmental Heads. And ECTs are teachers right?

Supporting the information shared by Mrs Eunice is the policy document below:

4. SENIOR EDUCATION SPECIALIST (SES)

A. JOB PURPOSE

To clarify, monitor, implement policies in schools and render support and development to educators that fall under their area of responsibility.

(NB: SESs are field workers and are accountable to the DCES for their operations).

B. KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS (KPAs)

- a) Provide professional guidance through the implementation of systems and structures that allow for effective management. These will include the following:
- Conduct regular on-site support visits to teachers in schools;
 - Represent the district at other relevant forums;
 - Coordinate and manage district priorities and projects;
 - Ensure effective and efficient utilisation of resources and information services; and
 - Work collaboratively with schools to improve learner performance.

Figure 5. ELRC Collective Agreement no.4 of 2017

Figure 5 clearly indicates that the Subject Advisors are expected to work with teachers from different position levels ECTs included, the Subject Advisors are not only expected to work with the Departmental Heads. The data generated revealed that the ECTs are indeed inducted when they get to school. They are inducted in ways whereby they make sure that ECTs needs are met. They further allocated the ECTs with mentors that will guide them. Most importantly, they conducted policy inductions where they informed the ECTs about available policies that are there to assist and protect the ECTs. Moreover, the data generated cleared the air concerning the arising arguments that states that Subject Advisors do not work directly with the ECTs. Seemingly, the Subject Advisors work directly with the ECTs according to the above-mentioned policy.

(ii) Supporting Early Career Teachers in attending workshops

Educator support encompasses ECT attending workshops that are either organised by the school or the department. The participants shared that educator support also entailed supporting the ECTs attending the workshops that are organised by the department. They shared that these departmental workshops are highly beneficial for the ECTs. The participants divulged that they supported the ECT through accompanying them to these workshops and informing them about these workshops. Mrs Moshoeshe, a School Principal at Thaba di Mahlwa shared how she encouraged the ECTs to attend the workshops. This is how she put it:

As the principal, I assisted my ECTs by showing them how to prioritise time such as taking their time to attend the professional development workshops.

The Subject Advisors organise these workshops. I show them to prioritise time by making sure to inform them about workshops they are expected to attend on time. I even offer them transport to take them to these workshops.

Likewise, Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head from school Thaba di Mahlwa also shared that he supported the ECTs through taking them to the workshops. Mr Makaota said:

I support them by organising inductions for them and accompanying them to attend workshops that are organised by the Subject Advisors.

Seemingly, a Senior Teacher from the same school as the preceding participants also accompanied an ECT to a workshop. Mrs Mokodumela from school Thaba di Mahlwa said that:

I was allocated with an ECT and I accompanied her to attend workshops and introduced her to her Subject advisor. The Departmental Head allocated the ECT to me as Senior Teacher and kindly asked me to coach, mentor and guide the ECT throughout and assist the ECT whenever they need my assistance. So, I accompanied the ECT to attend a workshop so that they could not feel isolated as they did not know how workshops work, I thought if I let the ECT go to the workshop alone then they would feel very frustrated.

A participant elucidated on how subject related workshops function and the benefits of the ECTs attending these workshops. A Deputy Principal at Thaba di Mahlwa, Mrs Mopeli stated that:

Subject related workshop only focuses on the subject matters such as helping teachers with teaching certain content but normally these workshops are used to teach ECTs and teachers how to use the expected paperwork such as Programme of Assessment and how to follow through with correctly, and effectively.

A Subject Advisor that works with school Nkonzo and Thaba di Mahlwa was asked about how she provided support through workshops with the schools that she works with. Mrs Eunice divulged that:

Support I am referring to is training and workshops, where I host professional workshops and send out invitations the ECTs so that they can come and attend. In this workshop, I normally do activities that develop the ECT professionally such as discussing how to fill in the lesson plan and how to incorporate certain lessons in the classroom. The aim is to enhance the ECTs professionally and to develop their teaching skills. Furthermore, I

practice what is called evaluation and assessment. I do this by making sure that I go to schools for regular evaluation so that I can be able to monitor the progress and identify areas of strength and growth. That is basically what I do as a Subject Advisor.

The findings revealed that attending workshops was also a form of supporting the ECTs. The findings further divulged that most of these workshops were organised by the Department of Education and Subject Advisors. Most School-Based Education Officials disclosed that they often accompanied the ECTs to these workshops during the infancy stages of the ECT arriving at the selected schools. Moreover, the participants shared that content based and subject related workshops helped them with how to deal with paperwork such as preparing lesson plans and how to implement the ATP.

(iii) Providing Early Career Teachers mental support

It is essential for the ECTs to be provided with mental support, the Education Officials can provide mental support through referring the ECTs to mental wellness centres. Data generated through interviews conducted revealed that the participants believed that providing the ECTs with mental support was a huge and significant part of Educator Support. They revealed how mental support was provided as a source of Educator Support in the selected schools. The participant mentioned that prioritising the well-being of ECTs through frequently checking challenges that were faced by the ECTs was one way of providing mental support. One ECT from the selected school shared that he believed that it was the responsibility of the SMT to create a supportive ambience for the ECT through consistency concerning addressing the challenges that were faced by the ECTs. Mr Mmuso alluded that:

My own understanding of Educator support has to do with the management taking care of the well-being of the ECTs. This can be done through constantly checking what issues The ECTs are dealing with and offering them advices and so on. Informing the ECTs about the available workshops to support the ECTs. And also providing the ECTs with resources to utilise. This is way of giving the ECTs a peace of mind and mental support of some sort.

Findings revealed that educator support also encompassed the Education Official taking care of the ECT through providing the ECTs with mental support now and then. The participants revealed that consistency was key when it came to providing mental support and it could be

accomplished through seeking the obstacles that were faced by the ECTs and addressing these obstacles frequently.

6.3.2 The experiences of the Early Career Teachers in being provided with support by Education Officials

The ECTs come across various experiences in the infancy stages of their careers such as challenges that hinder them from doing their best at their workplaces. The narratives shared by the participants indicated that the ECT come across various experiences in their workplaces. According to the findings, it was evident that there were more challenges that the ECTs came across than the benefits they derived at the workplace. This is really a concern looking into the well-being and functionality of the ECT at workplaces. Three sub-themes emerged under this main theme during data analysis. And the sub-themes namely: (i) Challenges that are faced by Early Career Teachers; (ii) The benefits derived by Early Career Teachers from receiving support; (iii) Factors that affect support being provided to Early Career Teachers; (iv) Available support programmes and policies for Early Career Teachers.

(i) Challenges that are faced by Early Career Teachers

The ECTs often experience various challenges at a workplace that affects them in various ways, challenges affect their productivity because these challenges limited them from being teachers that they desire to become such as innovative teachers. The data generated revealed that there are various challenges that are experienced by ECTs in the school context concerning the nature of support that they receive and do not receive. Challenges such as a). A lack of support; b). A lack of training; c). A lack of resources and existing poor working conditions; d). Academic decisions and reforms are imposed on Early Career Teachers; e). Early Career Teachers burdened with many responsibilities; f). Early Career Teachers are assigned to work in overcrowded classrooms. All the above mentioned are lengthily discussed below:

a. A lack of support provided to the Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials

A lack of support has a negative influence on the ECTs and it creates more problems for the ECTs, this is because the ECTs may not be well-informed about their subject or how to deal

with certain issues which may lead to them making blunders at the workplace. The participants revealed that lack of support is when the ECT arrive at a new workplace and they do not receive any support in certain area of where they need support or receive minimal support from their supervisors (Education Officials) which ends up destructively affecting the ECTs productivity at a workplace and the dynamic of the relationship between the ECT and the Education Officials. A participant revealed that other subjects did not have Subject Advisors; therefore, the ECTs who teach these subjects suffer as they do not receive any support from Subject Advisors. Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head at Thaba di Mahlwa School stated that:

The challenges arise when other subjects do not have subject advisors because it leads to no information being cascaded at the start-up workshop nor in the schedule of upcoming workshops and that will lead to educators not doing the right thing from the beginning of the year.

A Principal of Thaba di Mahlwa School revealed that she recalled an incident whereby, they as school management team, did not support an ECT which resulted in an ECT committing a misconduct. Mrs Moshoeshoe explained:

When an ECT had a problem with an ill-disciplined learner, I promised to attend to the case but I forgot because I have a lot of work. It led to the ECT enforcing discipline by herself through corporal punishment which escalated the matter. Now it involved the parents and was a serious case. The ECT was devastated by the whole situation. She felt like we failed her because she believed corporal punishment was beating a learner with a stick.

Only Mrs Moshoeshoe shared that an ECT committed a misconduct due to not receiving support from her as an Education Official. Another participant divulged that they lacked being provided support to the ECT was curriculum based, as Mr Mmuso, an ECT from Thaba di Mahlwa School unearthed that:

The time when a Departmental head asked me to submit a curriculum coverage but she did not sit down with me and show me how to compile a curriculum coverage. That was very frustrating because I did not even know where to start because I really did not know how to write a curriculum coverage but was expected to submit. It was a very stressful issue. It even affected our relationship because I would get annoyed whenever I saw the Departmental Head The other incident was when I experienced a problem with a learner who was transgressing in the classroom and I tried to discipline the learner but the learner disrespected me. I then kicked the

learner out of the classroom. The principal confronted me and told me that was a misconduct. It was really stressful because firstly I was not informed of the misconducts that I should be aware of and secondly I was not trained on how to discipline such learners.

Another participant revealed that sometimes, they lacked to provide ECTs with support and it was sometimes beyond curriculum matters. The participant explained how they did not inform the ECT about policies that aligned with the ECTs work. The Departmental Head (Mr Makaota) from Thaba di Mahlwa had this to say:

When the ECTs arrive, I do not educate them about the available policies that they should follow. I do not guide them on how to enforce discipline without committing any misconduct. There was a case whereby an ECT in my department had pinched a learner and the learner was injured which ended creating a huge case that involved the parents and other SMT members. I felt that I was to blame because I did not inform the ECT about disciplinary sanctions that are used.

The participants revealed that it was even more difficult for other ECTs as they were not provided with support that concerned the lesson they had to conduct in the classroom. As a Subject Advisor who worked with Nkonzo and Thaba di Mahlwa School unearthed that:

There is a school that introduced Grade 10 this year, they did not have any background knowledge on how to teach Grade 10. I did not induct the teachers, I just invited them to my workshop and discussed the matters like all other teachers who have been teaching Grade 10 for years. I only went to their school later in the year to check their progress and their work. The teachers were really frustrated especially with the increased workload as now they had to integrate many contents in a lesson, they have to teach literature strictly and other skills.

Lastly, an ECT from Thaba di Mahlwa shared how he was surprised and not impressed by the way induction took place when he first arrived at his workplace. Mr Mmuso shared that:

When I first arrived in the school, the inductions were not satisfying at all. I was just introduced to the teachers and learners, they also showed me around the school and that was it. I was then allocated with a time table and books that I was supposed to use. I felt neglected because I had to figure out on my own on how to do things.

The findings revealed that lack of support that was being provided to the ECT really affected them at different levels. It revealed that most ECTs ended up being discouraged and which affected their productivity as they normally did not receive support with issues that concerned the curriculum and policies that were pertinent to what the ECT was doing inside and outside the classroom.

b. A lack of training

A lack of training was identified as a factor that had become a barrier that hindered the ECTs from being effective and well performing teachers due to the effects of it, such as ECTs may not be well informed about the subject that they teach and it definitely affects their confidence. The findings revealed that the lack of training was also one factor that daunted the ECTs in many ways. Different participants shared their views and experiences regarding the effects of not receiving sufficient training. One participant revealed that the lack of training made it difficult for the ECTs to perform optimally. This is because they did not know what is expected of them in most of the things. The Deputy Principal, Mrs Mopeli from the school Thaba di Mahlwa divulged that:

When the ECT is not sufficiently trained they are going to be lack when it comes to their work in general, because they basically do not know what is expected of or how they supposed to deliver content to learner. They will not have an idea on how to tackle issues and this will discourage them due to lack of training.

Another participant from the same school shared the same sentiments. Senior Teacher Mrs Mokodumela shared that:

ECT finds it hard to perform to the best because lack of training and support from the DH. They often complain that the training they receive is below average and makes them look as if they do not know their job which leaves them discourage because it hinders the excellent teaching deliverance to the learners.

A Senior Teacher, Mrs Mokodumela was further asked about the kind of training that she believed should be provided to the ECTs. And this was her response:

Training on how to effectively teach their subject, such as being trained how to incorporate prior knowledge into the lesson and most importantly on how

to teach certain content that they find difficult such as how to prepare learners for unprepared speech.

A Senior Teacher, Mrs Mokudumela further added to her preceding statement that the lack of training further affected the self-confidence of a teacher. This is how she put it:

The aspect of teaching that is lacking is definitely the self-confidence, self-efficacy and job satisfaction. When the teacher lacks the self-confidence in teaching they start to become very lazy to a point where they go late to class, they allow learners to misbehave and make noise while the teacher is in the class and they do not prepare for lessons.

A participant from the same school shares how lack of training caused problems for the ECT and the school as a whole. Mr Mmuso, an ECT shared that:

The ECT who are not well trained will apply their own knowledge and this might create problems, because these ECTs are unexperienced, unknowledgeable and blank. They only the knowledge and theory from the university which is way different from what the ECTs have to deal with when they get to field. This makes the ECTs feel incompetent and they feel like they do not know what they are doing. So, in the long run you get discouraged and end up hating your career in general.

A participant shared how she had perceived how the ECTs were not trained on specific areas and how it affected the work of the ECTs. Deputy Principal Mrs Mopeli from the school Thaba di Mahlwa unearthed that:

ECTs that are not trained when they arrive at a school, normally they are not trained on how to maintain and enforce discipline in the classroom and how to effectively deliver content that will benefit all learners. ECTs should be trained on how to utilise various methods to teach learners with different learning disabilities and learning styles.

A participant from Thaba di Mahlwa was asked if she believed that lack of training discouraged ECTs. Mrs Mokodumela, a Senior Teacher shared that:

Yes, it does, because the ECT finds it hard to perform to the best because lack of training and support from the DH. They often complain that the training they receive is below average and makes them look as if they do not know their job which leaves them discouraged because it hinders the excellent teaching deliverance to the learners

Out of all the information that was shared by the participants, it showed that lack of training of ECTs really affected their productivity, their confidence and job satisfaction which led to the ECTs being despondent, unenthusiastic and end up not doing their work effectively.

c. The lack of resources and existing poor working conditions

The lack of resource is also a challenge that directly affect the ECTs as it limits them from being creative teachers and meeting their objectives. Findings revealed that the selected schools have a challenge of lack of resources that immensely affected the ECTs directly and made their job hard as it is. The findings revealed how lack of resources hinders the ECT from being innovative and creative teachers as they intended to be. The Principal of Thaba Di Mahlwa shared how the lack of resources discouraged the ECTs even though the ECTs arrived as innovative and creative people. Mrs Moshoeshoe revealed that:

The lack of resources is a huge challenge that the ECTs normally face, they have to improvise which is unfair for them. The ECTs are often enthusiastic and very creative people who come with different teaching strategies to help learners with different learning styles.

In corroboration with the views that were shared by Mrs Moshoeshoe, a Deputy Principal, shared how the lack of resources daunted the ECTs from being innovative teachers. She said:

Lack of resources affects the ECTs very much because it limits them from being creative and limits them from teaching learners on how to be innovative and think out of the box. Because the ECT uses the same method and resources which is the textbooks and chalkboard method.

Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head shared his views about the resources that they lacked on her department, and said:

The lack of resources in our school includes the shortage of poetry books and anthology books. The ECTs are unable to effectively teach literature and it really frustrates them because literature has a lot of work and needs resourced for learner to be able to comprehend it.

Another participant further detailed how the lack of resources affected the learner results and the work of the ECTs. This participant revealed that the ECTs have to opt to do black and white copies for learners and this is unfair as sometimes, these copies were not clear and made it hard for the learners to pass. Mrs Mokodumela, a Senior Teacher at Thaba di Mahlwa shared that:

Lack of resources makes the job of ECTs to be very difficult because the learners end up failing and it is blamed upon the ECTs. Learners who are short with textbooks have to use black and white copies whereby they cannot clearly see some of the things in the book such as structures that they need to label and so on. This leads to learners not grasping sufficient information and they fail the examination.

Moreover, a participant shared how poor working conditions negatively affected the ECTs. Mr Mmuso, an ECT shared that:

Poor working conditions creates a hostile environment and one does to get developed in such space or they do not grow professionally. The ECTs in such environment tends to make mistakes over and over again, because they do not know where to seek for support and they are not guided.

Mr Mmuso, an ECT was further asked to explain what a poor working condition is. This is how he put it:

A poor working condition is when co-workers are not in good terms and some of them do not get along. There is a case whereby I was often bullied by the old teachers and they would use the “you are young” card every time. This affected me negatively because the workplace did not feel safe and whenever I needed help with something I would not ask for it.

A participant shared her views with regards to transgressing the learners making it hard for the ECT to do their work. Mrs Mopeli, a Deputy Principal at Thaba di Mahlwa School revealed that:

ECT have to deal with problematic learners and they disrupt the classes, then the ECT cannot effectively do their work which also affects the other learners in the classroom. Which will affect the results.

Data generated revealed that lack of resources affected the ECTs and limited them from performing their job to their optimal best. In addition, poor working conditions also contributed to the difficulties faced by the ECTs as divulged by the participants that the ECTs have to work with learners from different backgrounds whom are ill-disciplined, are not interested in their schoolwork which is seen through learners inactive and uncooperative during lessons.

d. Academic decisions and reforms are imposed on the Early Career Teachers

Amongst the experiences that the ECTs face in their inception years at a work place, academic decisions and reforms are not discussed with the ECTs first but rather imposed on the ECTs by the department in most cases. A participant shared that the department does not consult the ECTs and other stakeholders when they want to make changes to the curriculum. She elucidated the issue of Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in foundation phase, as it was changed into home language and this has been distressing for the ECTs and other stakeholders. A Deputy Principal at Thaba di Mahlwa School shared her views. Mrs Mopeli stated that:

Academic decisions are imposed on the ECTs and other teachers because the DoE does not consult the teachers which negatively affects them as it also affects their job satisfaction. For example, the DoE has implemented the curriculum change whereby learners in foundation phase learn in their home language and this has affected the whole education system because now all the ECTs and teacher from various phases struggle with learners who are unable to read, speak, write and understand the English. It is really a burden.

A participant shared how academic decisions affected them at the selected school. Mr Mmuso, is an ECT at Thaba di Mahlwa School shared his current experience where the department has decided to add General Education Certificate (GEC) as part of the curriculum for Grade 9. He explained that as much as there is training taking place but they still did not understand what they were expected to do. This is how he put it:

The academic decisions are imposed and often disturbs the effectiveness of the ECTs, when the ECT is trying to adapt then there are new academic decisions that they should follow and this is really frustrating honestly. For example, I was adapting on how to teach grade 9 but now the curriculum or system is going to change because they have introduced General Education Certificate (GEC) and I do not understand how to apply it. I did attend the training but I am still clueless because the workshop was a one day and not effective at all. Funny enough, I have engaged with other colleagues from other schools and they are also struggling.

A Senior Teacher from the same school shared the same sentiments. Mrs Mokodumela shared that:

I mean that the department makes decisions without consulting the ECTs. Decisions like what the ECTs and teachers should do by when but they do not consider the challenges that the ECTs are faced with at schools and that restrict or hinder them from attaining or meeting the requirements. Currently, our school was piloted for GEC and this has been a great challenge as ECTs and other stakeholders are confused on how to conduct this whole project and how to balance it with the ATP. Worse part, we receive minimal support from the department and zero materials. This is really frustrating especially for the ECTs as they are trying to adjust to the workplace.

Mrs Mokodumela further shared that in languages there were absurd expectations from the department that were not realistic when considering the given time frame. This is how she put it:

The department always expects the ECTs to have completed a certain content by a certain period of time. For example, ECTs were expected to have completed the formal oral activities by week 3 after school re-opening but it is sometimes impossible because the ECTs work with a lot of learners. The time allocated for orals you might find it is only which is totally unrealistic.

A participant discussed how the department is inconsiderate of ECTs as they normally command the schools to conduct holiday classes which was unfair as the ECTs and other stakeholders needed to rest. Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head from the school Thaba di Mahlwa disclosed that:

The academic decisions are imposed on the ECT and other teachers, for example last year the teachers had to conduct Grade 9 holiday classes and this affects teachers because they are human and need to rest too. The department just makes decisions without considering the well-being of ECTs and teachers. It's really sad.

The participants revealed that the department is inconsiderate when they make decisions for schools. The data generated revealed that the department did not consider the needs of the schools or ECTs or even the challenges that the ECTs face in schools. The participants suggested that the department's academic decisions are unrealistic when looking at the given time frame.

e. Early Career Teachers burdened with many responsibilities

ECTs are burdened with responsibilities even though they are on their job descriptions they need to be guided thoroughly on how to perform the given duties or else they feel like a burden to the ECTs. The data revealed that as much as ECTs may feel like they are given too much work which feels like a burden, they are not really burdened with work because all the work allocated to ECTs is within their job description. Mrs Mopeli who is a Deputy Principal at Thaba di Mahlwa School shared that:

No, ECTs are not burdened with responsibilities because all the responsibilities are within their job description. It is the ECTs and other teachers to supervise learners during break-time, it is the responsibility of a teacher to make sure that learner's activities are constantly marked and it is a responsibility of teacher to make sure that they join certain committees at the school.

Mrs Mopeli, a Deputy Principal at Thaba di Mahlwa School shared that:

No, ECTs are not burdened with responsibilities because all the responsibilities are within their job description. It is the ECTs and other teachers to supervise learners during break-time, it is the responsibility of a teacher to make sure that learners' activities are constantly marked and it is a responsibility of the teacher to make sure that they join certain committees at the school.

Mrs Mokodumela, a Senior Teacher at Thaba di Mahlwa School shared the same view. She stated that:

No, they are assigned with duties that align with their contract. But experienced teachers sometimes bully them and overwork them by giving their own work. They take advantage because ECTs are new in the field and cannot defend themselves.

Mrs Mokodumela was asked to explain what she meant by saying that experienced teachers bully ECTs. She revealed that:

The people who allocate duties to teachers are the SMT members, but the older teachers misuse their power that they are old and bully the ECTs. For example, they would force the ECTs to type a question paper for them, then capture marks for them because they often claim that they do not know technology.

A Departmental Head from Thaba di Mahlwa was asked if he believed that the ECTs were burdened with responsibilities. Mr Makaota shared that:

No, they are not burdened with responsibilities unless they are allocated with responsibilities which are not within their job description. Such as being allocated with subject they do not qualify to teach because of maybe the shortage of teachers. There was a case whereby an ECT was allocated with Life Orientation and this frustrated the teacher as they did not know how to teach the subject and did not qualify for it. I stood up for the teacher and told the Principal to hire a teacher even if it is with the SGB post.

The data generated divulged that even though the ECTs are allocated with responsibilities that align with their job descriptions, they are burdened by other colleagues who are experienced by forcing them to do extra duties. It does not end there, the participants further revealed that ECTs are sometimes allocated with subjects that they do not qualify to teach and this is a burden to ECTs as well.

f. Early Career Teachers are assigned to work with overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms made it difficult for the ECTs to do their job effectively as they are unable to control the learners and learners in overcrowded classrooms are disruptive which makes it hard for the ECTs to deliver their lesson. The data generated exposed that it was a complex task for the ECTs to work with overcrowded classrooms as it encompassed various challenges that made it difficult for ECTs to effectively perform their duties or meet their objectives. An ECT from Thaba di Mahlwa shared how working with overcrowded classrooms directly affected him. Mr Mmuso, an ECT disclosed that:

As inexperienced as we are we have to work with a large number of learners and produce good results. Which is a huge challenge because it is impossible to effectively teach when you are allocated with a large number of learners

Ms Eunice, a Subject Advisor at the school Nkonzo and Thaba di Mahlwa shared the same sentiments that overcrowded classes led to ECT experiencing a challenge of discipline. This is how she put it:

ECTs normally are employed at school where there is overcrowding of learners. Overcrowding leads to ill-discipline and shortage of materials which is really frustrating to the ECTs. Lack of resources is really a challenge, the school that had just introduced Grade 10 had no Grade 10

textbooks at all. The teachers and ECTs had to find a way how to improvise and teach learners without textbook.

The participants revealed that overcrowding was a challenging experience for the ECTs as they had to deal with ill-disciplined learners and this had a negative effect on their productivity. The ECTs were unable to effectively deliver lessons because overcrowded classrooms were noisy and they spent more time trying to discipline learners than doing the actual job which was teaching.

(ii) The benefits derived by the Early Career Teachers from receiving support

There are various benefits that are derived by the ECTs who receive support such as the ECTs become experts in the subject they teach which leads to improved learner performance. The participants disclosed that there are positive outcomes that are evident when the ECTs received sufficient support. The participants mentioned that the ECT become happier at work, they gained more confidence, they produced good results which led to high job satisfaction. The first participant who revealed the benefits of receiving support has a first-hand experience as an ECT. Mr Mmuso, an ECT from Thaba di Mahlwa School supplied the following utterance:

The ECT will be highly knowledgeable about what you are doing, which makes the ECT to be very confident. You will have job satisfaction because you know what you are doing and you are at ease when you are at work. You easily learn from mistakes with feeling judged. You grow as an individual and get to experience different things which leads to you learning new things every-day. You get to know how to advance yourself within the institution.

It is evident through the utterances shared that ECTs become knowledgeable with their subject when provided with support. Mrs Mokodumela, a Senior Teacher went on mentioning that the ECT got well equipped through receiving support. This is how she put it:

They produce good learner performance that is shown in the results of the learners. The ECTs stand a good chance of being well equipped with relevant knowledge with regards to effective curriculum deliverance and they are able to reach out to Education Officials whenever they encounter problems.

In harmony with the above sentiments, Mrs Mopeli clearly indicated that providing the ECTs with support made their job easier. This is how she explained it:

It makes their job easier as it makes it easier for them to perform well. Because when they experience challenges that know where to go to seek for

support. It helps them transition well from being a student to being an educator as this is a very challenging and huge transition. Teachers are more likely to adapt easily and do well in their job. The teachers become confident in what they are doing, because they know how they are progressing and will be able to deliver content effectively to learners which in turn they will produce good results and will also offer support to their learners.

Interestingly, Mrs Moshoeshoe a principal shared that when the ECTs are supported this also helps with building harmonious relationship between the ECTs and learners which created a healthy working environment for the ECTs. Her utterances are reflected below:

The ECT produce good results. They often have harmonious relationship with both the learners and other stakeholders which creates a very healthy environment for the ECTs. They also become very active and are willing to offer a helping hand even where it is not their responsibility such as helping other teachers to mark.

In the same note, Mrs Mopeli, a Deputy Principal shared that ECTs who received support did extra work. His utterances are quoted below:

The supported ECTs become very enthusiastic and they become very dedicated and committed to their work. They even compromise their own personal time to teach learners. They are very energetic and organise extra classes to assist learners. Their work improves and they tend to enjoy their job which leads to job satisfaction and self -efficacy.

Utterances from the previous excerpt were also supported by Mr Makaota, a departmental head, who went on mentioning that it helped the ECTs to perform better in their respective subjects.

This is how she put it:

They perform better in their respective subjects as they know what to teach, how to teach it (Programme of Assessment), and through them performing well it will also boost their confidence and make them be happy about their job, they are doing when the input matches the output. They yield better results in their subjects.

The generated data disclosed that when support is provided to the ECTs it also bolstered their confidence and enhanced their job satisfaction and it was evident through the fact that they produced good results. Prominently, it helped the ECT build harmonious relationships with both learners and co-workers which results in a healthy working environment.

(iii) Factors that affect support being provided to Early Career Teachers

Despite every encounter that ECTs go through there are simply factors that affect and contribute to these encounters. The data generated disclosed that there are factors that affect support that is being provided to ECTs and the participants revealed that this is two-edged. Firstly, they uttered that there are various factors that hinders the Education Officials from offering support to the ECTs which results in ECTs being provided with poor and insufficient support. Secondly, there are factors that influence the Education Officials to provide the ECTs with support.

a. The factors that hinders support to be provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials

There are various factors that daunts the Education Officials from providing ECTs with support such as ECTs who do not balance their personal and work life but rather put their personal life first. However, other factors are beyond the control of both the ECT and the Education Official such as insufficient allocation of funds which directly affects and hinders the Education Officials from providing ECTs with support such as providing them with resources. Participants revealed that the factors that discouraged the Education Officials from providing them with support. Mrs Makaota, a Departmental Head shared that ECTs are often in a hurry and cannot compromise their time after school and he further shared that it discouraged them as Education Officials. His utterance is shared below:

Some ECTs are time conscious and prioritise their personal life than their work. It is hard to support someone who is always in a hurry after school. Some are very lazy and do not show any interest in any support that is offered to them. Lastly, others are not well trained for that specific subject and when you support them you have to start from the beginning and it is time consuming and very discouraging.

Proving that lack of time is sometimes beyond the ECTs control, Mrs Mopeli, a Deputy Principal shared her views on the matter. Her statement is quoted below:

Lack of time, in a sense that we know that the ECTs have to spend more time in the classroom and deliver content. So, when they attend workshops, they are losing contact time with learners. The limited budget and the limited

resources to provide to the ECTs. The workload that teachers have, it is hard for them to juggle the workload and seek for assistance. They end up prioritising their work over getting developed professionally.

Interestingly, other participants shared other factors that normally hindered support from being provided in the selected school, these are beyond the time frames and unavailability of ECTs. The findings also suggested that the ECTs tend to undermine the support that they are being provided with and their attitudes also contribute to Education Officials being reluctant when it comes to providing support. Mr Mmuso whom is an ECT, shared his belief as reflected below:

ECTs often decline the support given by senior or experienced teachers because they feel like they are highly knowledgeable. They look down on experienced teachers, because the ECTs have high qualifications such degree or even honours degree and you might find the experienced teachers only have diplomas. Sometimes there is no time because everyone is busy with their work.

Mrs Moshoeshoe, a Principal shared that insufficient funds in schools also contributed and this is how she put it:

When the school does not have sufficient funds to buy sufficient resources. Resources such as Books, Maps, atlas and mathematical instruments. Because how am I going to support the ECT if they do not have resources to support their teaching. I need textbooks and the likes to train ECTs how to utilise them and how to teach learners using them. Because I might need to show the ECT how to use the ATLAS when delivering the lesson but if there is no ATLAS at the school then it becomes a problem.

Contrary to what is mentioned on the above excerpts, the participants divulged that the unavailability of Subject Advisors is also a hinderance. Mr Makaota, a departmental head shared that:

Lack of Subject advisors, there are subjects that do not have subject advisors and is a challenge for the ECTs because they are not attending any workshops and are not developed professionally. Lack of funds at the schools also hinders the support because sometimes we are unable to provide the ECTs with required teaching materials. The hectic schedule of the SMT, as much as we want to support the ECT we also have a lot of work and endless meeting that ends hindering us from providing support.

The participants suggested that even though the ECTs may discourage the Education Officials through not being available and always having excuses when they have to be supported, the data generated revealed that there are other factors that are beyond both the control of the ECTs and the Education Officials such as insufficient funds and unavailable resources at the selected school and more interesting the lack of Subject Advisors is also one of the factors that hinders support.

b. The factors that facilitate support to be provided to Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials

As much as there are factors that hinder support from being provided to the ECTs, there are factors that encourage the Education Officials to offer support to ECTs such as when the ECTs are participative and show interest in being provided with support. It is evident that providing support is two-ways, both parties play an important role, as the participants revealed that each individual contributed such as the ECTs should be active and demonstrate willingness to learn and to be supported. Mrs Mopeli a deputy principal shared the notion of the ECTs' willingness to learn. This is how she put it:

ECTs willingness for them to learn. Even though there are limited resources but there are efforts from the Subject Advisors such as school visits and when the ECT are accommodating and they have a good relationship with the Education Officials then it facilitates the support.

Mr Makoata, a Departmental Head shared the same sentiments. This is how he put it:

When we have a positive relationship with the ECT, then it is easier for me to offer support and give them strategies to use in the classroom. When the ECT has a good attitude and is eager to learn. When the ECT does their own research and brings forward new information they acquired. Researching demonstrate the ECT is eager to learn and wants to be supported.

Another participant, a Senior Teacher shared that it influences the Education Officials to provide support when the ECT is qualified to teach the subject they are currently teaching or that they need assistance in. Mrs Mokodumela, a Senior Teacher disclosed that:

When the ECT is qualified and has the knowledge of the subject that they teach. Qualified means the teacher has a qualification to teach that subject, there are instances whereby teachers are asked to teach subjects that they

are not qualified for such as Life Orientation and History. When there is a shortage of teacher, the principals just allocate any teacher with those subjects. So, if the ECT is qualified to teach the subject, they have the knowledge of the subject and will seek assistance on small matters like how to teach certain concepts but with those who do not qualify it becomes a problem because they themselves do not understand the subject, how do you even begin with supporting someone like that?

The data generated revealed that it is easier for the Education officials to provide support to ECTs when the ECTs are knowledgeable about the subject that they taught. Furthermore, when the ECT were willing to learn, they showed interest in learning. Most importantly, when the ECTs and the Education Officials had a good relationship, it made it easy for the Education Officials to approach the ECTs and assist them.

(iv) Available support programmes and policies for Early Career Teachers

There is an absence of policies and programmes that up support the ECTs directly, the available policies are broad and cover all teachers not specifically the ECTs. The data generated revealed that there was really a lack of support programmes and policies that supported the ECTs specifically. It was really a concern and showed that there is a huge gap in this area. Mrs Mokodumela a Senior Teacher revealed that:

The ECT has only attended subject workshops which only happens once a year which is never adequately catered for their individual development as an ECT.

Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head shared that there are no support programmes. He echoed that:

I do not know of any support programmes and policies that support the ECTs. I would be lying if I said I do know them. So, I conclude that there are none.

Mrs Mopeli, a Deputy Principal also shares that:

We have none. Zero!

A participant shared the same sentiments that the only support programmes they receive are workshops organised by the Subject Advisors. Mr Mmuso, an ECT revealed that:

Only the workshops and inductions that are organised by the Subject Advisors.'

The participants shared that there are no support programmes and policies that helped to support the ECT in the selected school.

6.3.3 The forms of support that is provided to Early Career Teachers by Education officials

There are different forms of support that are offered to ECTs. The participants revealed different forms of support that is provided to ECTs, the forms are discussed below. The discussed forms of support are as follows: (i) Professional Development; (ii) Administrative support; (iii) Emotional support; (iv) Technological support.

(i) Professional Development

The professional development specifically deals with developing the ECTs on their work in different areas. The ECTs receive this type of support through being inducted and attending workshops. The participants revealed that professional development mainly took place through inductions and workshops that were either organised by the school or department. A participant revealed that professional development took place during workshops organised by the Subject Advisors. Mr Moshoeshe, a Principal stated that:

Subject Advisors organise start-up workshops that helps beginning teachers with content.

Mr Moshoeshe was further asked about what kind of professional support he provides to the ECTs as a School Principal except the support they are being provided with by Subject Advisors. His response is quoted below:

I do not do any professional support apart from organising policy review workshops.

A participant shared that the ECTs are invited to workshops by Subject Advisors. Mrs Mopeli, a Deputy Principal disclosed that:

They are invited to departmental workshops by Subject Advisors whereby they are guided on how ATP works, they are also further assisted with the subject that they teach and sometimes they are provided with the materials they need to use. Even though it is not always the case.

Mrs Mopeli's view is supported by Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head. He divulged that:

There are start-up workshops that path the way at the beginning of the year and different teacher forums and other workshops throughout the academic year such as SACE endorsed workshops.

Mrs Makaota, a Departmental Head was further asked what is normally covered in these workshops. His response is quoted below:

The workshops normally discuss the ATP on how to cover and when to cover certain activities and assessments, such as projects. The Subject Advisors will explain and demonstrate to ECTs and other teachers on how to cover the curriculum coverage and how to correctly fill in the curriculum coverage.

Mr Mmuso, an ECT shared similar information regarding the ATP being covered in these departmental workshops. He uttered that:

The ECT is allowed to attend workshops that are organised by the Subject Advisors to inform them about the curriculum and policies. There are workshops that are normally organised by the Subject Advisors whereby we are called to discuss the ATP and how to cover the ATP, the workshop basically trains teachers on which tasks should be covered and when they should be covered. Also, there are inductions that inform ECTs what is expected from them and all the necessary information that they need to know about their profession such as dress-code and how to conduct themselves.

It is evident that the Subject Advisors hosted workshops are to offer support in demonstrating to ECTs how to align their lessons with ATPs and to cascade subject-related information.

(ii) Administrative support

Administrative support is provided to ECTs through training them on how to access SA-SAMS. The data generated reveals that administrative support that was provided to ECTs is that when the Education Officials trained them how to utilise SA-SAMS such as how to record and capture marks. Another participant shared that they teach them how utilise SA-SAMS. Mr Moshoeshoe, the Principal shared that:

We teach them how to capture marks on SA-SAMS. Concerning SA-SAMS, we also teach the ECTs how to record learners who misbehave, we teach them how to make learners progress reports and how to do results analysis on the SA-SAMS. We also assist them on how to set standardised question papers.

Contradictory, a participant shared that they did not consider this as a form of support as they had to do it all by themselves. Mr Mmuso, an ECT shared that:

I do not receive any administrative support, because I do all the administrative work by myself. I type my own question papers, record and capture marks on SA-SAMS.

The participants revealed that there were various ways to provide the ECTs with administrative support. The data generated revealed that administrative support can be provided through training teachers on how to use SA-SAMS, how to record and capture marks. But the other participants disclosed that they were not provided any administrative support.

(iii) Emotional support

Emotional support can take place through Education Officials assisting the ECTs with matters that affect their emotional well-being because ECTs who have experienced challenges that directly temper with their emotional well-being and this has a negative effect on their job performance. The data generated revealed that there are challenges that affect the emotional well-being of the ECTs and it affected their work. A participant revealed that she offered an emotional support to an ECT who was cyberbullied by learners as the cyber-bullying took a toll on the ECT emotionally. Mrs Moshoeshoe, the Principal disclosed that:

There was once where a teacher had an encounter where a learner had posted negative things about the teacher on Facebook. This had taken a serious toll on her emotionally. It affected her confidence and I disciplined the learners and I shared my own personal experience on how learners spread certain rumours about me and that made her feel a lot better.

A participant's utterance revealed that having informal conversation with the ECTs helped the Education Officials to notice if a depressed the ECT needed emotional support or professional help. Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head revealed that:

I do offer emotional support, I have informal conversations with the ECTs and offer them with advices. I once had a conversation with an ECT and I could tell that they were very depressed and were at a boiling point. I then advised the ECT to seek for psychological sessions and they did that. Fortunately, the psychologist referred the ECT to a mental health institution for a month.

Mr Mmuso, an ECT shared how his Departmental Head provided him with emotional support. His shared that:

My Departmental Head does provide me with emotional support because I am able to share certain things with her and she gives me advice on how to tackle them. Not only work problems, she also listens to my personal problems and she creates a safe space for me to open up. There was a time when I was going through a difficult whereby I had a gambling problem and this affected me in many ways. She did not judge but offered me advice that ended up helping me out. I still appreciate her efforts for helping me with my gambling problem.

The data generated suggested that the Education Official in the selected school offered emotional support to the ECTs, regardless of the ECTs problems or position. The participants revealed that they offered emotional support through helping to discipline learners for the ECTs, by also telling ECTs about their comparable incidents and most importantly the Educational Officials encouraged the ECTs to seek professional help and it assisted a lot.

(iv) Technological support

Technological support can be provided through training ECTs on how to use computer and incorporating technological tools into their lessons such as watching Youtube videos on a projector, however most ECTs do not need this kind of support as they come to the workplace well equipped with utilising computer and technological skills. The participants revealed that the ECTs are well-equipped with technology and they did not need much support and assistance when it came to technology. Mrs Mokodumela, a Senior Teacher shared that:

They came well-equipped with computer skills from the university and do not need any further training. They know how to use computers from typing to using excel and other computer accessories such as downloading teaching resources from the computer that will assist them in the classroom.

A participant further shared that the ECT even helped other teachers with using technology. Mrs Moshoeshe, a Principal shared that:

Most ECTs come knowing a lot about technology, they are normally the ones who provide us with technological support at our school. An ECT in our school showed us how we can access the DBE database to download previous question papers and also how to download YouTube videos and use them in the classroom to teach learners. The ECT normally helps set up for

virtual meetings. So, the ECT made it clear that he did not need any technological support.

A participant whom is an ECT also shared that they believed they are well-equipped with technological skills and did not need support. Mr Mmuso who is an ECT stated that:

I believe that I do not need technological support because I came equipped with all the basic computer skills and everything, so I do not need any technological support.

The preceding *verbatim quotes* indicates that ECTs did not need technological support as they came well trained from the University. However, they still offered them with support here and there. Mr Makaota, a Departmental Head, shared that he helped the ECT with showing them how to incorporate YouTube videos in lessons. This how he put it:

The only technological support that I offered was to show them how they could use technology to teach learners such as that they could use You-tube to analyse poetry with learners and so on. I also help them set-up for the overhead projectors when they need to use them. The ECTs come well-equipped with computer and technological skills from the university.

With what the participants revealed, it is vividly clear that the ECTs did not need any technological support instead they assisted the experienced educators with technological matters. However, there were Education Officials that still offered technological support through assisting ECTs on how to incorporate YouTube in lessons.

6.3.4 The rationale for the Early Career Teachers needing support from the Education Official

There is always a rationale why something needs to be done, in this case there are different rationale why the ECTs need support from the Education Officials and the rationale are namely: (i) To enhance Early Career Teachers smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher; To assist the Early Career Teachers to be more conversant about their subject and to build the Early Career Teacher's confidence in their work.

(i) To enhance Early Career Teachers smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher

When support is provided to the ECTs it assists them to be able to shift easily from being students to being employees and makes it easier for them to adapt very fast at a workplace. Mrs Mopeli who is a Deputy Principal mentioned that ECTs need to be guided on how to adapt at the workplace. This is how she put it:

They need to be guided on how to adapt the work environment because of the tremendous change from being a student and to be employees. It helps with a smooth transition. For them to learn how to write lesson plans correctly because the format used in university is way different from one that is used at schools. Everything was too much for the ECTs upon their arrival at schools.

The above-mentioned view was similar to the view uttered by Mr Mmuso, an ECT, he shared that:

We as ECTs need support so that we can adapt in the field and learn how things are done in the field. So that we can know how to apply ourselves and know what is right and what is wrong. So that we can help learners perform well and become experts in the subject we need. So that we can excel within the profession.

It is evident that it is easier for the ECT to settle and adapt quickly at a new workplace when they receive efficient support. The support helps to transition easily as they are guided on how to do their work and most importantly it gave them the privilege of agency and autonomy.

(ii) To assist the Early Career Teachers to be more conversant about their subject

When the ECTs receive support, it drives them to be masters of the subject that they teach. Mr Mmuso who is an ECT shared that they wanted the ECTs to be experts of the subject they taught so that they can also accommodate learners with barriers. He put it like this:

ECTs need support from Education Officials so that they can master the curriculum development to also know the in depth of what is expected from them with regards to teaching and learning. Moreover, to be given strategies

to deal and deliver curriculum efficiently to learners with different learning barriers.

The extract above suggests that Education Officials acknowledged that when ECTs receive support they need, there are inherent benefits in terms of them becoming masters in their field. Certainly, such acquisition of skills and experience benefits them the school and the learners.

(iii) To build the Early Career Teacher's confidence in their work

The participants disclosed that it was vital for ECT to receive support as it assisted in building the ECTs confidence in doing their work. Mrs Moshoeshoe who is a Principal highlighted that supported ECTs became supportive teachers. Her statement is quoted below:

The ECTs can be effective dream carriers of the upcoming generation. So they can become dedicated and committed teachers and provide the ultimate support that the learners need. This is because they become very confident with their work and once they are confident they begin to love their work. One of our ECT began showing self-confidence after being frequently provided with support and this was seen through how she was always prepared for her lessons. She always had suggestions on how on to improve learner performance and always shared her strategies on how to enhance learner engagement in the classroom.

Mr Makoata, a Departmental Head mentioned that it assisted the ECTs know the modus operandi:

So that they can know the modus operandi as they need to be guided as to how things need to be done in the education system. Do their job with confidence as confidence will assist them to know how they need behave and how to deliver the curriculum confidently and effectively. So that they can also know how the Programme of Assessment works. When they efficiently know what they are expected to do, they develop so much confidence which is a good thing. One of our ECT was very confident to a point that she would investigate issues that caused learners to perform poorly and always seek assistance from use. Her confidence was admired by many colleagues.

The preceding data revealed that the ECTs need support because they sometimes did not know or understand how certain tasks are done, so they needed assistance to grasp important things

which normally bolstered their confidence and assisted them in knowing how to do their work as expected which led to becoming good teachers.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings from the analysis of the qualitative data generated from Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary School were presented. Like in the preceding chapter, there were six participants based in Thaba di Mahlwa schools and one Subject Advisors who worked with the school. The next chapter presents the analysis of findings from the third of the participating schools.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: NKONZO SECONDARY SCHOOL

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented the analysis of findings from data that was generated through conducting semi-structured interviews at Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary school. This chapter presents the analysis of findings from data generated from the third research site, anonymised as Nkonzo Secondary School. The structure of the chapter remains the same as in the preceding two chapters.

7.2 Profiling of the participants

The profiles are comprehensive, as they include the participants' names, age group, gender, position, qualifications, teaching experience, and years of experience in their current position, school name and type, as well as the location of the school. To keep the identity of all the participants and of their school, I used *pseudonyms*. Coffelt (2017) advocates for the use of *pseudonyms*, saying that they are ideal for preserving the anonymity and confidentiality of the research sites and of the participants. The selected participants were six from each of the three schools. They held different positions in their workplace ranging from Post level (PL) 1 to 4. The experience of the participants ranged from 6 years to 25 years. The biographical details of the participants are presented as demonstrated in Table 3 below:

Participant's name	Gender	Position	Highest Qualifications	Teaching experience	Years as Education official	Name of school	Location
1. Eunice	Female	Subject Advisor	B.Ed. Honours	11 years	2 years	Nkonzo and Thaba di Mahlwa Senior Secondary School (SSS)	Township area
2. Mr Mageba	Male	Principal	Advanced Diploma	25 years	9 years	Nkonzo SSS	Township

3.Mrs Mntungwa	Female	Deputy Principal	Advanced Diploma	23 years	6 years	Nkonzo SSS	Township
4.Mr Mvelase	Male	Departmental Head	Advanced Diploma	23 years	4 years	Nkonzo SSS	Township
5.Mrs Ndabezitha	Female	Senior Teacher	PGCE	19 years	3 years	Nkonzo SSS	Township
6.Mr Boyabenyathi	Male	ECT	B.Ed.	6 years	0 years	Nkonzo SSS	Township

Table 3. Biographical information of the research participants.

Table 3 above presents a summary of the biographical details of the participants. The six participants were selected for participation in the current qualitative multiple case study, as earlier explained in the previous chapter. Nkonzo Senior Secondary school is located in a township area. The presentation of the participants' individual profiling is shown below.

Mrs Eunice: Subject Advisor

Mrs Eunice is a female Subject Advisor at the Thabo Mofutsanyane District, she works with the Nkonzo and Thaba di Mahlwa Senior Secondary School. Nkonzo SSS is located at the township and Thaba di Mahlwa Secondary School is located in rural areas, both schools are in QwaQwa. She holds Bachelor of Education degree and her highest qualification is Bachelor of Education Honours degree. She has 11 years' experience as an educator and 2 years' experience as a subject advisor. Amongst sampled participants of the Subject Advisor cohort, she is the least experienced. Prior to her appointment as a Subject Advisor, she was a Head of Department for languages where she served for 4 years. She is a subject advisor of English First Additional Language (FAL) and Home Language (HL).

Mr Mageba: Principal

Mr Mageba is a male principal of Nkonzo Secondary School that is located at the township area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyane District. He holds Senior Teacher Diploma and his highest qualification is Advanced Diploma in Leadership and Management. He has been a teacher for 25 years and has served as a school principal for 9 years. Before he got appointed as a school principal, he served as a Departmental Head for the Mathematics and Sciences for 8 years at another school and served as a Deputy Principal for 6 years. Out of all the selected

participants in the cohort of principals he is the only male and he is the most experienced principal.

Mrs Mntungwa: Deputy Principal

Mrs Mntungwa is a female Deputy Principal at Nkonzo Secondary School located at the township area in QwaQwa. She holds Secondary Teaching Diploma and Advanced Diploma is her highest qualification. She has been an educator for 23 years and have served as a Deputy Principal for 7 years. Before she got appointed as a Deputy Principal, she served as a Departmental Head for Sciences for 8 years.

Mr Mvelase: Departmental Head

Mr Mvelase is a male Departmental Head at Nkonzo Secondary School in the township area of QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. He holds Senior Teaching Diploma and his highest qualification is Advanced Diploma. He has been a teacher for 23 years and 4 years as a Departmental Head. He is a Departmental Head of languages. Out of all the selected participants in the cohort of Departmental Heads his experience is average.

Mrs Ndabezitha: Senior Teacher

Mrs Ndabezitha is a female Senior Teacher at Nkonzo Secondary School located in the township area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. She holds Bachelor of Arts and her highest qualification is PGCE certificate. She has been a teacher for 19 years and has served as a Senior Teacher for 3 years. She mentors ECTs who specialise in Tourism.

Mr Boyabenyathi: Early Career Teacher

Mr Boyabenyathi is a male ECT at Nkonzo Secondary School located in township area in QwaQwa in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. He holds a Bachelor of Education degree FET phase specialising in Mathematics and Physics. He has 6 years' experience as an educator. He currently teaches Mathematics. Out of the sampled participants of the cohort of ECTs, he is the most experienced ECT.

7.3 Discussion and Presentation of findings

After I had completed the data generation process, which was conducted through the semi-structured interviews and document review of the selected school, I then proceeded to do the data analysis. The analysis followed the same process as outlined in Chapter Four as well as in Chapter Five. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis are discussed next.

7.3.1 The perspectives of the Early Career Teachers and the Education Officials regarding Educator support

The participants shared their different perspective with regards to what is Educator support according to their own views. The sub-themes that emerged are as follows: (i) Conducting induction programme for Early Career Teachers; (ii) Supporting the ECTs in attending workshops; (iii) Providing the ECTs mental support. Data generated is presented below.

(i) Conducting induction programme for the Early Career Teachers

The findings in this study suggest that educator support had to do with the ECTs being provided with new information regularly. Below is what Mr Boyabenyathi, an ECT had to say:

My understanding is that we should be updated about the new information and share it with the ECTs, and we need to support them by going to class with them and guide them how to teach and how to conduct themselves.

Likewise, a Senior Educator (Mrs Ndabezitha) identified the stakeholders that were responsible for conducting induction programme for the ECTs. In that regard, Mrs Ndabezitha had this to say:

The support you are talking about is the support that we are supposed to receive from the SMT, the SGB and Learner Facilitators which are now commonly known as Subject Advisors. As a maths educator, the support has to do with my being guided on how to deliver content so that I can also support my own learners.

The Deputy Principal (Mrs Mntungwa) corroborated this finding and went on to express how induction took place in their school. This is how she put it:

Educator Support is when we support the ECT through helping them learn the assessment programmes that are already available at school. When we have an ECT, we need to make sure that they are inducted in a way that they are introduced to their departmental heads, mentors (Senior Teacher) and their subject advisor. To show them facilities around the school. Also, to guide and show the ECTs on how to administer tests such as weekly and quarterly tests. Educator support has to do with allocating them senior teachers to mentor them.

Mr Mageba, the School Principal was asked about what Educator Support was and why it was essential for the ECTs to be inducted. Mr Mageba had this to say:

I believe that Educator Support is the support that is given to the new teachers who are entering the teaching profession, to help them transition from being students to being teachers, and to help them to be able to reach their full potential in transferring their knowledge to the lesson through lesson planning, preparation and delivery.

On the same note, a Departmental Head, Mr Mvelase shared the same sentiments on how Educator Support helped the ECTs with smooth transition and revealed more details on what induction programme entailed. Below is what Mr Mvelase had to say:

My understanding is that when we have an ECT from university, they have not managed a classroom and has no experience in the classroom at all. Therefore, educator support has to do with induction of ECTs focusing on the dress-code, importance of preparing for the lesson and how to manage the classroom. We normally induct ECT on how they can stamp authority in the classroom as to how make sure that the class is not chaotic and that a classroom should be neat. We induct ECTs on how to discipline learners and guide them that if there are uncontrollable learners they have to identify them and bring the names to the management. We show the ECTs how the ATPs work and which topics they need to prepare and teach learners in the classrooms for example we train them how to teach literature etc. We guide ECTs on how to control and monitor the learner's books in a period of a week. We train teachers that whenever they give learner's work they have to control and monitor the learner's work.

The data generated revealed that induction also entailed guiding the ECTs on how to teach their subjects and being provided with relevant teaching support materials such as books and study

guides. On the note of importance, the data generated revealed that not only the SMT was responsible for conducting induction programme for the ECTs, but also Senior Teachers and Subject Advisors were also responsible and should take part in the beginning stages of inducting the ECTs. The Subject Advisors further revealed that the policy allowed them to work directly with the ECTs as well as other teachers in the schools.

(ii) Supporting the Early Career Teachers in attending workshops

The findings in this study indicate that Education Officials offered support through accompanying the ECTs to attend the workshops. Mr Mageba, the School Principal shared that they allocated transportation for the ECTs to attend workshops. This is how Mr Mageba put it:

Normally, we allow the ECTs to go to workshops when they have to. We support them through giving them money for petrol if they have their own cars. But if they do not have their own car then we support them through delegating one colleague who has a car to accompany them to the workshop.

Mr Mvelase revealed that as a Departmental Head, he normally accompanied the ECTs to workshops. This is how he put it:

In most cases when I have time, I make time to accompany the ECTs to workshops so that they can feel supported and not feel alone.

The participants revealed that they supported the ECTs through providing them with transportation to go to workshops and the Departmental Heads often accompany the ECTs to the workshops so that the ECTs may not feel alone but they may feel supported through being accompanied by their immediate supervisors.

(iii) Providing the Early Career Teachers with mental support

The findings in this study indicate that Education Officials offered mental support to the ECTs by advising them to seek professional support when experiencing problems that affected them negatively in different aspects. Deputy Principal (Mrs Mntungwa) shared her experience with providing mental support to the ECTs. This is how she put it:

It is curriculum and mental support for educators such as one on one development from Departmental Head, workshops and promotion of a healthy working environment. We promoted a healthy working environment

by making sure we did team-building activities that would enable colleagues to have a good relationship with each other. I mean that the ECTs are supported when they experience mental health problems, we help them by referring them to available services that are aimed at helping people with the mental health problems.

The participants revealed that the promotion of healthy working environment was a practice of providing the ECT with mental support. Furthermore, the participants revealed that they supported the ECTs through referring them to services that assisted people with mental health problems.

7.3.2 The experiences of the Early Career Teachers in being provided with support by the Education Officials

The findings elicited through data generation suggest that the ECTs encountered different experiences in their beginning stages of their career concerning receiving support from the Education Officials. The sub-themes that are discussed are as follows: (i) Challenges that are faced by the Early Career Teachers; (ii) The benefits for the Early Career Teachers receiving support; (iii) Factors that affected the support being provided to the Early Career Teachers; (iv) Available support programmes and policies for the Early Career Teachers.

(i) Challenges that are faced by Early Career Teachers

The findings in this study revealed that there were various challenges that were experienced by ECTs in the school context concerning the nature of support that they receive and do not receive. The data revealed the challenges are as follows: a). The lack of support provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials; b). The lack of training; c). The lack of resources and existing poor working conditions; d). Academic decisions and reforms are imposed on Early Career Teachers; e). Early Career Teachers burdened with many responsibilities; f). Early Career Teachers face difficulties when working with overcrowded classrooms.

a. The lack of support provided to the Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials

The findings in this study suggest that the lack of support affected the ECTs badly because they ended up not knowing how to do certain duties effectively. Mr Boyabenyathi an ECT shared his experience and the participant revealed that during his inception years of working, his immediate supervisor did not assist and guide him on how to compile a lesson plan, he was in awe when his supervisor demanded a lesson plan. Mr Boyabenyathi, an ECT had this to say:

When I first started working. My mentor did not train me on how to write lesson plans and seemingly the person did not know how write the lesson plan and that was very stressful for me. Because I wanted to learn how to write lesson plan but my mentor does not know how to write lesson plan. Also, I did not receive support on how to compile the Educator files and personnel from the district was requesting an Educator's file while I did not even have any. I believe that the Education Officials failed to provide me with support. It made me angry and I was also mad at my mentor for some time which ended affecting our relationship.

Mrs Ndabezitha, a Senior Teacher revealed that she felt like it was not her mistake or she was not to blame for not providing support to the ECT, as the ECT arrived during examination time and there was not much she could do about it. This is how Mrs Ndabezitha put it:

When the ECTs arrive during examination time, I am unable to offer them with sufficient support because I am unable to take them to class and show them teaching strategies and how to discipline learners. The only thing I am able to do is show them how to mark scripts and I feel like that is not sufficient support. And when the ECTs do not receive support, they normally do not cope and they get very frustrated which leads them to change career because they feel like teaching is not their desired career. It really causes them to get frustrated.

Deputy Principal (Mrs Mntungwa) divulged that sometimes, she noticed after the damage was done that she did not provide sufficient support to the ECT. Deputy Principal (Mrs Mntungwa) shared that:

It is quite often when I noticed that support was lacking from my side as an Education Official. I noticed when an ECT repeats the same mistake over and over and this shows that they were not provided with sufficient support.

This is because we give the ECTs so much work that leads to frustration, I might expect them to submit marks after three days, at the same time they have to conduct a QMS, I also expect them to invigilate and lastly to submit learner's for moderation. This shows that support is lacking from my side and overload the ECT with workload and they have to obey because they are new and young.

It is evident that even though the participants were willing to provide the support to the ECTs, sometimes it was beyond their control as he mentioned that sometimes the ECTs arrived during the examination period and there was little that can be done during this period. The participants further revealed that it was easy to identify a participant whom was not supported; they were seen by repeating same mistakes over and over again.

b. The Lack of training

The findings in this study suggest that lack of training discouraged the ECTs which led to the ECTs losing their confidence and losing their eagerness to teach. Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head shared the following story:

If the ECTs are not well trained it becomes a challenge because they are not eager to teach and they lack confidence. Because we can easily identify that the ECTs lack knowledge of their subject and they are not sure on what they are going to do in the classroom and this leads them to being a dodgy and lazy teacher. They avoid going to class and they will always come up with excuses instead of going to the classroom. You will find the teacher going back and forth to the classroom and their office, most will pretend that they forgot something.

Mr Boyabenyathi an ECT shared the same views that the ECTs had to figure out by themselves what to do in class, due to the lack of training and scarce workshops. Mr Boyabenyathi shared that:

Lately, workshops for training teachers on certain content is very scarce. Workshops have been cancelled and teachers are not really trained and they have to figure things on their own and this discourages the ECTs. They have to learn content on their own without any trainings that were normally received in these workshops.

Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal revealed that:

Lack of training discourages these young teachers. I believe that teacher attrition is caused by undertraining of the ECTs. Because internal training is not sufficient. It is needed that Subject Advisors are subject specialist, my training might not be effective because sometimes you might find that I am Departmental Head of subject I do not even know or understand, and then it is frustrating for the ECTs because I cannot train them. Such I am a Departmental Head of Sciences but do not understand mathematics. Which is really a problem.

It is evident with the data generated that all these matters created problems for the ECTs as they ended up being characterised as lazy and incompetent by their supervisors in schools. The elucidation by one participant revealed that some Education Officials did not offer the ECTs training because the Departmental Head did not specialise in the subject they are heading which makes it difficult for them to offer efficient support.

c. The lack of resources and existing poor working conditions

The findings in this study suggested that lack of resources affected the learner performance and effectiveness of the ECTs. Astonishingly, the ECTs were expected to improvise and carry out their duties effectively even without sufficient resources. Participants further revealed that the working conditions made it difficult for the ECTs to be effective and produce good results as expected. Mr Mvelase shared how insufficient resources was a challenge and that it had an impact on the productivity of ECTs in the selected school. Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head shared that:

The lack of resources is a challenge in most schools. There are shortages of textbooks and the budget allocation is not enough to buy the textbooks that are needed at school. Teachers will have to make copies and this on its own is a challenge because learners cannot clearly see pictures in the copies. Sometimes learners have to share the same textbook and this is a problem because after school they go separate ways and this benefits only one learner. This is challenge to the ECTs because they have to come up with ways on how to compromise that every learner is covered. We also do not have extra teaching aids such as overhead projector. ECTs as they come with new strategies such as technology incorporated lesson that might need projectors or charts then it makes their job difficult.

Mr Mageba, the School Principal shared in detail how the experiences of the ECTs regarding the lack of resources in his own school. Mr Mageba unearthed that:

Lack of resources somehow depends on the subjects. There are subjects that are manageable even without resources, but there are subjects that are not coping without the resources. For example, with sciences it really becomes a challenge when an ECT has to teach learners but there are no replicas (skeletons), chemicals for experiments or even maps for geography. This really affects the productivity of an ECT. Because they are new in the field and do not know how to improvise like the experienced teachers.

Another participant shared the same sentiments and vividly elucidated how the ECTs were affected by the lack of resources. Mrs Ndabezitha, a Senior Teacher divulged that:

The ECTs are not able to be innovative, such as tourism teachers need laptops and overhead projectors to show learners the tourist attractions but because of insufficient and unavailable laptops, the ECTs are only able to show learners these tourists attraction with black and white pictures that are in the textbooks.

Astonishingly, Mrs Mntungwa revealed how the ECTs did not utilise the available laboratories at schools as expected. Mrs Mntungwa, the Deputy Principal exposed that:

I would like to discuss the issue of the ECTs whom do not use the available resources. We do have the laboratory, but the ECTs do not use the labs for practical and experiments and I often pick this up when I moderate the teacher's work and do not find any practical activities in the learners books. This is a problem because as much as there is a shortage of resources but the ECTs do not utilise available resources. We do have shortage of textbooks, we normally ask the teachers to write down the number of books that are short but budget often hinders us from buying these books.

Mr Boyabenyathi an ECT was asked if poor working condition affected them and he revealed that indeed it did affect them. Mr Boyabenyathi explained that:

It does affect us a lot, because working under poor working conditions is very stressful for the ECTs. One does not work well and it affects how they teach their learners because they are working under stressful conditions. This affects the ECTs productivity because poor working conditions affects the ECTs emotionally. Which is a big deal. In my current workplace learners do not care about their schoolwork and they fail very bad, and sadly I always

have to account. I have noticed that many public schools have a problem of lack of resources which affects the learner performance; we do not have enough resources for teachers and learners to utilise. For example, in this school we have CAT (Computer Application Technology) as a subject but we do not have enough computers and we also have Physics as a subject but we do not have enough chemicals for learners to use for experiments; this affects the effectiveness of the teacher and the learner performance.

Mr Mageba, the School Principal further revealed that poor working condition was not only aligned with the co-workers that the ECTs have to deal with. He revealed that even the learners made the work of the ECTs very difficult. Mr Mageba had this to say in that regard:

The ECTs often experience discipline problems because they might appear very young to these learners and they get disrespected by these learners. This makes their work very difficult as it also affects their confidence and emotional well-being. Also having to adapt to so many new responsibilities in a short period of time it is really a challenge to the ECTs and affects their job satisfaction a lot. The other challenge is that they have to adapt to being not only teachers but now they have to be parents and social workers to these learners who come from different backgrounds with different experiences. All this transition might be overwhelming and challenging to the ECTs.

It did not end there, Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal revealed that the ECTs had to work with the learners who were not cooperative in class. Mrs Mntungwa shared that:

The challenge that the ECTs face is the learners who do not cooperate in class and do whatever they want to do during the lesson. Another one is the lack of parental involvement, the ECTs are unable to meet the learner's parents because most learners are from farms that are far away and the parents cannot come to school when summoned. The ECTs are unable to address certain issues because they lack the information about the background of learners since they cannot meet with the parents.

Mrs Ndabezitha, a Senior Teacher revealed that it was even worse for the ECTs as they were new in the field and had to work with learners from different backgrounds. She shared how it was challenging for the ECTs to discipline these learners. Mrs Ndabezitha disclosed that:

Normally it is hard for the ECTs because they teach learners from different backgrounds whom normally disrupt lessons and this is a challenge for the ECTs because they are new in the field and normally do not know how to

discipline learners. Also, we do not have enough resources as a school then it is hard for the ECTs to do their work and also for us to support the ECTs when there are lack of resources because most subject requires extra teaching materials and I cannot train ECTs about a certain content if there are no resources to support.

The findings revealed that absence of resources really impacted the quality of work that was produced by the ECTs. Some participants revealed that as much as the ECTs tried to improvise by making copies, this sometimes made it worse for learners to cope as the copies were in black and white which made it difficult for learners to see vividly. Moreover, the ECTs had to work with ill-disciplined learners who did not care about their schoolwork and sadly contributed to the high failing rate and the ECTs were expected to take accountability on why these learners were failing. All the aforementioned challenges affected the effectiveness and productivity of the ECTs.

d. Academic decisions and reforms are imposed on the Early Career Teachers

The findings in this study indicate that academic decisions and changes varied from curriculum reforms to policy adjustments, which directly affected the ECTs and other stakeholders in the school premises. The participants revealed that academic changes and reforms were distressing and affected the ECTs negatively as they were still adapting on the workplace. Mrs Mntungwa revealed that curriculum change was not always the case; she clarified that sometimes, only the time frame changed but the curriculum remained the same. Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal revealed that:

When you are teacher, you have the background information of our subject and the content. Sometimes the curriculum does not change completely, they might just change the time frame of when each concept should be covered. For example, if last year we had to teach adjectives in the first term, it might change that this term we have to teach it in term four. Normally the Annual Teaching Plan changes the time-frame not the concept.

Mrs Ndabezitha a Senior Teacher emphasised that the department often just made decisions without considering how it affected the ECTs and other teachers. She shared the unfortunate experience of how an ECT had to re-mark a project because a Subject Advisor was not satisfied. Mrs Ndabezitha exposed that:

The department often just decide without consulting the teachers, there was a case whereby an ECT who teaches tourism had to make learners to re-write a project (Practical Assessment Task) because the Subject Advisor was not satisfied, this means the ECT had to mark from the start again which was very frustrating for her.

Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head shared that as much as there were academic reforms that were implemented by the department, there were also trainings that took place to support the ECTs and other teachers. Mr Mvelase shared that:

When the curriculum changes, the department of education trains the Subject Advisors so that they can cascade the information to the teachers. They host workshops maybe for three days to train the teachers on the new changes. The subject advisors encourage teachers to tell them if they experience any challenges and they will come to assist them. At the workshops the teachers are given a platform on what is it that they want to be added or phased out of the curriculum. So that the Subject Advisors can tell the CES what was asked by the teachers.

Correspondingly, Mr Mageba, the School Principal shared similar information concerning that the ECTs and other teachers were invited to seminars where they were trained and informed about these changes. A School principal shared how seminars were hosted to cascade information regarding academic reforms. Mr Mageba stated that:

In most cases, whenever there are curriculum changes, the department of education hosts seminars and summon teachers to train them about the new curriculum but this might not be sufficient and effective because the seminar might take a day or two. I believe that is not sufficient time to train teachers about a whole curriculum change so this affects the ECTs productivity because they feel like they are never involved in any academic decisions, they are just told what to do and what not to do.

Mr Boyabenyathi, an ECT was asked if he had experienced academic decisions and reforms being imposed to him. Mr Boyabenyathi revealed how he had to figure out on himself how to teach a new content. This is how he put it:

Yes, the department frequently changes the curriculum and the ATP. They frequently add something new on the ATP and does not offer training on the newly added topic/content, For example, with Maths we used to have linear

programming and it changed to Euclidean Geometry and we had to learn that on our own and that really affects our effectiveness as ECTs.

The participants have revealed that academic decisions and reforms affected the ECTs work capacity and their productivity because they needed to adjust into teaching new curriculum. Additionally, the participants revealed the reforms were not always curriculum based; sometimes, the reforms had to do with added workload that did not align with the given time frame which made it difficult for the ECTs to adjust smoothly at a workplace. Furthermore, the academic reforms interfered with the premediated schedules that were done by the school for the benefit of the school which ended increasing the workload of the ECTs. To sum up, the participant shared that policy reforms created challenges for them in schools.

e. Early Career Teachers burdened with many responsibilities

The findings in this study suggest that the ECTs were allocated with responsibilities in their job descriptions. However, as much as these responsibilities were within their job description, it showed that because they were not efficiently trained and not provided with sufficient support it then makes the ECTs feel that they are burdened with many responsibilities. Mr Mageba, the School Principal shared that he believed that the ECTs were given responsibilities that were within their own right and this could not be called a burden. Mr Mageba elucidated that:

I believe that everyone is given responsibilities that are within their right and capacity. Every teacher including the ECTs are allocated with responsibilities that are outlines in their job description so we cannot say they are burdened with responsibilities.

Ms Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal shared the same views and clearly explained responsibilities that were normally allocated to the ECTs in the selected school. Mrs Mntungwa shared that:

I do not think ECTs are burdened, all the work they are given is there on their job description. Even though it seems like it is a lot of work. Because as a teacher you are expected to be a class teacher, to teach and assess, to monitor and control schoolwork, to set formal tasks, to mark examination. It is also a teacher's responsibility to monitor learners even during break-time but teachers are always reluctant and claim that break-time is their time to eat. As much as these may seem as many responsibilities but it is in their job responsibility.

Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head was asked if he believed that the ECTs were burdened with responsibilities. Mr Mvelase's response was to the negative side, and said:

I do not think they are burdened, there is a PAM document that outlines the responsibilities of teachers. This document outlines that a teacher needs to be part of different committees, be involved in extra and co-curricular activities, prepare lesson plans and a teacher has to teach between 80-90% as a PLI which shows that most of the time a teacher is expected to be in the classroom.

An ECT from Mr Boyabenyathi shared that as much as the responsibilities were within job descriptions but sometimes they were allocated with responsibilities that were beyond their job descriptions. Mr Boyabenyathi shared that:

Normally in schools the ECTs are even allocated with subject they do not even qualify to teach especially when they are new in the field. Subjects such as Life Orientation. This on its own is a burden to an ECT. Again, the department only focuses on school's obtaining 100% and this means that ECTs have to sacrifice their family times and conduct extra classes, this means that ECTs do not get to rest on weekends and holidays which is unfair and not good for their well-being. It also shows that ECTs are burdened.

There seemed to be a contradiction in the data generated as other participants revealed that the SMT did not believe that the ECTs were burdened with responsibilities because they were allocated with roles and responsibilities that were within their job description. However, other participants divulged that the ECTs were allocated with the subject they do not specialise with but expected to deliver a good outcome. Participants shared that they believe this is unfair on ECTs and is regarded as a burden.

f. Early Career Teachers face difficulties working with overcrowded classrooms

The findings in this study suggest that when the ECTs were allocated with large number in classrooms, it made their job to be harder as they were not trained to work with a large number of people. Participants revealed that this was a difficult experience as most of the ECTs were not trained to work with a large group of learners. The participants revealed that this experience left the ECTs feeling exhausted and discouraged in most cases. Mr Mvelase shared that as much as overcrowded classrooms affected ECTs, it was even harder as they were unable to call parents of learners who transgress. Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head disclosed that:

Overcrowded classrooms are not easy for the ECTs to control and monitor the schoolwork of learners. When the learners misbehave and the ECTs summon the parents, other parents do not show up or worse, other parents side with their children which gives these learners power over the ECTs. It is not easy for ECTs to effectively deliver a lesson in an overcrowded classroom.

Participants revealed that it was even sadder, as ECTs were not able to conduct a conducive classroom management due to overcrowded classroom and this affects their dedication and commitment as this daunts them.

(ii) The benefits derived by Early Career Teachers through receiving support

The findings in this study suggest that the ECTs derived various benefits through receiving support such as being confident and being able to voice out their opinions. Mrs Mntungwa a Deputy Principal shared that:

When the ECTs is perfect with applying the Programme of Assessment. In a manner whereby, they submit their work before the deadline. This shows that the ECT is learning a lot from my support. Also, when the ECTs bring their own opinions to the table and teaches me about new strategies. This is really a visible benefit for providing support to the ECTs.

Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head emphasised that it made the job of the ECTs to be easier and they got to enjoy their job. His utterances are quoted below:

The ECT's job become very easy and they tend to enjoy their job which leads to job satisfaction because the ECT is well-equipped and knowledgeable. The ECTs will also deliver in the classroom, the learners will receive quality teaching which results in the teacher producing quality results and good learner performance.

Mr Boyabenyathi shared his own experience on how receiving support sometimes affected him. His statement is quoted below:

When I receive support, I am able to learn new things and get to know new information. It also boosts my confidence as ECTs and builds my self-efficacy. It really makes my job easier because I know that whenever I need help there are people who are there to offer support with whatever I need support with.

The generated data revealed that when the ECT received sufficient training they became enthusiastic, and amazingly got committed to their work to the extent that they would even submit requested work before the deadline.

(iii) Factors that affected support being provided to the Early Career Teachers

The findings in this study suggested that there were factors that affected the manner in which support was provided to the ECTs. These factors would be direct in a sense that some of them were caused by the ECTs themselves or the Education Officials. However, participants revealed that there were also other factors that facilitated support provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials. The sub-themes that emerged are a). The factors that hinders support to be provided to the Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials; b). The factors that facilitate support to be provided to Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials. The data generated is presented below.

b) The factors that hinder support to be provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials

The findings in this study suggest that, as much the Education Officials wanted to offer support to the ECTs, the ECTs themselves hindered the efforts to provide support by amongst other things, not being available when the Education Officials wanted to offer them the requisite support. Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head revealed that the ECTs sometimes undermined the Education Officials which discouraged the Education Officials in offering the ECTs with support. Notably, Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head remarked and shared that the ECTs often felt like they knew too much and did not need support from experienced teachers, and this kind of attitude contributed to the lack of support to be provided to the ECTs. His statement is quoted below:

Factors that hinder us from providing support to the ECTs is that the ECTs look down on experience teachers. The ECTs feel like they know too much than the experienced teachers. And that is not the case because experienced teachers have knowledge about different things that can help ECTs. So, it is hard to support someone who looks down on you. Also, the ECTs are not humble and they are reluctant to be developed. You'd ask an ECT to stay

behind after school to support them with something, they will tell you that they do not have time because they have plans.

Furthermore, Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal corroborated views shared above and further mentioned that this resulted in the ECTs experiencing problems. This is how she put it:

When an ECT is stubborn and does not want to take advice from experienced teachers. They want to do things their own way which leads to repeating mistakes because they feel like they are more informed than experienced teachers. They feel like we do not know anything and cannot advise them with anything. Sometimes I am unable to support them with content because they might be teaching the subject I did not specialise with then it becomes a problem because I myself do not know the subject and cannot offer support to this ECT.

The above utterances were also shared by Mrs Ndabezitha, a Senior Teacher, that when the ECTs were not approachable and did not create a friendly environment for the Education Officials, they created an unfriendly environment for any fruitful engagement. This is how she put it:

When the ECTs has a bad attitude towards me then it discourages me to support them. I end up not supporting them because it very difficult to support an ECT who has a bad attitude and is not approachable. It is hard to offer support because you do not feel comfortable around a person with such attitude because there is always tension between us.

The above excerpts revealed that the ECTs' behaviour and attitude also played a role in receiving lack of support from the Education Officials. However, there were other factors that were beyond both the ECTs' and Education Officials' control. Mr Boyabenyathi an ECT shared his view about insufficient budget from the department and how such a budget affected the kind of support that was provided to them. Mr Boyabenyathi uttered that:

I believe that the main issue that hinders Education Official is the budget, as much as they want to support the ECTs. The budget does not cover resources that the ECTs can use to teach and also the budget does not cover school-based workshops. As much as Education Officials want to support the ECTs, but without sufficient budget then it is a hinder itself. I believe that the ECTs are more focused on results and they normally have high-work pressure and do not have enough time, for example if the Education Official wants us to

stay behind after school and I have packs of scripts to mark then it becomes a problem. Because I want to push marking as I will be expected to submit by my Departmental Head, so I will not compromise my time to mark.

It is evident that Education Officials were also caught in an intense predicament that was caused by the behaviour of the ECTs which affected how they provided support to the ECTs. The participants further revealed that other factors were beyond the control of both the ECTs and the Education Officials such as the insufficient budget that was allocated to schools which did not cover the resources that were needed by the ECTs.

b) The factors that facilitate support to be provided to Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials

The findings in this study suggest that, as much as there were factors that hindered support from being provided to the ECTs, there were also factors that influenced the Education Officials to offer support to the ECTs. The data generated revealed the importance of a good relationship between the ECTs and the Education Officials. Mr Mageba, the School Principal, shared that when the ECTs asked for help whenever they needed it then it also encouraged the Education Officials to assist the ECTs. His statement is quoted below:

When the ECT consult whenever they need assistance, this makes me want to provide support to them. When the ECT is humble and seeks guidance in a respectful manner shows that they are eager to learn. When the ECT is well trained and shows that they have knowledge about the subject they are teaching, this makes it easier for me to support the ECT. Also, when the ECT has a very good relationship with me and knows how to formally and respectfully address and seek guidance, it really makes me want to support the ECTs.

The above excerpt suggested that when the ECTs were active and did not wait for support to be brought to them instead they went and sought for support, which on its own facilitated support to take place. The view of active ECTs was corroborated by Mrs Eunice who as a Subject Advisor. She divulged that:

When the ECT is very active and participative. When the ECTs reach out to us for assistance. Active ECTs always make sure that they attend trainings, they actively participate during professional development activities. They always bring new ideas and opinions and they are eager to learn and this is

seen through asking questions and coming up with new strategies on how to tackle challenges. When the ECTs are energetic and approachable. They give you courage to want to fully support them. Other ECTs normally show willingness and will always come at you for clarity of certain things and this facilitates the support that we provide to them.

Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head divulged that it encouraged him to offer support to the ECTs when the ECT tried certain things by themselves and only sought assistance when they were unable to do it by themselves. This is how he put it:

Factors that facilitate me to support ECT is when they show dedication by doing things by themselves first then coming to consult afterwards, for example a teacher will tell you that I read this novel but I do not understand the plot. This teacher has made an effort first, before seeking assistance. This kind of teacher gives me a passion to develop them and support them with whatever they need.

Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal also uttered that when ECTs were involved in other school activities such as joining certain committees and showing commitment it then influenced support from the side of the Education Officials. This is how she put it:

When the ECT shows effort in everything they are allocated with. When they get involved in different committees and actively participate in extra and co-curricular activities. When an ECTs admit their mistakes and show willingness to learn. When ECT has a good relationship with Education Officials, they always want to support you such as maybe frequently checks up on you whether you need assistance with anything. They always provide you with information and available materials.

It was evident that there were various factors that influenced the Education Officials to support the ECTs and mostly it was facilitated by the positive attitude they received from the ECTs such as ECTs who did not have pride and sought assistance whenever they needed it. Moreover, active and participative ECTs also influenced support to be provided to them.

(iv) Available support programmes and policies for the Early Career Teachers

The findings in this study suggest that there were support programmes and policies but these were not school based programmes and were not entirely aimed at assisting only the ECTs. The programmes that were revealed by participants helped with underperforming learners and

the policies assisted the ECTs to know about their roles and responsibilities. Mr Mageba, the School Principal uttered that they did not have school-based workshops but they engaged in support programmes that were organised by the department. Mr Mageba stated that:

We do not have any school-based support programmes. But the department offers support programmes such as JENN and also Kutlwanong.

Mr Mageba's utterance was corroborated by Mr Boyabenyathi, an ECT who further mentioned the functions of JENN and also revealed that there were Kutlwanong programmes that assisted schools and teachers. His utterances were quoted below:

JENN and Kutlwanong programmes. JENN mainly works with underperforming schools and helps them with extra classes such as holiday classes and materials, they pay teachers who avail themselves in these holiday classes. Kutlwanong focused on supporting learners who are performing well in Science and maths, and this is a form of support to ECTs as it also improves their productivity and learner performances.

Mr Boyabenyathi, an ECT was further asked about the available policies that support the ECTs. His response is quoted below:

The policies apply to everyone which are contained in the PAM document and ELRC.

Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal shared that they regarded attending workshops as part of available support programmes. Mrs Mntungwa uttered that:

We lack support programs here at this school. Only support programs are organised by departments such as start-up workshops and last push workshops. They are also not effective because they only address ATPs and not the challenges that are faced by ECTs. However, they get supported through departmental meetings where information shared on what is expected from them. Year plan of the department is shared with the ECTs and other teachers and information of what is expected from the teachers is cascaded in the meeting.

Below is evidence of what Mrs Mntungwa shared regarding the departmental meetings. Below is the year plan of the department of Languages and economics.

LANGUAGE, ECONOMICS YEAR PLAN

Date	Activity	Responsibility	Progress
24/01/2025	Department meeting	Educators	
27/01/2025 28/01/2025 29/01/2025 30/01/2025 03/02/2025 04/02/2025 05/02/2025	Subject meeting Economics Business Studies Accounting English Sesotho Isizulu Creative Arts	DH and Educators	
10/02/2025	Internal Monitoring and control Teachers file	Subject Head and DH	
12/02/2025	Teach and Assess Strategy Monitoring curriculum Coverage 2 activity books per class	DH	
26/02/2025- 04/02/2025	Moderation of question paper all grade	DH	
	Term 1 test	Educators	
	Moderation of scripts	DH	
11/04/2025	Analysis Term 1 progress report and challenges Subject improvement plan		

Figure 6 Year plan of the language and economics department

Figure 6 clearly indicates the year plan of the languages and economics department, what was expected from the teachers in the department of languages and economics with dates and who will monitor the work. In addition, below is evidence of what Mrs Mntungwa shared about the departmental meetings as a way of supporting the ECTs and other teachers; below is the agenda of the departmental meeting.

TERM SCHOOL

Ladies and Gentlemen

You are invited to a departmental meeting scheduled as follows:

DATE: 24/01/2025
VENUE: STAFF ROOM
TIME: 14:30
AGENDA:

- Subject file
- Index
- ATP
- Lesson plan and preparation
- Teach and assess strategy
- Program of assessment 2025
- Monitoring and control tool
- Item and error analysis
- Subject improvement plan
- SBST- progressed learners
- Textbooks shortages
- Subject needs 2025
- QMS 2025T

Thank you

Mrs Sibaya MA (Departmental Head)

Figure 7 Agenda of a departmental meeting

Figure 7 clearly indicates that the Departmental Heads organise departmental meetings to support ECTs and teachers in terms of sharing what is expected from them as the agenda shows different requirements that are expected from the teachers and the ECTs by the departmental heads. The participants revealed that there were only few support programs for the ECTs. They revealed that most support programmes were there to support learners and all teachers not only the ECTs. The data generated indicated that there was a gap when it came to support programmes and policies that were aimed at supporting the ECTs in schools.

7.3.3 The forms of support that are provided to the Early Career Teachers by the Education officials

The data generated revealed that there were various forms of supported that was provided to ECTs, namely: (i) Professional Development; (ii) Administrative support; (iii) Emotional support; (iv) Technological support.

(i) Professional Development

The findings in this study indicated that professional workshops may be executed for purposes of training for the ECTs about the content and other relevant matters. Mrs Ndabezitha, a Senior Teacher, shared that the Department of Basic Education hosted numerous workshops as part of professional development. Mrs Ndabezitha divulged that:

Department of Basic Education hosts workshops for teachers, we normally go for content-based workshops only. These workshops never help us with addressing challenges that we face at school; they only focus on content and that's all.

Mrs Ndabezitha was further asked to elaborate on how the workshops helped them with content-based matters. Her reply is quoted below:

It assists the teachers on how to teach complications in the contents such as poetry for English teachers, Euclidean geometry for maths teachers and Top-Quality Management for Business teachers and many more.

The view that was shared by Mrs Ndabezitha was corroborated by Mr Mvelase, when he said:

Workshops are organised by the DoE, whereby we will be summoned to Tshiya. We are normally developed on how to use the ATP and how to cover

certain content in a given period of time. In our school the school also organises school-based workshop to inform teachers and the ECT about different policies especially job description. So that the ECT can be well informed about their duties and responsibilities.

Mrs Eunice, a Subject Advisor, shared how she provided support to the ECTs through workshops. Mrs Eunice utterance is quoted below:

As a subject advisor I organise start-up workshops at the beginning of the year where all teachers attend and we discuss content-based matters and maybe the changes that are available in the ATP. For example, in language the ATP might change whereby literature has changed and formal tasks such as maybe the teachers will now have to assess learners through unprepared speech for oral instead of listening comprehension. Also, some schools this year introduced GEC in Grade 9 and this kind of changed the ATP as there are certain new activities that need to be done by learners such as projects that only focus on the communication skills.

Content-based matters are normally, tasks that need to be completed in that term and how they have to be done, to be more specific we normally discuss how teachers should support learners on how to master and pass these tasks such as reading aloud, writing essays and how to correctly answer comprehension-based questions.

Mr Boyabenyathi, an ECT utterance showed that he was not satisfied with these workshops that were hosted by the department. Mr Boyabenyathi shared that:

Workshops are conducted but they are very scarce; we do not receive full support because we normally attend workshops such as memo discussion workshops. I find these not helpful because memo discussion we only discuss what learners were assessed on. There are no inductions taking place anymore. And they are only conducted by the Department of Education, they are not school-based workshops.

Mr Mageba, the School Principal explained how professional development programmes took place as part of induction in the selected school. This is how he put it:

Induction programmes are done for the ECTs whereby, they are guided on how to utilise resources, how to manage the classroom, how to discipline learners and most importantly, how to administer tasks both formal and informal tasks. There are also departmental workshops that are hosted by

the department of education whereby, Subject Advisors invite teachers according to different subject they teach and the aim of these workshops are to train and develop educators in certain matters. The department of education also host workshops whereby they induct teachers about serious misconducts, for example we were once summoned to the UFS to a symposium whereby all teachers were told and warned not to use corporal punishment to enforce discipline but they were given alternatives on how to discipline learners.

Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal's statement supported the information that was shared on the preceding *verbatim quote*. Her statement is quoted below:

We do offer induction programmes for an ECT to know their departmental head, their subject advisor and all other staff members. When we induct them; we show them all the facilities and also guide them on how the time table works. I believe that is how induction is done. Internal workshops are normally organised by departmental heads whereby they show ECTs the textbooks that are used in the department and how many are available and how they use these books. The departmental heads also guide the ECTs on the assessments that are expected to be completed in that specific subject.

Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head also shared how they inducted the ECTs. This is how he put it:

We induct the educator by telling them about dress-code and how they have to conduct themselves so that learners can respect them. We induct them on how to practise classroom management and how to effectively deliver content based on the subject that they teach. The department of education hosts workshops and we allow the ECTs to attend such workshops to be developed. But we never host any school-based workshops.

The participants shared their experiences on how workshops and inductions were conducted to assist the ECTs in getting familiar with the school set up and duties that they were expected to do as teachers. The participants further revealed that the subject advisors hosted workshops but these workshops were scarce and seemingly not effective.

(ii) Administrative support

The data generated indicates that ECTs were provided with an administrative period as a form of support so that the ECTs can prepare for their lessons and they were given certain time-frame to mark exams which was also regarded as administrative support. Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head shared a different way on how they offered administrative support to the ECTs. His utterance is quoted below:

Yes, we do offer administrative support, for example during the examination period they are given three days to mark and record marks. Then the recording sheets will be given to the departmental head and they will be given to the admin clerk so that they can be captured on SA-SAMS. We also allow them to observe other colleagues from other school to develop various teaching strategies.

On the same note, Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal shared how they provided ECTs with a free period as a form of administrative period. This is how she put it:

School starts at 7 and ends at 14:30. The teacher has 5 periods every-day and only have one free period. We cannot say one hour is sufficient for a teacher to plan their work, to write lesson plans and to prepare for a lesson. So they need to do these at home. ECTs are normally not allowed to observe other teachers because most teachers feel intimidated and do not feel comfortable being observed by ECTs. They rather prefer to observe the ECTs and offer them with advice on where to improve and so on.

The above excerpt is in contradiction with what Mr Boyabenyathi, an ECT revealed concerning being provided with sufficient time to plan as part of administrative support. His statement is quoted below:

We are never provided with planning time within the school schedule, we only have planning time after school or one can prepare and plan at home. In my case, I do not get a chance to observe other colleagues to develop teaching strategies because I am the only Maths educator in this school. But the principal does allow me to request assistance from Maths teachers from other schools.

The participants revealed that there were various ways to provide the ECTs with administrative support. The data generated revealed that administrative support could be provided through allocating them with free periods that allowed them to prepare for their lessons. As there were

ECTs who complained of not receiving sufficient time to prepare at schools and other ECTs seemed to complain that they were not assisted and they did all the above mentioned by themselves. This revealed that there was lack of administrative supportive at some selected schools.

(iii) Emotional support

The findings in this study indicate that the ECTs faced challenges that affected them emotionally and they needed support from Education Officials. The data generated revealed that challenges that affected the ECTs emotionally may be work related or personal life. However, they need support from the Education Officials. Mr Mageba the School Principal revealed that it was easier for him to provide emotional support as the ECTs normally reported to him first with whatever issue they were facing. His utterance is quoted below:

Yes, I do offer ECTs with emotional support. Because as the school principal I am the first person they come to whenever they have problems even if they are not work-related problems and are personal problems, they seek guidance and I always offer them with advice. So, yes I do offer ECTs with emotional support. I offer emotional support in a way that we have informal conversations with the ECTs, I allow them to vent and confide with their problems, then I offer advice and solutions where I am able to. There was a case where one of my female teachers had lost a child and I could see that she could not cope. I would always check up on her, I even advised her to seek professional help. She booked sessions with a therapist and she came back to thank me as she felt I offered her a shoulder to cry on.

Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head shared the same sentiments concerning the ECTs who needed emotional support, saying that he referred them to the specialist therapists. His statement is shared below:

Offering emotional support is difficult because it depends on a person. It is not easy to offer emotional support to a secretive ECT and we cannot interrogate them to tell us about their problems. But for the ECTs who are not feeling well and maybe they are sick then we reduce their workload until they feel better and also there are wellness support in the department of

education, then we refer them to wellness support. So that they can be provided with the necessary support such as sessions with psychologists.

Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal shared that even within the school premises there were committees that offered emotional support to the ECTs. This is how she put it:

We have different committees such as School-Based Support Team (SBST) that offers emotional support to ECTs. Whatever personal things that teachers experience, they can just go to the SBST and they will be provided with support. ECTs also build mutual friendships with other colleagues and are able to confide and chat with them which shows emotional support.

The above excerpts indicate that in the selected schools, the Education Officials did offer emotional support to the ECTs. However, other participants revealed that they were unable to offer support to ECTs due to certain circumstances. Mrs Ndabezitha a Senior Teacher shared that they ended up not providing emotional support to the ECTs due to ECTs not letting them know of their problems. Mrs Ndabezitha shared that:

Unfortunately, we do not offer emotional support, because when an ECT arrives in our school they will find that there are different groups of teachers and they have to choose which group do they prefer to be part of and that alone shows that there is definitely no emotional support in this school.

The participants revealed that the ECTs did receive emotional support from the Education Officials in selected, most importantly the ECTs reported to their principal which made it easier for the Educational Official to offer support in a form of giving them advice or referring them to the pertinent department. When the ECTs need emotional support it was easier for them to offer them advice and suitable solutions.

(iv) Technological support

The findings reveal that the department offered schools and ECTs with Information and Computer Training (ICT) training through delegating ICT Subject Advisor to train the ECTs. Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head shared that the department also offered the ECTs with technological support. He revealed that:

For technological support, the department of education has delegated an ICT Subject Advisor, there is programme that is taking place in Tshiya Education centre. Teachers are invited to be trained in computer skills, how to type, how to print and how to utilise overhead projector.

Another participant shared how she helped the ECTs with technological support. Mrs Eunice a Subject Advisor stated that:

As a Subject Advisor, I have a WhatsApp group where I cascade all the information including some learning materials and content. I also inducted my teachers on how to fill in google forms such as curriculum coverage and teacher profiles.

The data generated revealed that the department offered technological support through delegating ICT Subject Advisor to help and train the ECTs with technology and the Subject Advisor used WhatsApp as a media platform to cascade information to ECTs.

7.3.4 The rationale for the Early Career Teachers needing support from the Education Officials

The findings in this study suggest that there were various reasons why it was essential for the ECT to receive support such as it assisted them to adapt well at a new workplace. It helped them to know the subject they taught well and also helped to build the confidence of the ECTs which led to good performance. The findings in this study further suggested that when support was provided to the ECTs it helped to enhance smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher, additionally they mentioned that they assisted in equipping the ECTs to be more knowledgeable about the subject they taught and lastly, they mentioned that it helped to build the ECTs confidence which is also very vital. The participants revealed that when ECTs were supported it makes their job easier and effective. The sub-themes that emerged are (i) To enhance Early Career Teachers smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher; (ii) To assist the Early Career Teachers to be more conversant about their subject; (iii) To build the Early Career Teacher's confidence in their work.

(i) To enhance Early Career Teachers smooth transition from being a student to being a teacher

The findings in this study indicates that being a student and being a teacher are two different things, that is why it is important for the ECTs to be assisted with the transition. Mr Mvelase, a Departmental Head, expressed himself as follows:

The ECTs do need support because being at a university and being an employee are two different things. Because now as an employee you are

based at a school on a full-time basis unlike in university they go to schools once in a while. To help them learn new skills such as marking scripts and how to fairly and correctly mark because you might find that other ECTs are very lenient and give marks to learners.

It was evident that providing the ECTs with support was really essential as there were benefits that came along with it. As the data revealed that it assisted the ECTs to smoothly transition from being students to being teachers.

(ii) To assist the Early Career Teachers to be more conversant about their subjects

The findings in this study revealed that providing the ECTs with support further assisted them to become experts in the subjects they taught. Mrs Eunice, a Subject Advisor shared that it assisted the ECT to provide quality education:

They need support so that they can learn how to provide quality teaching and learning to learners. So that they can also provide support to learners. I understand that quality teaching and learning has to do with the methods and practices that enhance operative, engaging, and significant educational experiences for learners. Such as teachers making sure that they structure their lesson plans well, they set clear objectives and providing continuous assessment and feedback. The ECTs can make sure that active participation is influenced and encouraged in the classroom, provide learners with effective communication and most importantly they should develop creativity and innovation amongst learners.

Notably, the same sentiments were shared by Mrs Mntungwa, a Deputy Principal, when she highlighted that they did not want to see learners failing; hence, the support needed to be provided:

We do not want to see learners failing, so the ECTs need to be supported so that they can also help the learners to pass. An ECT that is not supported does not produce good results and learners end up failing which is something that we do not want. We want the ECT to obtain 100% pass rate hence they need to be supported to achieve this.

In alignment with the previous excerpt, Mrs Eunice, a Subject Advisor added another dimension to the discussion as indicated below. She shared that unsupported teachers became demotivated and it led to poor performance:

ECTs need support because ECTs that are not supported become unmotivated, which leads ECTs to being unproductive and to underperform and this often results in the teacher feeling stressed and frustrated. ECTs need support because they do not have enough experience as they transition from being students to being full time educators.

Through the excerpts, evidence exists to suggest that it was important to provide the ECT with requisite support as it helped them to become conversant in the subject they taught. Evidence indicated that it did not only benefit the ECTs but, also, other stakeholders such as learners because when the ECT were knowledgeable with the subject they deliver then it improves the learner performance.

(iii) To build the Early Career Teacher's confidence in their work

The findings in this study indicated that it was vital for the ECT to receive support as it assisted them in building their self-confidence in doing their work. Mr Mageba, the School Principal highlighted that, when supported, the ECTs became supportive teachers. His statement is quoted below:

The ECTs can be effective dream carriers of the upcoming generation. So, they can become dedicated and committed teachers and provide the ultimate support that the learners need.

Mr Mvelase, the Departmental Head mentioned that it assisted the ECTs to know the modus operandi:

So that they can know the modus operandi as they need to be guided as to how things need to be done in the education system. Do their job with confidence as confidence will assist them to know how they need behave and how to deliver the curriculum confidently and effectively. So that they can also know how the Programme of Assessment works.

Fascinatingly, Mrs Ndabezitha, the Senior Teacher shared that lack of experience affected their confidence. She revealed that:

They are new in the field and have zero experience in teaching learners and this affects their confidence in most cases. They only have theory and content but do not know how to correctly apply it in the actual classroom hence it is very important for us to support and guide ECTs and make their job easier. Also, to build their confidence and job satisfaction which is very imperative.

Mr Boyabenyathi an ECT highlighted that building the ECTs confidence protected them from committing certain misconducts. His utterances are shared below:

We need support because our workload is a lot and with lack of confidence one gets discouraged easily which affects their productivity. Also, ECTs with low confidence easily get tempted by flirty learners. Which might lead to Educators losing their job. So, we need support by being provided through helping us build our confidence and become firm teachers which will assist ECTs on how to keep away from jeopardising our jobs.

The preceding excerpts suggest that providing support was significant to provide the ECTs with support as it assisted to build the confidence of the ECTs. It built their confidence in different areas such as in doing their job and also when they had gained confidence they became firm and very strict to a point that they knew how to deal with learners who tempt teachers in ways that may lead to misconducts being committed by the ECTs.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings were developed through the analysis of qualitative data that was generated from one of the three selected schools (Nkonzo Secondary School) with 6 participants based in Nkonzo Secondary Schools and one Subject Advisors who worked with Nkonzo Secondary School. This chapter showed how the ECTs were being provided with the support. However, some participants revealed that there was lack of support provided to the ECTs in the selected school and had revealed the reasons. Nevertheless, the findings have made it clear that it was essential for the ECTs to receive support because it had various benefits not only for ECTs but also for other stakeholders in the school. The next chapter presents comprehensive discussions of the findings represented from the current literature and the theories that were discussed in Chapter two and Chapter three, in that order.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: EMERGING PATTERNS FROM THE DATA

8.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters (Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven) focused on descriptive data analysis from the School Principals, Deputy Principals, Departmental Heads, Senior Teachers and Early Career Teachers. In this Chapter, I am focusing on emerging themes and patterns which are coming from the descriptive analysis of data. I must mention that this chapter is a second level of analysis, and shows a move from mere description of what appears to be the case to an explanation of what, what appears to be the case is the case (Emanuel, 2019). One approach to achieve this is by identifying patterns in the findings, and the first step is to draw some similarities and differences from the data presented in the preceding three chapters.

This chapter is organised according to four areas of focus. Therefore, I begin by looking into similarities and differences from three communities where the schools are located, and then, show some similarities and differences from the three schools, and the similarities and differences from the three ECTs. I then carry on to describe emerging patterns in other aspects of the data regarding the instructional leadership practices. Such a discussion lends itself to the use of the two theories that provide a theoretical framework that underpins this study. Therefore, the discussion includes the use of theories and literature to enhance the analysis and discussion.

8.2 Similarities and differences in three communities

The three communities shared connections and variation. The three schools were located in communities that shared a radius of around 20 kilometres between each school. The three schools are located in communities that are part of the Thabo Mofutsanyana District. According to Magaiza et al. (2024), unemployment is high in these three communities. Most parents worked for spaza shops that are owned by foreign nationals, and some of them work in nearby industries. Spaza shops are also known as tuck shops. They are small local businesses that form part of the informal retail sector. They are often operated by local businessmen and are

commonly found in South African townships and rural areas (Rogerwilco, 2021). The population profile of the three communities is made up exclusively of black Africans as there are no white people and no Indians in these three communities. Crime is also rife in these three communities. Most children are raised by their grandparents and some households are child-headed households (Magaiza et al., 2024)

As much as there are similarities in these communities, there are also differences as well. For instance, Nkongo Secondary School is located in a community in which the government has built many low-income housing projects commonly known as RDP houses. There is also high unemployment, gangsterism, and poverty in this community (Mathibela, 2024). Makaoe (2024) stresses that some families live with the bare minimum since they do not have consistent meals or basic needs. Thaba Di Mahlwa Secondary School is situated in a rural area of which there are a lot of isolated homesteads. There is high unemployment rate in this area (Maposho, 2024). Maposho (2024) further discusses that children resort to both substance abuse and violence in this area. Some children in this area only eat at school during break-time through the national nutrition programme, usually known as school feeding scheme. There are low literacy levels in the community and there are many child-headed households (Mathibela, 2024). Children survive only with the social grants to support themselves. Some household did not have electricity and proper sanitation such flushing toilets. Most houses in this communities are made of shacks and huts.

eHulene Secondary School is positioned in a semi-urban area encircled by a small suburb and a limited number of informal housing. The suburb areas have electricity and proper sanitation such as flushing toilets and running water. However, the informal settlement has electricity connections that are illegal which was a risk as it posed safety hazards to the children that walk to school (Maposho 2024). The school is near to the town and various big businesses (Magaiza et al., 2024). The literacy levels are reportedly high in this area compared to the other areas surrounding the other schools. But there were moderate and low literacy levels in the informal settlements. The school serviced learners from the neighbouring informal settlements. Most learners are exposed to various vulnerabilities, considering the fact that they are orphans and many households are child-headed as I have mentioned. They are susceptible to various physical, social and emotional vulnerabilities and intimidation in the society. Most children had no source of livelihood other than the social grants that provided by the South African Social Security Agency (Mathibela, 2024).

8.3 Similarities and differences from the three schools

All three schools were built properly with cement and bricks. They all have running water, proper sanitation and electricity. The language of teaching and learning is English in all three schools, but the mother tongue for learners is Sesotho in all three schools. One of the schools is a rural school, one of the schools is a township school and one is a semi-urban area school. Nkonzo Secondary School is a Quintile 4 and has enrolled over 400 learners. The Quintile system works in the education system of South Africa that is a financing method which positions schools based on its socio-economic profile (Bhengu, 2013). Schools are ranked from Quintile 1 to Quintile 5. Quintile 1 refers to the underprivileged schools while Quintile 5 refers to schools which are financially thriving off. The quintile system assists the National Department of Education to regulate the provision of finance it would offer schools (Bhengu, 2013). Post Provisioning Norm (PPN) also known as staff establishment of 13 teachers 4 Departmental Heads (DH) and 4 non-teaching staff. The Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) determines how many teachers and non-teaching staff is needed at every school for every academic year looking at the number of admitted learner in that specific school.

In some cases, when the number of learners enrolled at the school decreases, then the school will have to identify which teachers are in excess to the PPN, and in some cases number of learners enrolled may increase in which case the school will need extra teachers. This is a No-fee paying school, and as such, parents are not required to pay school fees and, there is a National Nutrition programme at school. The private school setting presents a unique context that may differ from public schools in terms of resources, management, and accountability (Kilag et al., 2022). The pass rate in 2022 was 85 % and in 2023 it was 83%. Thaba Di Mahlwa Secondary School situated in a rural community and learners do not pay a school fee. It is Quintile 3. It has an enrolment of 500 learners and a staff PPN of 23, comprising 5 SMTs and 16 teachers. This school does not pay any school fees and offer food for needy learners through nutrition programme. The school enjoyed a pass rate of 89% in 2022 to 92% in 2023.

While, eHulene Secondary School is also a Quintile 4 school, it is positioned on the borders of a suburb community. It has an enrolment of 1055 learners. It has basic infrastructure in good form as well as proper water and electricity. Most learners are Sesotho speaking but are taught through the medium of English. The school has 38 members of staff with 5 DHs as well as 7

non-teaching staff. The school fees for the 2023 academic year was R500, 00 per child per year. The school boasts with the pass rate of 90% in 2021, 87% in 2022 and 95% in 2023. The third area of focus is the similarities and differences from the three ECTs.

8.4 Similarities and differences from the three Early Career Teachers

The only female in the study was the ECT Ms Octavia, from eHulene Secondary School, who has been an ECT for 4 years. She holds a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree and she is 29 years old. She was the only female ECT in the study. She described her experience of being offered with support by the Education Officials as satisfactory. Mr Mmuso an ECT from Thaba Di Mahlwa and was one of 2 male ECTs who were part of this study. Mr Mmuso is 32 years of age and has a Bachelor of Arts degree Honours as well as a Bachelor of Arts degree and Post-Graduate Certificate for Education. He has been an ECT for 5 years and described his experience with being provided with support by the Education Officials as not satisfying at all. Lastly, there is Mr Boyabenyathi an ECT from Nkonzo Secondary School who is 30 years of age. He is the second male ECT who was interviewed in this study. Mr Boyabenyathi holds a Bachelor of Education degree and has been working as an ECT for 6 years. He described his experience with being provided with support by the Education Officials as unsatisfactory. The fourth area of focus is the emerging patterns and themes from the data.

8.5 Emerging patterns and themes from the data

In this section, I study patterns which emerged throughout the data analysis. This section focuses on cross case analysis. There were plentiful points of differences and less areas of similarities. In this section I look at seven key aspects which are: a) emerging education officials' comprehension of the value of their roles as instructional leaders, b) varying and diverse range of challenges experienced by the Early Career Teachers, c) Early Career Teachers enjoy benefits of receiving support from Education Official when they received it, d) Duality in the influence of Education Officials providing support to the Early Career Teachers, e) Looking into available support programmes and policies for Early Career Teachers, f) Scrutinising multiplicity forms of support provided to the Early Career Teachers, and g) Inspirational rationale as direction in Education Officials providing support to Early Career Teachers.

8.5.1 Emerging Education Officials' comprehension of the value of their roles as Instructional Leaders

This section emphasizes on points of similarities and differences in education officials' comprehension of the value of their roles as instructional leaders at the case schools. However, there were more areas of similarities in their understandings. In this first key aspect the themes include: (a) The different understandings amongst ECTs and Education Officials regarding Educator Support; (b) The nexus between the participants understanding of educator support and Professional practices.

8.5.1.1 The different understandings amongst Early Career Teachers and Education Officials regarding Educator Support

Educator support is crucial in assisting Early Career Teachers (ECTs) to develop professionally at a work place (Ben-Amram & Davidovitch, 2024) and the concept of educator support becomes critical in this regard. Firstly, the participants shared their own understandings concerning Educator Support further contrasted and supported by literature. Educator support provided by Education Officials is helping ECTs in enhancing their teaching methods with the aim of sustaining teaching and fostering learning practises that are self-directed among learners and educators (Giannini, 2023). The findings of the participants in this study relates to the argument by Giannini (2023) regarding Educator Support, which is that they understand that Educator support entails the ECTs being provided with support by the Education Officials, mainly, the Subject Advisors, School Management Team (Principal, Deputy Principal and Departmental Heads) and Senior Teachers. The participants' findings indicated that each Education Official plays a different and vital role in supporting the ECTs, such as the participants shared that the role of the Subject Advisor is to host training and workshops, induct and send necessary materials to the ECTs. The role of the SMT as a whole is to allocate resources and create a healthy working environment for the ECTs. Furthermore, they need to effectively communicate with the ECTs of what is expected and what is not expected from them.

Moreover, the SMT is expected to provide support through hosting school-based workshops and trainings for the ECTs which relates to current literature which discusses that school-based

mentoring was a best way that helped to enhance the beginner teachers' professional identity in the induction programme (Hyseni & Hoxha, 2020), The Education officials should support the ECTs by providing them with various forms of support such as professional support, administrative support, emotional support and technological support. The findings of the participants relate to the current literature that states that it is thus significant for the Subject Advisors, the SMT and Senior Teachers to acknowledge the ECTs' individual needs and challenges so that they can provide better support to them and equip them with sufficient support in their initial years of teaching (Toropova et al., 2021). The following sub-themes are discussed below: (a) Educator support can be implemented through the Education Officials guiding the Early Career Teachers and providing the Early Career Teachers with resources, (b) Induction as a form of educator support provided to Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials; (c) Education Official practise Instructional Leadership to provide Early Career Teachers with educator support

8.5.1.1.1 Educator support can be implemented through the Education Officials guiding the Early Career Teachers and providing the Early Career Teachers with resources

The Education Officials guide the ECTs to augment their pedagogical methods by guiding them to attending workshops, trainings, observing other colleagues and being allocated with materials they need to utilise when they perform their pedagogical duties. Observing other colleagues as educator support relates to discussion by Theodore (2024) emphasises that within the school context, educator support is one way of empowering the ECTs to engage with mentors and other colleagues through discussions and engagements, and educator support also takes place through ECTs being guided by Education Officials to observing other educators such as Senior Teachers to enhance their teaching strategies. The Education Officials understand that educator support is basically demonstrating and guiding the ECTs on how to perform and cultivate available material and facilities at their workplace. The participants' findings relate to Tjirumb (2024) who argues that educator support is not only subject to Early Career Teachers but it is also open to other teachers as well. The findings from the participants and the understanding of Education Officials concerning guiding ECTs how to utilise the available materials as Educator Support relates to current literature. In that regard, Chrystine (2023) maintains that effective educator support is evident through technology integration whereby, the ECTs are trained on how to cohesively embed technology into their instructional plans.

Notably, the Education Officials further understand that educator support is when they tell the ECTs how to perform their job and duties as expected and required by the Department of Education such as how to compile a file. It is clear that there are many benefits that are accrued to the school rather than the ECTs. So, it gives the impression that the needs of the school are the priority. This comprehension by the Education Officials is also based on ECTs being trained more about their responsibilities than how to deal with their responsibilities. This thinking might obscure the view that there can be no organisational growth if individuals within it are not growing (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Contrary to the participants' findings, a study by Liu (2022) suggested that educator support entails the academic and emotional support of the educators which are more inclined remain faced with challenges, mastery strategies and vast efforts to achieve their goals, which leads to enhanced engagements and improved academic achievements, as a way of helping the ECTs to effectively know how to deal with their responsibility as per instruction. There is somehow a contradiction between the findings and literature, as findings indicated that ECTs were guided how to attend workshops, utilise available resources and observe other colleagues; however, literature clearly indicates that the ECTs should be assisted gradually on how to perform their duties and responsibilities inclined on providing the ECTs with academic and emotional support not only professional support.

8.5.1.1.2 Induction as a form of educator support provided to the Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials

Induction of educators is a crucial element of developing educators, and when done effectively it can have a fruitful impact on the educator work quality (Smith, 2024). The Education Officials' understandings indicate that the process of induction of the ECTs took place through the process of introducing them to other staff members, showing them around the school and showing them materials that they have to use. The Education Officials were more focused on making the ECTs feel comfortable and familiar with the school environment. The participants' findings relate to the research on induction that has been taking place for years. For instance, Smith and Ingersoll (2004, p. 683) state that "inductions are viewed as bridges that facilitate the transition of the ECTs to adapt in a workplace". However, in the context of this study, it can be argued that the Education Officials did not perform the duties of assisting and providing support to ECTs efficiently because they did not train and guide the ECTs on many things other than introducing them to the staff. Important elements such as teaching them how to set

standardised question papers and correctly write the lesson plans, did not happen in any substantial manner; they just told the ECTs that they are expected to do so. Findings are in contrast and did not relate to what is stated by Kwok et al. (2022), because Kwok et al. (2022) elucidate that inductions that are evidence-based demonstrate immense promise in amplifying the ECTs' overall performance and students' outcomes, through guiding them about how to correctly plan for their lessons and set standardised question papers. This demonstrates that the Education Official understandings differs from those of scholars who conducted research on this important topic. The findings portray a picture that the Education Officials offered induction with the intention of focusing only on what the ECTs have to do rather the intrinsic worth of the ECTs.

Education Officials understand that Educator Support also includes allocating the ECTs with mentors to assist them where they need help, such as assisting them grasp how to control and monitor learners' books in classrooms. The findings resonate to what was discussed by Yang et al. (2021) who state that the educator support assists educators gain self-efficacy which encourages the educators to show high-levels of involvement in classroom activities such as collaborating with mentors to assist enhance learners' performance when done effectively. What is different from the scholarship cited above is that Education Officials in this study understood what they had to do and informed the ETCs accordingly, but they fell short in terms of ensuring that the ECTs actually did what was expected of them.

8.5.1.1.3 Education Official practise Instructional Leadership to provide Early Career Teachers with educator support

Leadership has been discussed as a significant component in augmenting educational results and student achievements (Wahlstrom et al., 2010). There has been colossal amount of attention focused on the role of school leaders in fostering educator professional development, improving educator-efficacy, and amplifying student learning results (Yusof, 2019). Therefore, instructional leadership practices have been recognised as a crucial element in refining educator performance (Kilag & Sansa, 2023). Therefore, the findings resonate with the component of defining and communicating goals and objectives on the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy (2006) Instructional Leadership Theory. It is of the utmost importance to acknowledge that there are different instructional leadership practices that were linked with providing educator support such as setting goals and expectations (Leithwood et al., 2004). However, in this case, the

pertinent component that linked with the findings was the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy's (2006) Instructional Leadership Theory which states that instructional leaders are expected to define and communicate goals. Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy's (2006) Instructional Leadership Theory component states that instructional leaders are expected to define and communicate goals which is in line with the findings, whereby, the participants shared that the Education Officials assisted them by mentoring them on how to set objectives (goals) of the subject they taught (Leithwood et al., 2004). The component is pertinent to the findings because the findings of the participants revealed that the above-mentioned component was practised through Education Officials sharing information with the ECTs about how things are done at school, informed them about systems used by the Department of Basic Education, and most importantly, what is expected from the ECTs by the Department of Basic Education such as how to effectively and efficiently manage curriculum delivery.

Additionally, Education Officials (Subject Advisors and Departmental Heads) provided educator support through going to school to monitor the ECTs' work such as a formal tasks, teacher's file and learners' activities and provide feedback, which is crucial and relates with Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy's (2005) Instructional Leadership Theory component whereby it is illustrated that instructional leaders are expected to monitor and provide feedback to the educators. Similarly, the act of Education Officials conducting inductions for the ECTs to enlighten them about crucial information they need to know such as materials and facilities they need to utilise and how, in addition to the act of guiding the ECTs to attending workshops and training through informing them and accompanying them, resonate with the Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy (2005) Instructional Leadership Theory's last component of promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development of educators.

In conclusion, it is evident that there are similarities in terms of findings and literature concerning how educator support is actually provided to the ECTs in the selected schools and what the literature suggests the Educator Support Officials should do to support the ECTs in schools. The findings indicated that educator support takes place through Education Officials guiding ECTs to attend trainings, workshops, providing them with available resources, providing mentorship and allowing ECTs to observe other colleagues at the selects school. The findings further indicated that educator support is more inclined on assisting the ECTs to adapt and settle well at their workplace, mainly focused on assisting them to transition seamlessly

from being students to being teachers without experiencing major hassles and literature discusses that educator support should also be inclined to academic and emotional support of the teachers. Moreover, the findings showed that educator support took place in a manner whereby the ECTs are showed and guided how to do their work and perform their responsibilities as expected by the Department of Education. Lastly, showed the importance of providing ECTs with efficient materials to utilise at schools, which has a huge constructive influence on the teacher's work efficiency and competence.

8.5.1.2 The nexus between the participants understanding of Educator Support and Professional practices

The participants' understandings about educator support indicated that the Education Officials were expected to assist the ECTs and show them how to do their responsibilities effectively through guiding them and teaching them but it was not the case with the findings, because the findings suggested that the Education Officials practices unfolded with the Education Officials mainly just telling the ECTs about the responsibilities that they are expected to perform but did not guide nor teach them how to perform those responsibilities as per expectations. In a nutshell, the Education Official professional practices took place through instructing the ECTs instead of guiding and teaching the ECTs in this case. These findings further resonated with current literature regarding the fact that literature states that educator support was also a way of avoiding unnecessary errors or even negligence on the part of the ECTs; hence, they were supposed to be provided with support (Wahab & Zaini, 2024), but with the findings instead indicate that ECTs were expected to perform certain duties effectively without being trained and assisted, it shows that they were negligent.

It is worth noting that the participants' understanding indicated that inductions and trainings should take place even at school-based level where the ECTs are equipped with necessary training such content knowledge. However, the findings suggest that the professional practices of Education Officials point to a different direction. They only introduced the ECTs to the rest of the staff members in the selected schools, furthermore showing the ECTs around the facilities of the school and the materials that they are expected to use as a form of inducting the ECTs. Therefore, in terms of understanding the role of education officials, there is resonance between the current findings and literature (Theodorio, 2024; Wahab & Zaini, 2024). These scholars maintain that Educator Support includes induction programme, and such induction

takes place through enhancing the ECTs' effectiveness through coaching, mentoring and training them how to do their work, which leads to enhanced ECT performance and improved student achievement. All such important support activities did not happen in the current study. Therefore, there is a colossal difference between the participants' understandings and what is professionally practised by the Education Officials in providing educator support to ECTs.

8.5.2 Varying and diverse range of challenges experienced by the Early Career Teachers

This section exposes varying and diverse range of challenges experienced by the Early Career Teachers in the three schools. Through a cross case analysis, the theme that emerged is a varying and diverse range of challenges experienced by the Early Career Teachers. Such a varying and diverse range of challenges entails (a) The challenge of Early Career Teachers insufficient support from Education; (b) The challenge of Early Career Teachers receiving insufficient training from Education Official; (c) The challenge of Early Career Teachers being expected to work with the lack of resources and working under existing poor working conditions by Education Officials; (d) The challenge of the Department of Education imposing academic and curriculum reforms to Early Career Teachers and schools ; (e) The challenge of Early Career Teachers being burdened with responsibilities by Education Officials; (f) The challenge of Early Career Teachers working with overcrowded classrooms.

In my data analysis, I noted varying and diverse range of challenges experienced by the Early Career Teachers. The experiences of Early Career Teachers vary in different schools. Most importantly, I am noting various and numerous challenges that are faced by the ECTs. The ECTs and Education Official view of the challenges faced by the ECTs indicate that it affects the productivity of the ECTs and their job satisfaction. Studies divulge that most beginner teachers experience variety of challenges within the first four years of being teachers (Ingersoll, 2012; Mkhabele et al., 2024) due to a number of issues such as burdensome workloads, insufficient support from leaders, absence of learning opportunities, poor working conditions, lack of job-satisfaction, inadequate provision of learning materials, and learner-indiscipline.

8.5.2.1 The challenge of Early Career Teachers receiving insufficient support from Education Officials

The ECTs face various challenges when they get to work during their inception years. The participants explained how the lack of support was one of the challenges that was faced by the ECTs. This finding resonates with recent and current scholarship in the field of leadership and management. For instance, Antonsen (2024) states that the lack of support provided to the ECTs can be seen through less engagements between the mentors (Education Officials) and the ECTs which normally leads to the lack of motivation of the ECTs. The Education Officials' different understanding revealed that the ECTs were not provided with sufficient support which negatively affected their job performance. Consequently, it contributed to the ECTs' deprivation in productivity, and it further affected the relationship between the ECTs and Education Officials. This broke the trust between the ECTs and the Education Officials due to what the ECTs considered as negligence of not being supported in certain areas even though Education Officials demanded work. The findings relate to those of Gulab and Khokhar (2024) who concluded that ECTs are expected to take care of learners and also protect, but when they are not sufficiently supported through being shown, guided and directed on how to do it they end up becoming just mechanical professionals. They end up not being able to take care of the learners as expected. Dawes (2020) states that when the mentoring from education officials is inconsistent it creates loss of trust between the ECTs and education officials.

Education Officials' understanding indicated that the lack of support is through ECTs not being well informed about the subject they teach, utilise the materials that they are expected to use as teaching aids, or how to correctly deal with matters that led them to committing blunders. The findings relate to the study by Gulab and Khokhar (2024) who argued that the lack of support provided to ECTs, for example, through orientation and induction processes can have a negative impact on their work ethos and also affected their emotional well-being. The actions of the Education Officials are in contrast with what they are expected to do according to one of the Alig-Milecarek and Hoy's (2005) tenet that states that Instructional Leaders promote and emphasise the importance of professional development through Instructional leaders nurturing a culture of constant learning and development, both individually and professionally, for themselves and their staff (Gaston, 2024). Gaston (2024) further adds that Instructional Leaders actively offer and inspire prospects for growth, recognising the importance of investing in people (Gaston, 2024).

Since, the Education Official did not employ the tenet of promoting and emphasising professional development through indicating that lack of support was provided to ECTs, their action indicated that it consequently created more problems for the ECTs and the school such as not meeting the Department of Education requirements. The findings align with existing literature, Meier (2020) states that the lack of support provided to the ECTs affects their performance. A bad performance gives an ECT a bad name. Meier (2020) further states that as much as the ECTs are not provided with support they are expected to effectively perform their duties as expected such as completing teaching the prescribed curriculum by the end of the targeted term. It implies that it is a difficult task as the Education Officials shared that ECTs are not supported thoroughly on how to use materials that they are allocated with. According to Ng (2019), it is the duty of Education Officials as Instructional Leader to make sure that ECTs are well supported so that they can effectively carry out their duties.

The participating ECTs and Education Officials saw the effects of the discussed challenges, their views in the matter is a point of reference. In articulating their views, they vividly demonstrated that most ECTs were discouraged because of not receiving support with matters that were concerned with curriculum policies that were pertinent to what the ECTs were doing inside and outside the classroom. The Education Officials noticed that they offered the ECTs with minimal support. The discussion clearly indicates that Adult Learning Theory cannot take place because one Adult Learning Theory tenet explains that adult learners are self-directed, they often thrive in environments that promote self-directed learning (SDL) (Damayanti, 2024). This approach, which emphasises learner autonomy and active participation, aligns with the core tenets of andragogy, the theory of adult learning (Knowles, 1980). It is vivid that non-supportive environment disables adult learning theory from taking place. It is evident that for the ECTs to benefit from the ideas expressed in Adult Learning Theory, a lot of spadework has to be done by Education officials.

8.5.2.2 The challenges relating to Early Career Teachers receiving insufficient training from Education Official

An additional challenge that was faced by the ECTs was the lack of training that they received from various stakeholders. The ECTs and Education Officials views indicated that the

challenge of the lack of support is a source that hinders the road to success of the ECTs because it discouraged the ECTs from effectively doing their jobs. The study outcomes are concurrent to literature as context by Liu and Lu (2023) who suggest that ECTs training is one of the most pivotal factors that positively affect academics in a school. The Education Officials' understandings indicated that when the ECTs did not receive training effectively they ended up being discouraged, which then, led to incompetence and poor performance. It showed that the lack of training of the ECTs negatively affected their productivity, their confidence and job satisfaction which led to the ECTs being despondent, unenthusiastic and end up not doing their work effectively. The findings are supported by the extant literature. For instance, Gutiérrez and Tomás (2019) show that ECTs training is effective in enabling the ECTs to gain autonomy and competence as teachers, which cultivates commitment of the ECTs and leads to an increased job satisfaction and performance. It is evident with the views of the participating ECTs and Education Officials that this challenge created problems for the ECTs as they ended up being characterised as lazy and incompetent by their supervisors in schools.

Even though Gutiérrez and Tomás (2019) emphasise the significance of ECTs training, as it revealed that the benefits augmented autonomy, enhanced competence and job satisfaction of ECTs. However, the findings revealed that what was happening in the selected schools was the opposite of what is presented by literature. The findings were rich evidence that the lack of training led to discouraged, incompetent and poor performing ECTs. The discussion led me to assimilating Adult Learning Theory tenet that discusses that adult learning readiness to learn is based on developmental and real-life responsibilities. ECTs are adult learners, their learning unswervingly addresses a precise necessity or developmental task, and it stimulates the intrinsic motivation for adult learners (Valsiner, 2012). ECTs as adult learners want to enhance their skills and knowledge to excellently navigate their current challenges and fulfil their roles. This inherent motivation through being trained nurtures commitment and engagement to learning, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes (Merriam, 2018). However, the discussion is clearly in contradiction with the ALT principle because the ECTs receive lack of support and it kills their intrinsic motivation to do their best.

The participating Education Officials recognised that lack of training is a challenge that has various negative impacts on the ECTs. The Education Officials shared that they were lacking when it comes to training ECTs with vital factors that directly affected the ECTs and learners such as training the ECTs about operative classroom management. The ECTs are referred as

not efficiently trained at the Universities because the theoretical knowledge that they gain at the University trainings does not adequately prepare them for the reality they face at the real school and classrooms setups; the ECTs struggle to apply pedagogical strategies they have acquired in the Universities (Tiba & Cody, 2021). The Education Officials is clear evidence that the ECTs were not trained with the content that they were expected to teach the learners which leaves ECTs feeling and looking like they do not know their job. The findings relate to literature, Yang et al. (2019) elucidate the importance of teacher training as it assists the teachers to build harmonious relationships with learners, which leads to improved classroom management and learner engagement.

It is evident that Education Officials understood their role in supporting ECTs and they demonstrated that they understood the damage that comes with lack of training as it did not only affect the ECTs but it also affected the institution as whole because it affected how the ECTs did their duties and tasks allocated to them. Education Official understanding of the impact that the lack of training challenge showed that it also interrupted the school order and success in a way. Lack of training further indicated that the Education Officials were not sufficiently practising the Instructional Leadership. As one of Instructional Leadership tenets by Alig-Mielcarek and Hoys (2005), the promotion of, and emphasis on the importance of professional development is crucial. Instructional leaders are expected to encourage professional development of ECTs and other teachers at the school setting, but because the Education Officials shared that there is a challenge of lack of training, it raises concern and shows that there is a need for improvement in that area as instructional leaders.

8.5.2.3 The challenge of Early Career Teachers being expected to work with lack of resources and working under existing poor working conditions by Education Officials

As mentioned in the previous sections, there are numerous challenges that the ECTs have to contend with, and the lack of resources and existing poor working conditions form a big part of them. Interestingly, all categories of participants acknowledged that the lack of resources was a barrier that undermined the ECTs' efforts to provide quality teaching to learners. However, very little seems to have been done to address this challenge. The lack of resources and its negative effects are highlighted in the literature. For example, Abylay (2024) argues that lack of resources contributes negatively on the quality of education that is provided in a school.

The findings show that some subjects required certain teaching aids which were not available in the schools, and the ECTs were expected to improvise by figuring it out on their own on how to look for alternatives to teach learners without the needed resources which is very stressful for ECT. This point is raised by Nurbaev (2021), who correctly argues that nowadays, teaching aids are essential factors that assist the ECTs to effectively do their work and allow learners to easily grasp lessons. Unfortunately, the lack of resources made it difficult for the ECTs to carry out their duties as expected.

Besides the lack of resources, the findings also suggest that for effective teaching and learning to occur, poor working conditions such as hostile working environments should be addressed. Such working condition could include co-workers not having good relationships with each other, colleagues bullying each other and having to deal with problematic learners on your own. The findings relate to literature that clearly explains that in the context of education, good working conditions can be identified through colleagues treating ECTs well by providing the ECTs with validation and a sense of camaraderie, which are essential for ECTs' confidence and professional growth (Sydnor et al., 2023). The participating ECTs understanding of their experience demonstrates that they did not feel validated and did not feel a sense of camaraderie because older and experienced colleagues created a hostile environment through overworking them because they were classified as "young teachers". Such work environments destroy intrinsic motivation that Malcolm Knowles (1980) talks about. This scholar argues that adult learners learn best in a healthy, supportive and collaborative learning environment that fosters respect, trust, and open communication can encourage active participation and intrinsic motivation among adult learners (Smith & Jones, 2023). This environment enables the ECTs to feel safe expressing their ideas, taking risks, and learning from each other.

The Education Officials indicated that poor working conditions also contributed to the challenges faced by the ECTs as divulged by the participants that ECTs had to work with learners from different backgrounds who are ill-disciplined, are not interested in their school work which is seen through learners being inactive and uncooperative during lessons. Sadly, the ECTs are normally expected to be resilient and thrive despite the existing poor working conditions. The findings relate to studies conducted that argue that resilience has been misapplied and misused, looking at the excessive emphasis on the capabilities of individuals

without adequately addressing systemic or structural factors that affects the ECTs (Masten et al., 2021). ECTs as adult learners need to be provided with a friendly working environment in order for them to flourish. Literature argued that ECTs as adult learners, the tenet of adult learners as self-directed learning driven by a desire for self-directed learning (SDL), often flourish in environments that empower them to take ownership of their learning journey as teachers (Smith & Jones, 2023). This aligns perfectly with the core principles of andragogy, the theory of adult learning developed by Malcolm Knowles (1980). Good working conditions play a crucial role in the development of ECTs. It is evident that existing poor working conditions can be created by colleagues or even learners in a school setting.

8.5.2.4 The challenge relating to the Department of Basic Education imposing academic and curriculum reforms to Early Career Teachers and schools

Education Officials play the role of being instructional leaders in this study. The Instructional Leadership Theory focuses on policies and practices that are implemented at the district level to help support and improve teaching and learning (Mdabe, 2019). The Education Officials have to make sure that the regulations and requirements set by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) have to be met by the ECTs and staff as a whole. However, schools still need to make their own decisions in certain matter to ensure the smooth running of a school that will be a roadmap to the success of the school. Hence it is vital to involve ECTs during decision-making processes. The study findings contribute to existing literature by Liou and Daly (2014) discusses that is it important for Education Officials to involve ECTs as a form of encouraging the empowerment of teachers, such as involvement of teachers in decision-making and allowing them autonomy, were operative in supporting teacher learning and development.

It is unfortunate that the views of the participating ECTs and Education Officials indicated that the DBE often interrupted the smooth running of a school due to academic decisions and reforms were imposed on Early Career Teachers and schools by the DBE. The Education Officials understanding show that academic decisions and reforms taken by the department affected the premediated plans of the ECTs. The participants disclosed that the department often imposed their own changes to the ECTs and schools as a whole. The findings relate to literature as noted by Johnson (2024), that the reforms imposed by DBE has a vast impact on the workload and morale of teachers. Some Education Officials explained that it was not always the case that the curriculum changes, but she explained sometimes it was the tasks that were

changed. However, even when only the tasks change it still affected the ECTs directly in a sense that these tasks also made it difficult for ECTs to cope because they changed tasks that were supposed to be done by the learners, for example they changed the assignment and demanded weekly tests, not considering that teachers work with a large number of learners.

The concern of the Education Officials and ECTs was that even when the department changed the tasks they did not allocate the ECTs and teachers sufficient time frame to complete their work. The findings resonate with the existing body of knowledge shared by National Centre for Education Statistics (2024) that the changes in education brought by DBE has increased the accountability measures for teachers of why they do not finish work on time and as expected. The findings indicated that Education Officials are middle-men between the DBE and teachers, therefore, they need to make sure that the teachers receive communication from DBE. The findings align with the theoretical expectations of Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy's Instructional Leadership (2005) tenet of defining and communicating goals, instructional leaders who are Education Officials in this study encourage the ECTs to identifying crucial goals but also inspiring and empowering others to dedicate themselves and the necessary resources towards achieving those goals (Sergiovanni & Green, 2021). Education Officials clearly indicate the requirements and expectations from the DBE to the ECTs and other teachers.

The participating Education Officials saw that the DBE would often organise workshops to cascade information concerning the reforms; however, the ECTs and Education Officials concerns was that these workshops were not effective at all and did not serve purpose due to different matters. Education Officials and ECTs understanding reflect that, as much as they were called to workshop where information about these reforms was cascaded, these workshops were totally ineffective considering the large number of attendees which made it hard for ECTs to learn anything. The findings relate to literature that indicates that such workshops are ineffective because they just transmit information and not offer solutions on how teachers can tackle and work with the academic reforms (Cansoy & Turkoglu, 2022). The changes and academic decisions that are brought forward by the DBE sometimes negatively affect the smooth running of the school as it ends up affecting the performance of the school due to frustrating the ECTs and teachers with changes that directly affects how they do their job. And this was evident when the Education Officials monitor the work of ECTs and teachers. So that they can provide them with feedback.

It is evident that that academic decisions and reforms affected ECTs work capacity and their productivity because they needed to adjust to teaching the new curriculum. Additionally, it is evident that the reforms were not always curriculum based, sometimes the reforms had to do with added workload that did not align with the given time frame which made it difficult for ECTs to adjust smoothly at a workplace. Furthermore, the academic reforms interfered with the premediated schedules that were done by the school for the benefit of the school which ended increasing the workload of the ECTs. To sum up, the participant shared that policy reforms created challenges for them in schools.

8.5.2.5 The challenge relating to the Early Career Teachers being burdened with responsibilities by Education Officials

The challenges do not end with DBE imposing academic changes and reforms on ECTs, but also the ECTs faced another challenge of being burdened with many responsibilities. The Education Officials' understandings were that the ECTs were fairly allocated responsibilities that were within their job description. Obviously, the findings show varied perspectives on the issue. While school principals in the study believed that the allocation was fair, and some Education Officials felt the same, the ECTs and some Education Officials shared similar sentiments, especially when it comes to the submission deadlines. Some Education Officials understood it as unfair to the ECTs to be given the unrealistic time frame for submission of completed tasks. A study by Hallinger and Heck (2010) as well as that of Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy's (2005), both highlight the issue of defining and communicating goals that have an important influence on teacher success and student achievement, and effective communication in that regard. Thinking along those lines, the discrepancy between what the ECTs consider as burden and what the Education Official regard as part of job description would be averted.

The misunderstanding between the two parties (ECTs on one hand and Education Officials and SMT on the other) is cause for concern. The lack of understanding between them results in the current situation where, the ECTs feel burdened by heavy workload, while the other stakeholders see things differently. From the ECTs' perspectives, they are burdened with responsibilities even though they are within their job description. Apparently, they needed to be guided on how to perform the given duties or else these duties felt like a burden to the ECTs. Therefore, as much as the ECTs felt like they were given too much work which ended up making them feel burdened, they were not really burdened with work because all the work allocated to them was within their job description. Perhaps, the main issue is about making

them understand all the way what is expected of them, and communicating the vision and goals clearly (Alig-Mielcarek & Hoy, 2005). An added dimension to this is the fact that experienced teachers also abused them ECTs in some ways. The Education Official understanding concerning this matter is that even though the ECTs were allocated duties within their job description, when the experienced teachers gave them work it became a burden to an ECT because the ECTs had to do the job of two people at once. In addition, the Education Officials were concerned that it became a burden to the ECTs when they were allocated to teach subjects that they were not qualified to teach. This challenge had to do with the shortage of teachers who were qualified to teach those subjects. The ECTs found this frustrating. Evidently, support systems could be put in place for the ECTs to rely on. Unfortunately, such support systems did not exist. In this regard, Howard et al. (2020) advocate for support systems tailored mentoring, teamwork and fairness essentially eased the burden of the teachers. A similar study conducted by Diab and Green (2024) suggested that a group of novice teachers shared that Education Officials as mentors are expected to provide ECTs with support through guiding them into the absorption of the educational context and ensuring that they do not experience burnout because of work frustration.

Additionally, the findings revealed that experienced teachers took advantage of the ECTs and overused them and the ECTs were sometimes allocated with subjects they did not specialise in which was really stressful for them. This resulted in the ECTs extreme fatigue, frustration and burn-out. The negative impact also affected the ECTs job; they could not perform well and ended up a decline in their productivity which was even more frustrating. These findings relate with another study finding, where teachers reported that when the work environment is supportive it leads to increased levels of job satisfaction and lower occurrences of burnout (Kaplan, 2022). It is of the utmost important for the Education Officials as Instructional Leaders to mentor and guide the ECTs gradually. The actions of Education Officials should align and be influenced by Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy's Instructional Leadership Theory (2005), where instructional leaders are expected to promote professional development. In that regard, Crowther et al. (2011) allude that instructional leadership practices consist of providing unending professional development and support to teachers constructing an ethos of co-operation and continuous improvement. The Alig-Mielcarek and Hoy's theory (2005) emphasise that it is the duty of the Education Officials as instructional leaders to ensure that they inspire, motivate and encourage learners to achieve beyond their plans, to ensure that all educators know that they are valued equally in a school context.

8.5.2.6 The challenge of Early Career Teachers working with overcrowded classrooms

The last challenge that the ECTs had to contend with is the difficulties working with overcrowded classrooms. Teaching in overcrowded classrooms has received attention in the literature as undermining the quality of engagement with the learners, which may result in under-achievement (Ahmed et al., 2025). These scholars explain further that overcrowding entails a condition in which the quantity of pupils surpasses the suggested number for whom the class is intended (Ahmed et al., 2025). The participating Education Officials and ECTs indicated that ECTs were sometimes given classes that had a large number of learners and this was a challenge to the ECTs. Findings of the study revealed that this was a difficult challenge because overcrowded classrooms had different challenges such as ill-discipline and limiting the movement of ECTs in the classroom to be able to effectively instil classroom management. The findings relate to the literature that demonstrate that quality teaching and learning is compromised because teachers are stretched by a large number of learners in the classrooms (Tekele, 2023). Education Officials understand that when the ECTs are working with a large group of learners it often affected their job and how it affected classroom management which resulted in chaotic and disruptive classrooms. The findings corroborate those of another study which found that overcrowded classrooms interrupted instruction as most teachers experience teaching problems, discipline, physical, and appraisal problems (Osai, 2021). The participating Education Official attested that that overcrowded classes made it difficult for ECTs to execute their duties effectively, and that it made their job harder and heavier as they revealed that overcrowded classrooms were disruptive and a teacher could not make any movements to monitor if all learners were listening and cooperating.

The Education Officials further revealed that overcrowded classrooms often consumed the teaching and learning time as ECTs spend most of their teaching time trying to discipline disruptive and noisy learners. This made the job of the ECTs to be very difficult. The findings relate with literature as it is the responsibility of a teacher to nurture learners, care about their well-being and their learning and it becomes a challenge when the teacher has to deal with an overcrowded classroom because more learners have similar needs and teacher lacks time to attend to all the learners' needs (Arain et al., 2019). Education Officials' practices revealed challenges as they engaged in various forms of analysis and planning in consultation with stakeholders to deal with organisational issues but still faced the issue of overcrowded

classrooms. Education Officials understand that overcrowded classrooms made it difficult for the ECTs to do their job effectively as they were unable to control the learners.

8.5.3 Early Career Teachers enjoy benefits of receiving support from Education Official when they received it

ECTs in this study appeared to have varied understandings of their roles as adult learners at the case schools with regard to inspirational direction to their work and learners. However, within this theme there were differences in terms of how the ECTs understood their roles as adult learners. The Education Officials and the ECT understanding demonstrated that the ECTs got to enjoy certain benefits from receiving support from the Education Officials. The ECT as adult learners were keen to learn through the support provided by the Education Officials. The determination of Adult Learning theory expanded its prestige as requesting the existing status as “the art and science of helping adults learn” which is persuaded by Eduard Lindeman’s work in the mid-1960s which differentiated pedagogy with andragogy (Knowles, 1986). The Education Officials recognised that the ECT became very active and happy employees when they received support in certain areas. The Education Officials further noticed that when ECTs were supported they tended to gain agency in doing things on their own like trying to discipline learners. The sub-themes discussed below are: (a) Early Career Teachers improved dedication and commitment when they received support from Education Officials; (b) Early Career Teachers become happier employees when they receive support.

8.5.3.1 Early Career Teachers improved dedication and commitment when they received support from Education Officials

The findings reveal that when the ECTs received support from Subject Advisors through consistent communication and inviting the ECTs over to workshops to train them about content and induct the ECTs, it resulted in enhanced dedication and commitment from the ECTs. Improving the learner performance which was a positive indicator that providing the ECTs with support came with benefits. It could be seen through the fact that when the ECT received support in certain areas it did not only benefits the ECTs but other stakeholders such as the learners and the SMT. This was because the participants divulged that when the ECTs were provided with support they tended to go the extra mile to an extent that they brought their own

resources to help learners because as Adult Learner they found it meaningful to create a learning climate that is supportive. The findings of the study are congruent with the literature, Fisher and Jones (2024) allude that ECTs that are provided with support indicate positive attributes such as personal growth, optimal motivation, competence and autonomy. Merriam (2001, p. 5), “Some adults are extremely reliant on a teacher for structure, while some young learners are independent, self-directed learners”. The action of the ECTs align with the Adult Learning tenet that adult learners need motivation to learn. Unlike children who may be primarily motivated by external factors like grades or rewards, adult learners are driven by a desire to understand the "why" behind what they are learning (Smith & Jones, 2023).

ECTs seek clear insights into the purpose, benefits, and applications of the learning content before they invest their time and effort. The Education Officials understand that when the ECTs received support the ECTs became experts in the subject they taught which led to improved learner performance. The Education Officials disclosed that as the ECT were adult learners, and it aligns with the theoretical expectation as discussed by Ngozwana (2020) that adult learning theory tenet of adult learners need motivation to learn makes learning for adult learners to be very vital and find it very meaningful as it also contributes to their personal value, helps them to create a learning climate that is filled with trust, mutual respect, and where there is collaboration and that is very supportive.

8.5.3.2 Early Career Teachers become happier employees when they receive support

The findings revealed that when the ECTs received emotional support from the Education Officials through regular check-ins whereby the Education Officials scheduled meetings with ECTs to ask them about their challenges and well-being, they were happy and content. The findings are in line with literature that ECTs who receive support have more emotional control, reduced stress and foster resilience (Ewing, 2021). ECTs receiving support also bolstered their confidence and enhanced their job satisfaction and it was evident through the fact that they produced good results. Moreover, the findings divulged that when the Education Officials enabled an open communication where the ECTs were allowed to share their opinions, views and feelings it created a warm working environment which led to happier ECTs. Receiving support was beneficial for ECTs as it contributed to their personal value because there were positive outcomes that are evident when the ECTs received sufficient support such as the ECTs

became happier at work, they gained more confidence, and they produced good results which led to high job satisfaction.

Prominently, it helped the ECTs build harmonious relationships with both the learners and co-workers which results in a healthy working environment because they find it meaningful to have mutual respect and institute collaboration. The behaviour of the ECTs being happier when receiving emotional support aligns with the theoretical expectations of Adult Learning Theory tenet that adult learners possess intrinsic motivation. It discusses that learning environment that nurtures open communication can boost feeling of happiness and intrinsic motivation among adult learners (Smith & Jones, 2023). The literature (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Smith & Jones, 2023), suggests that it is essential to consider that internal motivation flourishes when adult learners feel valued, respected, and capable. It is evident that providing the ECTs with support results in positive outcomes which positively affects all stakeholders. Most importantly, it allows the ECTs to be effective adult learners at a workplace as literature divulged that adult learners learn effectively when they are in a conducive and supportive environment. The Education Officials understand that when sufficient support is provided to the ECT, it drives them to become enthusiastic, and remarkably get devoted to their work to an extent that they would even submit requested work before the deadline. Literature (Adebola & Tsotetsi, 2022; Arasomwan & Mashiya, 2021; Darwish & Saqedi, 2016; Freeman et al., 2013; Phillips & Condy, 2023; Tiba & Cody, 2021) showed that when the ECTs received support they grow in different ways such as personal growth and they also learnt to foster resilience. The ECTs got confident and ended up being able to voice out their opinions because they felt valued equally as other employees. Most importantly it built their self-efficacy which led to improved productivity and enhanced learner performance.

8.5.4 Duality in the influence of Education Officials providing support to the Early Career Teachers

Education Officials in this study appeared to have understandings that there were various factors that limited the Education Officials from providing support to the ECTs. The duality encompassed that there are factors that hinder support to be provided and there were factors that influenced support to be provided. The sub-themes discussed are: (a) How certain factors discouraged Education Officials from providing support to the Early Career Teacher and (b)

how certain factors encouraged Education Officials to provide support to the Early Career Teachers.

8.5.4.1 How certain factors discouraged Education Officials from providing support to the Early Career Teacher

The Education Officials in this study understood the roles they occupied and they could often influence the schools more through their actions and conduct than their words, however there were factors that discouraged the Education Officials from providing the ECTs with support such as the bad attitude that ECTs gave to Education Officials and time was also a contributing factor as ECTs have limited time which led to the ECTs being unable to assist them. It is vital to identify factors that hinder engagement and collaboration between mentors and ECTs such as budget and time constraints (Bjerke & Xenofontos, 2024; Street et al., 2024). The sub-themes discussed below are: (a) Time constraints and lack of resources and equipment hindered Education Officials from providing sufficient support to Early Career Teachers; (b) Early Career Teachers undermining the Education Officials authority discouraged the Education Officials from providing the Early Career Teachers with support; (c) Unwelcoming and hostile attitude from Early Career Teachers hindered Education Officials from providing them with support.

8.5.4.1.1 Time constraints and lack of resources and equipment hindered Education Officials from providing sufficient support to Early Career Teachers

The Education Officials recognised that time limitations are one factor that hindered the Education Officials from providing the ECTs with support. The Education Officials recognised that the ECTs often are not willing to stay behind after work to receive support but instead they are always in a hurry and have different excuses. The Education Officials also recognised that the reason why the ECTs could not stay behind was because they had organised extra classes for their learners and could not cancel the extra classes. The findings relate to literature by Smith (2023) who found that in most schools, mentors have work overload and hardly have time to support the ECTs because of their own pressure from work. Additionally, Jones (2023) discusses that another factor that hinders the mentors from providing the ECTs with support is the teaching commitments of the ECTs. Education Officials are unable to support the ECTs in a sense that during the working hours the ECTs were in class doing their work and after school

they were either hosting extra classes or attending to their personal matters. Moreover, findings related to literature that indicated that things that hindered the Education Officials from providing ECTs with support are lack of resources and equipment (Jones, 2023). As much as the Education Officials wanted to provide support, they noticed that there are other factors that hinder the Education Officials from providing ECTs with support and these factors are not related to what is done by the ECTs but over the ECTs and Education Officials' control. Factors such as the insufficient allocation of funds to the selected school which leads to insufficient resources.

All the above-mentioned actions and predicaments align with the Alig-Mielcarek Instructional Leadership (2005) tenet that instructional leaders should promote and emphasise professional development; in this case it becomes difficult for the practice to take place because of the unavailability of the ECTs due to various issues mentioned such as time constraints, lack of equipment, lack of funding and pressure from work. These findings are congruent to literature that explains that it makes it difficult for Instructional Leaders to practise promoting and emphasising professional development through effectively engage and support the ECTs through professional development if the ECTs are unavailable (Ozdemir et al., 2020). It is vivid that as much as Education Officials want to provide professional development as a way of supporting the ECTs, it becomes a challenge due to ECTs having limited time because of various commitments and factors that are over the control of both the ECTs and Education Officials such as no equipment to utilise.

It is evident that, as much as the Education Officials want to provide the ECTs with support, there are various factors that limit them from doing so. Education Officials were also caught in an intense dilemma that were caused by the behaviour of the ECTs which affected how they provided support to the ECTs. The participating ECTs and Education Officials revealed that other factors were beyond the control of both ECTs and Education Officials such as the insufficient budget that was allocated to schools which did not cover the resources that were needed by the ECTs. ECTs who did not balance their personal and work life but rather put their personal life first. However other factors were beyond the control of both the ECT and the Education Official such as insufficient allocation of funds which directly affected and hindered the Education Officials from providing ECTs with support such as providing them with resources.

8.5.4.1.2 Perceptions about Early Career Teachers undermining the Education Officials authority discouraged the Education Officials from providing the Early Career Teachers with support

Education Officials recognised that the other factor that discouraged them were when the ECTs undermined their authority such as when they advised the ECTs with certain issues and guide them how to carry out certain duties. They experienced that the ECTs did not do as told because they undermined the Education Officials. This resulted in the ECTs doing blunders that affected their work and their relationship with the Education Officials suffered. The findings are supported by extant literature by Lee (2023), who discusses that the ECTs may undermine authority of the Education Officials due to lack of trust. In the context of this study, the loss of trust between these two important stakeholders may leads to ECTs not taking any advice that they are given by the Education Officials. The participants revealed that the ECTs sometimes undermined other colleagues and did not want to take advice from them which sometimes led to unpleasant outcomes. The education officials ended up providing the ECTs with lack of training when the ECTs undermine their authority (Garcia, 2023). However, when different expectations were not met by both parties, their relationship suffered and there were perceptions by Education Officials that the ECTs were undermining their authority. One of the factors that discourages the education officials from providing the ECTs with support is that the ECTs do not understand the role of mentors as they are inconsistent with their mentoring, therefore they end up not following up with the programme and not doing as they are told or advised due to inconsistency from the education officials (Wexler, 2020). In addition, ECTs undermining the authority of education officials can be seen when the ECTs not submitting on time before the deadlines and not attending trainings organised by their mentors (Symeonidis et al., 2023). The findings did not reveal that lack of mentoring training can be a contributory factor. It is crucial for Education Officials to consistently mentor the ECTs as Instructional leaders because instructional leaders are transparent and accountable and they communicate high expectations clearly and provide accurate information to build trust and confidence among stakeholders (McGuire, 2001). The findings reveal a case of Education Officials being unable to provide support to ECTs due to ECTs undermining their advice.

The findings are in line with literature that discuss that when the Instructional Leaders cannot or do not practise the role of defining and communicating goals, it leads to teachers making unnecessary mistakes and affects the functioning of the school (Bush, 2023). It is clear that ECTs discourage the Education Officials actively engaging in their roles such as defining and communicating goals as Instructional Leaders by undermining the Education Officials authority. It is evident that other issues that caused Education Officials not to provide support to ECTs were the fact that they had communication barriers and experience what is called personality clashes. Moreover, the ECTs did not trust the Education Officials due to past disappointments and most importantly the Education officials were not sufficiently trained as mentors and did not know how to correctly do it.

8.5.4.1.3 Unwelcoming and hostile attitude from Early Career Teachers hindered Education Officials from providing them with support

The Education Officials expressed that the ECTs were sometimes not welcoming and gave them a hostile attitude when they approached the ECT to provide them with support. The shared views indicate that the ECTs somehow caused the Education Officials to neglect their duties the Educational Officials have to monitor the progress of ECT's work through engaging with them through meetings, the hostility discourages the education officials from engaging with the ECTs (Shamow, 2017). The findings indicate that it was difficult for the Education Officials to provide support to ECTs in such a manner because they did not have a good relationship with the ECTs, they were uncomfortable to the eerie attitude they received from the ECTs that were caused by various factors such as previous conflicts. The findings align with the existing literature by Anderson (2023) who argues that communication barriers and personality clashes can also contribute to Education Officials not being able to offer support, as they will not have a good relationship with the ECTs. It is evident that the Education Officials were sometimes working with tied hands when providing support to ECTs because of the hostile attitude and adverse behaviour they received from the ECTs.

8.5.4.2 How certain factors encouraged Education Officials to provide support to the Early Career Teachers

Even though there are factors that limited the Education Officials from providing the ECTs with support, there are also factors that encouraged and influenced the Education Officials to

provide the ECTs with support. The Education Officials articulated that it often influenced them to provide support to ECTs when the ECTs showed that they were willing to learn as Adult Learners and this could be seen through the ECTs being participative and active during support sessions. Participative in a manner that they engaged, asked questions and put forward their own opinions. The Education Officials shared that this positive attitude and behaviour from the ECTs motivated them to provide support to the ECTs continuously. ECTs should feel “accepted, respected, and supported”, as there is “a spirit of mutuality between teachers and students as joint inquirers” (Knowles, 1980, p. 47). ECTs in this case also need guidance from their mentors (Henschke, 2011). The participating Education Officials focused on the actions and response they received from the ECTs, They further indicated that it encouraged them and made them to be enthusiastic when it came to supporting the ECTs with anything. The sub-themes discussed below are: (a) Early Career Teachers willingness to learn encouraged the Education Officials to provide them with support; (b) Education Officials felt influenced to provide support to Early Career Teachers when they were big on team-work.

8.4.4.2.1 Early Career Teachers willingness to learn encouraged the Education Officials to provide them with support

The findings indicated that there needed to be deep internal changes in the ECTs as adult learners for mentors (Education Officials) to become authentic and active support providers. The Education Officials understood that the internal change could be seen through ECTs engaging in various ways such as seeking advice wherever they need assistance from the Education Officials. The increased work ethos and increased potential was also a factor that encouraged the Education Officials to support the ECTs. The findings relate to literature that states that teachers were required to change from being passive learners to engaging in active learning (Turcsanyi-Szabo, 2012). The findings reveal that it encouraged the Education Officials to provide support to the ECTs when they showed willingness to learn, then it made the job of the Education Officials to be easier to want to offer support to ECTs. Moreover, the findings indicated that when the ECTs showed that they knew their job and always prepared for lessons then it was encouraging and gave the Education Officials the enthusiasm to support the ECTs. The findings relate to literature that ECTs keenness to learn and develop motivated the Education Officials to provide them with support (Klein et al., 2024). The Education Officials discussed that during support session when the ECTs were very active and

participative and most importantly when they used the advice and applied the teaching strategies that the Education Officials had recommended to them.

The actions of the ECTs being eager to learn align with the theoretical expectation of Adult Learning Theory tenet by Malcom Knowles that outlines that adult learners are self-directed learners. Adult learners often succeed in environments that stimulate self-directed learning (SDL) (Smith & Jones, 2023). This tenet, which emphasises learner independence and active participation, aligns with the core tenets of andragogy of adult learner as self-directed learner, the theory of adult learning (Knowles, 1980). Studies have shown that SDL (Self-Directed Learning) tenets can establish a more engaging and effective learning experience for adults (Yang & Park, 2022). The ECTs as adult learners, driven by a desire for self-directed learning, often flourish in environments that empower them to take ownership of their learning journey as teachers (Smith & Jones, 2023). It is evident that it is vital that the ECTs show a positive attitude and behaviours, enhance their work ethic so that it can influence the Education Officials to offer support. Education Officials were influenced to provide support when the ECTs showed eagerness to learn through doing certain things by themselves first before seeking for assistance and doing their own research. Furthermore, when the ECTs were willing to learn and they showed interest in learning. Lastly, active and participative ECTs also influenced support to be provided to them.

8.5.4.2.2 Education Officials felt influenced to provide support to Early Career Teachers when they were big on team-work

The findings revealed that when the ECTs asked for assistance whenever they needed one, it influenced the Education Officials to offer support. Importantly the ECTs were keen to create an environment with collaboration and respect amongst each other. The Education Officials indicated that it also motivated them when the ECTs were big on team work spirit and were able to collaborate with other colleagues. The finding resonates with existing study that it was imperative and encouraging for the Education Officials when both parties built strong relations and created a welcoming environment that allowed co-operation and most importantly team-work (Social Dynamics in Education, 2024). The findings indicate that it was vital for ECTs to be big on team work because they got to learn new skills and build new relationships with their co-workers. The action of ECTs being big on collaboration and team work aligns with the

Adult Learning Theory tenet by Malcom Knowles that outlines that adults bring experience and knowledge to the learning experience; the findings align with the tenet because ECTs are able to bring their own prior knowledge into collaborative discussions and allows them to learn new strategies during team-work (Merriam & Bierema, 2024). The Education Officials further understood that it was even easier to provide support to ECTs that were qualified to teach the subjects they were allocated. This was because the ECTs had sufficient knowledge about the subjects and completely understand what is expected of them. It made things easier for both Education Officials and ECTs. The findings relate to literature that it is therefore crucial for ECTs to have an insight of the subject they teach so that they can be able to learn effectively from the trainings and support provided by the Education Officials (Feiman-Nemser, 2024).

However, in addition to the findings the study by Aderibigbe et al.(2022) indicate that there are other various factors that help to influence the Education Officials to provide the ECTs with support such as when the school has a supportive school culture and leadership that is strong, it fosters the Education Officials motivation to provide the ECTs with support. Supported by Educational Program Evaluation (2024) stated that when the school has outlined valid policies, guidelines and well-designed programmes that guide the Education Officials how to provide the ECTs with support the situation becomes easier. Furthermore, when Education Officials get recognised and get appreciated for supporting the ECTs, it boosts their morale and functions as an influence to keep the Education Officials to continue supporting the ECTs (Shanks et al, 2022). It is evident that it was easier for the Education Officials to provide support to ECTs when the ECTs are knowledgeable about the subject that they taught. Most importantly, when the ECTs and the Education Officials had a good relationship, it made it easy for the Education Officials to approach the ECTs and assist them. Support was facilitated by the positive attitude they received from the ECTs such as ECTs who did not have pride and sought assistance whenever they needed it.

8.5.5 Looking into available support programmes and policies for Early Career Teachers

The participating Education Officials and the ECTs' understandings indicate that different constituents (policies) and practices are needed to regulate success and to support the ECTs. The participating Education Officials understood the variety of their roles as cooperatively communicating as well as monitoring the vision which is to support the ECTs. The sub-theme

discussed: (a) available policies and programmes were not specifically for Early Career Teachers but all teachers.

8.5.5.1 Available policies and programmes were not specifically for Early Career Teachers but all teachers.

The Education Officials needed support programmes and policies to guide them to effectively support the ECTs. The findings relate to the literature as it indicates that the programmes and policies to support ECTs should help the ECTs gain confidence, get qualified, and be conversant teachers in their occupation (Kadel, 2023). However, the Education Officials understood that there were available support programmes and policies that assisted the ECTs, but these policies were not specifically aimed at assisting ECTs only but teachers in general. Therefore, there were policies that were there to support every educator not the ECTs. The Education Officials articulated that some of the available policies were there to inform teachers about their responsibilities and duties that they were expected to do and the name of the policy mentioned was the Personnel Administrative Measure (PAM). The findings align with literature, Kadenge (2021) despondently confer that education districts of South Africa have been noticed to lack policies that directly support the ECTs. The actions of the Education Officials utilising the mentioned policies, PAM and ELRC to support teachers aligns with principles of instructional leadership they define and communicate goals in a sense that they informed the ECTs of what the policies expected of them regarding how to their work, misconducts to avoid and their responsibilities. When the education officials practise this tenet, it assists the ECTs to be competent and improve their instructional skills (Osei-Amankwah et al., 2023).

The Education Officials further indicated that there was a policy called Educator Labour Relation Council (ELRC) documents which were often used to support teachers as they outlined all the essential information that the ECT had to know about their occupation. With the participants' findings it is clear that the policies did not only focus on supporting the ECTs alone but teachers in general. The Education Official understanding revealed that there was support programme from the Department of Education that is called the ECASA which is sponsored by TELKOM. The findings relate to literature that the initiation of technology has had a huge impact on education, because it forced teachers to change ways on how they taught adult learners (Horsley, 2010). The findings indicate that the support programme sought to

assist teachers with technological support. In a sense that they trained the teachers on how to incorporate and utilise technology during their lessons. The Education Officials recognised that there was lack of support programmes and policies that were initially intended in supporting the ECTs. The actions partaken by the Education Officials of utilising the TELKOM programme to assist the ECTs with technology align with the theoretical expectation as McGuire (2001) states that Education Officials as Instructional leaders foster a culture of continuous learning and development, both personally and professionally, for themselves and their staff.

The Education Officials as instructional leaders enact this by implementing the TELKOM programme which was part of professional development as it assisted them with training the ECTs and teachers on how to incorporate technology in their lessons to augment the quality of instruction and learning at the selected school. Implementing policies and programmes align well with the responsibility of Education Officials promoting and emphasising professional development because it bears different benefits such as enhanced teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction and learner achievement (Gymerah, 2021). It is evident that there were minimal support programmes that were available to assist the ECTs in schools. The programmes and policies available were not strictly for ECTs but they were policies that were available for every teacher. There were no support programmes and policies that helped to support the ECTs directly in the selected school. Most participating Education Officials believe that there were none at all while other participants seemed to believe that workshops can be regarded as support programmes. There was a gap when it came to support programmes and policies that were aimed at supporting the ECTs in schools.

8.5.6 Scrutinising multiplicity forms of support provided to the Early Career Teachers

This section scrutinises how support is provided to the ECTs. The following findings show the forms of support that is provided by the Education Officials to ECTs, looking into the four spectrums which are: (i)Professional development as a form of support that is provided by Education Officials that is focused on developing Early Career Teachers as professionals not a person ; (ii)Administrative support as a form of support to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials to sharpen the Early Career Teachers effectiveness; (iii)Education Officials provided Early Career Teachers with technological support to polish their technological abilities ; (iv)Education Officials provided the Early Career Teachers with emotional support

to function within the constraints of conscience and regulations of the Department of Education. .

8.5.6.1 Professional development as a form of support that is provided by Education Officials that is focused on developing Early Career Teachers as professionals not as a person

The findings indicate that Education Officials tried to develop the ECTs professionally. The claim made by the participating Education Officials of their leadership practice of developing the ECTs at first looked to reflect an Instructional Leadership practice. Most of the Education Officials focused on the professional development of the ECTs through workshops, both formal and informal, and they described these as developing people. The findings align with the study that the ECTs need to be developed in a form of being inducted so that they can perform effectively (Kadel, 2023). Education Officials revealed that they developed the ECTs through capacitating the ECTs through workshop trainings.

The Education Officials understood that the professional development specifically dealt with developing the ECTs on their work in different areas. The ECTs received this type of support through being inducted and attending workshops. The professional development mainly took place through inductions and workshops that were either organised by the school or department. The findings were congruent to literature, when teachers feel supported and their professional well-being is catered for, their professional practice and resilience amplifies and it is seen through better results (Dreer-Goethe, 2023). In other selected schools, the professional development took place when the school organised its own training that focused on training the ECTs on a certain aspect such as policies in this case. The ECTs were only trained on how to become professional teachers and how to do their work effectively so that they can produce good results and become productive teachers. The findings relate to the findings that Goldhaber et al. (2020) encapsulate mentoring as a crucial element of teacher preparation and induction that can inspire the career route of a teacher for years to come.

The actions of the Education Officials training the ECTs through workshops, inductions and more aligns with the theoretical expectation as Mustari and Nurhayati (2024) posit that the responsibility of an instructional leaders is to make sure that they cultivate the favourable character attributes amongst teachers with the aim to foster them to perform well by developing

them professionally through training and inductions. In addition, instructional leadership professional development encompasses various educational aspects including knowledge base, curriculum, professional development, and institutional vision (Southworth, 2002). These tenets of promoting and emphasising professional development of teachers aims to create inclusive learning environments that foster both student learning and teacher development (Southworth, 2002). It is evident that inductions and workshops that were organised by schools and the department were the only way that ECTs received professional development as a form of support though attending workshops and trainings to help enhance their pedagogical strategies and augment their curriculum comprehension. Workshops and inductions were conducted to assist the ECTs in getting familiar with the school set up and duties that they were expected to do as teachers. The participating Education Officials and ECTs further revealed that the subject advisors hosted workshops but these workshops were scarce and seemingly not effective.

8.5.6.2 Administrative support as a form of support to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials to sharpen the Early Career Teachers effectiveness

The findings indicated that ECTs are further assisted with administrative support to help enhance their professional development. The Education Officials articulated that administrative support took place when the ECTs were allowed to observe the teaching strategies of other colleagues and when they were provided with time to prepare for and plan their lessons during school hours. As a strategy for the ECTs to adapt the teaching strategies that were used by other teachers to help them to become effective teachers. The actions of the Education Officials align with the role of instructional leaders as they are expected to monitor and provide feedback, effective instructional leadership lies on the leader's skill to communicate clearly when monitoring the work of teachers and consistently providing feedback to teachers (Hussein, 2016). This involves employing various methods such as providing guidance, offering suggestions and feedback, demonstrating best practices, sharing valuable insights, and acknowledging teachers' achievements and excellence (Sultan et al., 2022).

The Education Officials understand that training the ECTs to utilise SA-SAMS also formed part of administrative support. The Education Officials mentioned that administrative support was provided to ECTs through training them on how to access SA-SAMS and monitoring their

progress. The administrative support that was provided to ECTs was that when the Education Officials trained them how to utilise SA-SAMS such as how to record and capture marks. The findings indicate that Education Officials had to encourage team work especially involving ECTs in team tasks. The Education Official understood that ECTs were provided with an administrative period as a form of support so that the ECTs could prepare for their lessons and they were given certain time-frame to mark exams which was also regarded as administrative support. After marking the Departmental Heads would monitor their work through the process called post-moderation and provide feedback to the ECTs and teachers in overall. The shared views and information indicate that ECTs were provided with an administrative period as a form of support so that the ECTs can prepare for their lessons and they were given certain time-frame to mark examinations which was also regarded as administrative support. The findings lead us to the discussion by Saleem et al. (2020) that administrative duties irritate novice teachers if they are not well supported with administrative work. The findings relate to literature as Salem et al. (2020) further discuss that administrative work frustrated the ECTs because it consisted of a lot of administrative tasks, such never-ending paperwork, which aggravated them and make classroom management challenging. ECTs need administrative support, because it boosts their level of motivation to do well and handle everyday challenges (McClelland, 1987). Education Officials articulate that administrative support could be provided through training teachers on how to use SA-SAMS, how to record and capture marks.

There were various ways to provide the ECTs with administrative support. The data generated revealed that administrative support could be provided through allocating them with free periods that allowed them to prepare for their lessons. As there were ECTs who complained of not receiving sufficient time to prepare at schools and other ECTs seemed to complain that they were not assisted and they did all the above mentioned by themselves. This revealed that there was lack of administrative at some selected schools.

8.5.6.3 Education Officials provided Early Career Teachers with technological support to polish their technological abilities

The findings indicate that the ECTs were also provided with technological support but this was not a common form of support provided to the ECTs because most of the ECTs came well equipped with technological skills from tertiary. The Education Officials understood that

technological support made teaching to become easier and effective for the ECTs such as using computers and internet to teach learners. The finding aligns with the existing study by Porter and Graham (2016) suggest, strong infrastructure, technological support, and pedagogical support are essential for facilitating ease of use for ECTs. Therefore, school leaders must provide high-quality and sustained technological support. The finding further resonates with literature that the format and intensity of this support, such as long-term co-design with colleagues (Koh et al., 2017), may have a mediating effect on ECTs' technostress.

The findings revealed that technological support took place through Education Officials assisting ECTs on how to incorporate technology during their lessons. The data generated suggested that as much as the ECT were well trained with technology and did not need any training upon their arrival at workplaces. However, some Education Official still offered the ECTs with technological support. They used visual centres as a form of providing technological support to ECTs. The findings relate to technological training programs should provide more opportunities for hands-on experience, contextually relevant evaluation, and timely feedback to enhance ECTs' perceived knowledge and skills (Xie et al., 2017). Even though the ECTs were well equipped with technological skills, the Education Officials still offered them with technological support as a form of professional development so that it can improve their performance at work and productivity as employees. The action of the Education Officials providing technological support to ECTs relates with the role of that Instructional Leaders as they are expected to promote and emphasise professional development, as the Education Officials trained the ECTs how to embed technology in their lessons to elevate the quality of teaching and learning. According to a study by Koehler and Mishra (2024), instructional leaders can promote professional development through helping and supporting the ECTs to develop the essential skills to effectively assimilate technology into their teaching practices which will promote technological pedagogical content knowledge. The technological support could be provided through training ECTs on how to use computers and incorporating technological tools into their lessons such watching YouTube videos on a projector, however most ECTs did not need this kind of support as they came to the workplace well equipped with utilising computer and technological skills.

8.5.6.4 Education Officials provided the Early Career Teachers with emotional support to function within the constraints of conscience and regulations of the Department of Education

The findings suggest that Education Officials work within the limitations of principles and/or protocols and are accountable to their managers for the state of their schools. Their appreciation for structures and regulations within the school holds them accountable for their actions. Hence it is their responsibility to provide the ECTs with emotional support so that they do not work with fatigued or burned out ECTs who will not be able to operate within the constraints of conscience and regulations. The Education Officials revealed that providing emotional support to ECTs was very vital because it boosted their confidence and helped them enjoy doing their work required by the district within the given time-frame. However, some Education Officials often failed to provide emotional support due to ECTs not reporting their problems to the Education Officials and it affected their productivity.

The Education Officials understood that providing ECTs with emotional support such as mutual relationships and informal conversation somehow amplified teamwork and emotional support from colleagues and leaders nurture trusting work relationships, allowing teachers to prosper and endure in the profession. The findings are consistent with prior research as Morettini et al. (2020) highlight the significance of "mutually emotional supportive, and trusting personal, professional, and peer relationships" in structuring teacher resilience against challenges and stress (p. 58). The Education Officials understand the ECTs sometimes experience emotional problems due to different issues such as work-related or even personal issues often triggered emotional issues for the ECTs and ended up causing the ECTs not to operate within the regulations of the supervisor. The findings relate to literature that effective emotional support includes active listening and adapting tactics to individual needs, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach (Baker et al., 2022). Emotional support could take place through Education Officials assisting the ECTs with matters that affected their emotional well-being because ECTs who have experienced challenges that directly tempered with their emotional well-being had a negative effect on their job performance, providing the ECTs with emotional support benefits the ECTs in various ways such as guiding them how to take control of situations that affects them emotionally.

The findings reveal that emotional support took place through engaging with the ECTs in informal conversation regarding challenges they experienced and exchanging advice. Furthermore, they provided emotional support with the ECTs through making them feel valued and recognised by complementing their work and allowing the ECTs to possess autonomy in most of the work they did. This finding aligns with the previous studies by Schaefer et al. (2020) indicate that participants who experienced belonging were able to institute strong relationships with various teams, including parents, staff, administrators, and students. The actions of Education Officials providing support to ECTs aligns with the theoretical expectation of Adult Learning Theory by Malcom Knowles tenet that outlines that adult learners possess intrinsic motivation. Emotional support from Education Officials and other educators can foster intrinsic motivation among adult learners, leading to increased autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2024, p.238).

It is evident that it was difficult to provide emotional support to ECTs in the selected school due to circumstances like the ECTs did not inform their Education Officials about their problems and it made it difficult for the Education Officials to provide them with support. Findings discusses that providing the ECTs with emotional support benefits the ECTs in different ways which ends up assisting the ECTs to gain resilience and be able to face challenges without giving up. The Education Officials understand that generated data suggested that the Education Official in the selected school offered emotional support to the ECTs, regardless of the ECTs problems or position. The participants revealed that they offered emotional support through helping to discipline learners for the ECTs, by also telling ECTs about their comparable incidents and most importantly the Educational Officials encouraged the ECTs to seek professional help and it assisted a lot.

8.5.7 Inspirational rationale as direction in Education Officials providing support to Early Career Teachers

This section examines the benefits that the ECTs derive from receiving support from the Education Officials. The Education Officials revealed that there are various and visible benefits that are enjoyed by the ECTs when they receive support such as they transition smoothly from being student to becoming full time teachers, additionally they get to be conversant about the subject that they teach which lastly builds their confidence at work. The sub-theme discussed below Multiple ingredients as a roadmap to success in supporting ECTs.

8.5.7.1 Multiple ingredients as a roadmap to success in supporting Early Career Teachers

The Education Officials understand that the rationale why ECTs needed support was because it boosted their confidence, improved their job satisfaction, enhanced their performance and served as a guide to making sure they adapted well at their new workplaces. The data generated revealed that there were various benefits that the ECTs derive from receiving support from Education Officials. The sub-headings found below are: (a) When the Early Career Teachers receive support from Education Officials it assisted with smooth transition from being pre-service teachers to being Teachers;(b) The Early Career Teachers pedagogical skills and subject knowledge amplified when they received support from the Education Officials; (c) The support that is received by Early Career Teachers from Education Officials bolstered the confidence of Early Career Teachers

8.5.7.1.1 When the Early Career Teachers receive support from Education Officials it assisted with smooth transition from being pre-service teachers to being Teachers

The Education Officials articulated that it was a difficult stage when an ECT transitions from being a student to being an Educator hence it was very pivotal for them to be provided with support where needed. The findings are in line with literature as Dreer-Goethe (2023) discusses that when a teacher receives support, their professional practice is greatly impacted because it influences the professional well-being. The findings suggested that when the ECTs received support from the Education Officials through inductions and trainings, it made it easier for the ECTs to adapt at the workplace without any hassles. They were able to grasp what was expected from them as educators. The Education Officials reflected that essential training could include being introduced to policies available and to be trained how to do their work effectively. The support provided to ECTs helped them transition well in the first years of their work. ECTs were guided on how to deal with issues that affected their work and helped them to easily fit in as new teachers in a school. The findings relate to literature that when the ECTs were provided with support, it assisted with the ECTs job satisfaction resulting to ECTs performing well through administrative support and appropriate working conditions (Gulab & Khokhar, 2024). The findings indicated that ECTs felt that it was easier for them to understand their role

as educators when they were supported, they got to understand how being a pre-service teacher and a teacher were two different things and how responsibilities were different.

The findings indicated that they learnt easier through support provided by the Education Officials. The finding aligns with the Adult Learning Theory tenet that adults bring experience and knowledge to the learning experience, to assist smooth transition, educators can apply the principles of andragogy, which emphasises the importance of acknowledging and leveraging adult learners' experience and knowledge (Gupta, 2024). Education Officials understand that when support is provided to the ECTs, it assists them to be able to shift easily from being students to being employees and makes it easier for them to adapt very fast at a workplace. The Education Officials articulated that they assisted the ECTs with work that they will do in most times such as lessons plans and curriculum coverage; this was to help them adapt and not feel as if they are being put under pressure with work especially the paperwork that comes with it. It is vividly clear that being an ECT is a challenge on its own so receiving support helps the ECTs to feel at ease and easily adapt at the work environment.

8.5.7.1.2 The Early Career Teachers pedagogical skills and subject knowledge amplified when they received support from the Education Officials

The Education Officials further mentioned that when the ECTs receive support, they become conversant with the subject that they teach. The findings align with the study that teachers were able to enhance their subject knowledge and teaching skills when encouraged and supported through regular professional development opportunities offered by the school and other organizations (Khatoon et al., 2021). The Education Officials articulated that when ECTs received training and sufficient support, it assisted them to become knowledgeable about their subject and most importantly they became experts which bolstered their confidence.

It was essential for the ECTs to receive training and support as they did not have any experience when they got to the field and they needed guidance to adapt and grasp the whole process as it aligns with Adult Learning Theory as Knowles (1980) tenet outlines that adult learners are self-directed learners, which explains that constant learning is not only connected to the learning process at school, but also to lifelong learning. In addition, according to Knowles (1980), adult education is well-defined as the procedure whereby persons no longer attend school and instead partake in informal learning activities to advance their knowledge, skills and abilities. The

ECTs are able to learn and effectively pass their knowledge to learners. It is evident that when the Education Officials offered support to the ECTs, it benefited the ECTs in a way that they became more knowledgeable about the subject that they are teaching. Evidence indicated that it did not only benefit the ECTs but other stakeholders such as learners because when the ECT were knowledgeable with the subject they deliver, then it improves the learner performance. The Education Officials understand that it was important to receive support from the education officials as it assisted the ECT to know the curriculum that they teach and basic knowledge of teaching and learning.

8.5.7.1.3 The support that is received by Early Career Teachers from Education Officials bolstered the confidence of Early Career Teachers

The Education Officials mentioned that providing the ECTs with support bolstered the ECTs confidence so much, and it was such a good thing as it positively impacted the ECTs. The Education Officials understand that when the ECT were provided with support they tended to gain confidence which positively affected their productivity. Mentoring has been reported to help with increasing the retention of the ECTs as it helps them improve job satisfaction and commitment (Auletto, 2021; Burger et al., 2021; Maready, 2021). It is evident that the significance that support brings to the ECT job satisfaction as it also built their confidence to a point that they became creative and innovative which had a positive impact on the learners. Ben-David and Berkovich (2021) emphasise that when the ECTs are provided with adequate support they benefit a lot as they gain professional growth that comprises discipline, content knowledge and pedagogy. The findings relate to the study that ECTs seemed to be satisfied and gain confidence when the school environment seemed to be friendly, harmless, and healthy with satisfactory resources and facilities such as well-equipped classrooms, the availability of adequate teaching materials, space and furniture availability, adequate library and computer labs to support the learning of students (Arainet al., 2019).

The findings indicated that it built their confidence in different areas such as in doing their job and also when they had gained confidence they became firm and very strict to a point that they knew how to deal with learners whom tempted teachers in ways that may lead to misconducts being committed by the ECTs. Socialisation where the mentors build a relationship with the ECTs helps to make the ECTs not to feel isolated, when they spend time with mentors they

learn ways how to instil discipline and how to deal with challenges that involves learners (Shanks et al., 2022). ECTs needed support because they sometimes did not know or understand how certain tasks were done, so they needed assistance to grasp important things which normally bolstered their confidence and assisted them in knowing how to do their work as expected which led to becoming best teachers. When the education officials offer the ECTs with educative mentoring, it assists with influencing the ECTs professional growth which builds their confidence and helps them to become active and participative teachers (Nolan & Molla, 2018). The actions of the ECTs confidence being bolstered because of receiving support aligns with the Adult Learning Theory tenet by Malcom Knowles (1980) that outlines that adult learners possess intrinsic motivation. It's crucial to remember that internal motivation thrives when adult learners feel valued, respected, and capable (Akiba et al., 2023). By incorporating interactive activities, it encourages ECTs to take control and become confident.

It is evident that the ECTs needed support because they were still new in the field and trying to navigate their way through, so it was easier for them to adapt when they receive support. It also helped to prevent ECTs making irreversible mistakes. ECTs settle and adapt quickly at a new workplace when they received efficient support. The support helped to transition easily as they were guided on how to do their work and most importantly it gave them the privilege of agency and autonomy. The findings indicated that it positively benefits the ECTs when provided with adequate support that helps the ECTs to be fully functional such as healthy environment with necessary teaching aids, facilities and training available to assist the ECT.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the emerging patterns from data analysis. The analysis has presented that ECTs and Education Officials have varied and diverse contrasting and at times insincere understanding and misunderstanding of various roles that they play as instructional leaders and adult learners. Education Officials' leadership practices reflected shades of practices from those that are dependable on Instructional Leaders to those that are not. In this regard, they reflected non-instructional leadership practices when it came to efficiently supporting and developing the ECTs and combating challenges faced by ECTs. However, they also displayed leadership practices that can be associated with instructional leadership and these include valuing others' views and developing ECTs professionally, supporting them emotionally, administratively and technologically. Lastly, their values have a bearing on their practices.

Educational Officials' leadership practices revealed that when support was provided to the ECTs there were various benefits that are enjoyed by the ECTs and were seen through their behaviour and approach. Having provided descriptive analysis of data generated, and begun a more theoretical analysis in Chapter Eight, on the next and final chapter I present the findings, and based on these findings, the model developed by the study and I present implications.

CHAPTER NINE

SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I focused on mapping the patterns that emerged from the analysis in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. In Chapter Nine, I draw conclusions from the findings that were presented in the preceding three chapters and discussed in Chapter Eight. Implications for various stakeholders are also drawn from the conclusions made. In discussing the conclusions, I use the research questions that underpinned this study to organise these conclusions. This is done in order to evaluate the extent to which the findings, and conclusions have addressed the research questions that guided the study. I begin by outlining the synthesis of the thesis.

9.2 The synthesis of the thesis

When I conducted the study, I sought to explore the nature of support that is provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials in the participating schools. The aim was to understand how the Education Officials provided support to the ECTs and what forms of support they used to provide support to the ECTs. This function is premised on the assumption that Education Officials, theoretically, adopted instructional leadership roles. As an ECT, my experience of not receiving adequate support in the first years of my teaching profession ignited an interest for me to conduct this study. I faced a number of challenges at the workplace and it made it difficult for me to do my job, even with the challenges I faced there was no support from Education Officials which caught my interest, hence the study was conducted. The first chapter briefly discussed these anecdotes as a way of introducing the study. Therefore, the first chapter introduces the study by providing a background of the problem, including those personal and professional experiences that triggered a desire in me to conduct the study. The research questions were also posed in that chapter.

The second chapter provided a detailed discussion of the literature reviewed. Both the local and international literature was reviewed on various elements of ECTs and why it is important to support them as they transition from being students in initial teacher training programmes to

being fully fledged teachers. The third chapter provided a detailed and comprehensive theoretical framework. Such a discussion included the origin of each theory and why each of them were deemed relevant for the study. The fourth chapter focused on issues of design and methodology, and why such a methodology was adopted. The philosophical grounding of both the methodology and methods was explained. Chapter Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven presented the first level analysis of findings from the perspectives of the three cases study sites. The eighth chapter discusses the findings. In that discussion, literature and theoretical framework is infused in the discussion in order to enhance the analysis. The ninth chapter brings the whole study to a close. Conclusions are made and implications for various stakeholders that participated in the study are provided.

9.3 Research questions restated

Main research question

- What kind of support is provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials in schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana district?

Sub-questions

- What are the fundamental values and beliefs that shape the support that is provided to ECTs by the Education Officials in schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana district?
- How can ECTs in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district be supported such that these values and beliefs can be achieved?
- Why do ECTs need support from the Education officials in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District?
- What are the challenges and opportunities that are associated with supporting the Early Career Teachers in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District?

9.4 Presentation and discussion of conclusions

The presentation and discussion of the conclusions are organised according to the main research question and four subsidiary questions as presented in the preceding section. What follows now is the main research question that has been posed as a heading.

9.4.1 What kind of support is provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials in schools in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district?

The findings have shown that some efforts were made by all relevant stakeholders, principals, Education Officials and members of the SMTs in the three schools. The findings have also shown that the support was not adequate in terms of inducting the ECTs into the school culture and also ensuring that teaching and learning support materials were made available to the ECTs. This kind of support was largely transactional in nature rather than organic and ensuring that the ECTs settled in the new environment as they were coming from initial training institutions and they had more to learn about real world of work. In short, the ECTs were introduced to staff, and shown various facilities that were available in the schools. Thereafter, they would be linked with the Subject Advisor and Departmental Heads who would assist them as they transition from being university students to being teachers who have to face all the challenges of the work environment on daily basis.

The point about the support that was provided being transactional and not organic, becomes even more visible when the ECTs raised concerns about the lack of resources and other teaching and learning support materials. One of the school principals (Mrs Khensani) argued that before the ECTs demand more resources, they should use the laboratories that are available in the school. Without my being too critical of the principal and management teams, it appears to me that the attitude is that of finger pointing rather than addressing the real bread and butter issues. For example, I did not hear the principal saying that despite the support and guidance that has been given to them (ECTs) about the use of the laboratory, they are not utilising the laboratory fully. One conclusion that I can make of this finding is that the kind of support that was provided was technical, entailing the ticking of boxes and not necessarily focusing on what the ECTs required. It is noted here that the kind of support that was provided covered four important aspects, namely, professional development support, administrative support, emotional support and technological support. A detailed discussion of these four aspects are addressed in Section 5.3.3 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.3 of Chapter Six, Section 7.3.3 of Chapter Seven, as well as, Section 8.5.6.1 of Chapter Eight. One critical aspect on which I can base my conclusion on these important issues is that, unlike what literature describes as

professional development, the kind of support was not continuous, and not based on the needs of the ECTs.

Building on from the ECTs' exposure to the Subject Advisors and Departmental Heads within the schools, some additional support would be provided in the form of exposing them to the workshops that the subject Advisors would invite them to, from time to time, and these workshops were organised by the provincial department of education. The other important point that these findings demonstrate is that the support provided to the ECTs was not properly organised, sustained and driven by the needs of the clients themselves (ECTs). There is very little in the findings that suggests that when the ECTs asked for help, they would get it. From time to time, their Departmental Heads would pop into their classrooms or staff rooms to check on them and ask for work such as lesson plans. Further details on this issue are provided in Section 5.3.2 of Chapter Five, and Section 6.3.2 of Chapter Six, as well as, Section 7.3.2 of Chapter Seven. Based on these findings, I can conclude that the kind of support that was provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials fell far too short of what they (ECTs) were expecting.

9.4.2 What are the fundamental values and beliefs that shape the support that is provided to Early Career Teachers by the Education Officials in schools in Thabo Mofutsanyana district?

The findings have shown that school leaders and Education Officials had clear understandings of what it means to support ECTs. Various testimonies from various participants have suggested that they understood what to do to support ECTs. It appears from the findings that the fundamental values underpinning the support was that learners should not fail, and fundamentals need to be made available to the ECTs, in the form of Annual Teaching Plans, how to do preparations, and also hope that with the little material support that is available, and not sufficient for all the learners, management would be seen as having done something. The practice of deploying ECTs to classes and subjects that they are unfamiliar with, baffles my mind. I may expect that when the school is facing difficulties finding a suitably qualified teacher, at least, the services of an experienced teacher would be sought rather than utilising the services of an ECT, who in real sense is a novice in the profession. This raises more questions than answers.

The findings have suggested that attempts were made by Education Officials to foster a sense of keeping the ECTs happy in the schools. For example, the findings have revealed that when the ECTs received emotional support from Education Officials through regular check-ins whereby the Education Officials scheduled meetings with ECTs to ask them about their challenges and well-being. It should also be noted that the findings have indicated that when the ECTs received support they got the feeling of a sense of belonging because they would be included in collaborative work where they were allowed to bring their own views and opinions, most importantly they learnt from the experienced teachers. In addition, the findings have indicated that when the ECTs received support from Education Officials, it led to all co-workers having good relationships that made ECTs feel welcome and as part of the team. This made the ECTs to feel happy because they experienced a healthy working environment concerning the relationship with the colleagues and this assisted the ECTs in their own personal growth as they learnt a lot from their fellow colleagues. It is unfortunate that Education Officials did not exploit these social and human capitals to the benefit of both the school and the ECTs. Further discussion on these important points can be found in Section 5.3.3 of Chapter Five, and Section 6.3.3 of Chapter Six, as well as, Section 7.3.3 of Chapter Seven. Therefore, based on the findings presented and discussed above, I can conclude that, perhaps, the values and beliefs behind the support could be that of maintaining the school's functionality, and not focusing on enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning for the ECTs.

9.4.3 How can Early Career Teachers in the Thabo Mofutsanyana district be supported such that these values and beliefs can be achieved?

The findings have shown that the support that was provided to the ECTs was underpinned more by values of transactional leadership which characterises what some scholars regard as managerialism. Such values assist schools as organisations to operate and be able to achieve its goals. Principles of instructional leadership practices as we have seen in this study can and actually assist the schools to go forward due to their focus on teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluating the work of teachers as followers (Hallinger & Hosseingholizadeh, 2020). The findings have also suggested that there are two ways in which ECTs can be supported. These are (a) Assisting the ECTs with Administrative support and (b) Providing emotional support to the ECTs.

In terms of administrative support, the findings have revealed that the ECTs received administrative support in various ways that assisted them to do their work effectively. Firstly, the ECTs received administrative support by giving them time to prepare for their lessons so that they can effectively deliver the lessons to the learners. They are given time to prepare for lessons through being allocated free periods daily. They were also assisted in preparing and properly organising their teaching files, and lesson plans. This kind of support is very important because it fosters quality education in the classrooms and assist the ECTs to become confident and proficient with the lessons that they teach. Additionally, the ECTs received administrative support through guiding the ECTs on how to formally and correctly set standardised summative tasks that are set after the learners and teachers are done with the term's curriculum. The ECTs are taught how to set standardised task such as examinations, tests and projects that contribute to the marks that determine whether the learner should pass or not, the main aim is to identify whether the learners understood the lesson or if they did not so that the ECTs can help the learners who seem to be left behind and still do not understand the lesson. More discussion on these issues can be found in Section 5.3.2 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.2 of Chapter Six, Section 7.3.2 of Chapter Seven, as well as, Section 8.5.3.1 of Chapter Eight.

In terms of emotional support that is received by the ECTs, the findings have shown that Education Officials regularly checked up on the ECTs to see if they were still doing well. The check-up took place through informal conversations that the ECTs have with the Education Officials. Moreover, the ECTs also received emotional support through Education Officials and other teachers building mutual relationships with the ECTs which allowed them to share their experiences, challenges and stress caused by their work. This allowed them to offer and exchange advices that assisted the ECTs to deal with the challenges that they encounter at workplace which puts the ECTs at ease because they got to understand that whatever challenges they faced could be avoided or resolved in certain ways. It is noteworthy that when the ECTs received support they were always or mostly available when they were asked to remain behind to be supported. The ECTs were readily available and made time for these support sessions due to their determination towards their work. These findings underscore the importance of relationships rather than cold administrative posture that was more interested in compliance with the rules and procedures, and less with the creation of an environment that is healthy, and conducive to effective teaching and learning as advocated in instructional leadership models

(Hallinger & Murphy, 2005). Drawing from these and other findings expressed in the preceding sections, I can conclude that the Education Officials paid less attention on building and keeping good human relations; this is despite the positive efficacies demonstrated in the findings.

9.4.4 Why do ECTs need support from the Education officials in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District?

The findings have indicated why Early Career Teachers need support from the Education Officials. Research has always indicated that professional teachers want to grow in their field and improve their craft, in this case, effective teaching and learning situation. Given their default positions, ECTs are new to the profession and are building their careers. Therefore, it stands to reason that they need to transition smoothly from being pre-service teachers to being experienced teachers. For that to happen, the services of the Education Officials are critical. Secondly, as part of professional growth, ECTs need to be knowledgeable and confident about the subject that they teach. For this to happen, they need to sharpen their skills and knowledge of their respective subjects (Sims & Jerrim, 2020). The findings have indicated that the Education Officials have clearly articulated a view that it was a difficult stage when an ECT transitions from being a student to being a teacher who is proficient in the craft of teaching. In that regard, Dreer-Goethe (2023) has suggested that when a teacher receives support their professional practice is greatly impacted because it influences the professional well-being. The findings suggested that when the ECTs received support from the Education Officials through inductions and trainings, it made it easier for the ECTs to adapt at the workplace without any hassles. They were able to grasp what was expected from them as educators. The Education Officials reflected that essential training could include being introduced to policies available and to be trained how to do their work effectively.

The findings have also indicated that when the ECTs receive support, they become more conversant with the subject that they teach. The Education Officials articulated that when the ECTs received training and sufficient support, it assisted them to become knowledgeable about their subject and most importantly they became experts which bolstered their confidence. These findings are also supported by existing scholarship in this area (Clarke et al., 2013; Green et al., 2020; Khatoon et al., 2021; Langdon & Ward, 2015; Moor et al., 2005). These pieces of literature suggest that teachers are able to enhance their subject knowledge and teaching skills

when encouraged and supported through regular professional development opportunities offered by the school and other organisations. Section 5.3.3 of Chapter Five, Section 6.3.3 of Chapter Six, Section 7.3.3 of Chapter Seven, as well as, Section 8.5.6.1 of Chapter Eight. Drawing from the finding, it can be concluded that Education Officials are clearly aware of the support that the ECTs require in order for them to acclimatise, settle and grow in the profession. However, the notion of continuous professional development remains largely, a lip service.

9.4.5 What are the challenges and opportunities that are associated with supporting the Early Career Teachers in the Thabo Mofutsanyana District?

The findings have shown that there are many challenges that the ECTs faced. Some are associated with general dictatorial tendencies of the government departments, whereby, they usually consult less instead of more consultations (Burger et al., 2021). One of the challenges is that there are too many changes and curriculum reforms that are instituted time and again. These reforms are not necessarily directed at ECTs, but to everybody in the education system. Such impositions become difficult for the ECTs because, they have to adjust many things simultaneously. The other challenge is that ECTs are abused by their own colleagues who give them additional tasks without requisite training, and preparations. Overcrowding becomes an additional burden that they have to contend with.

There are opportunities that they can exploit to assist them to grow. There is evidence in the findings that suggests that when the ECTs were provided with support, it assisted with the ECTs job satisfaction resulting to ECTs performing well through administrative support and appropriate working conditions (Gulab & Khokhar, 2024). The findings indicated that ECTs felt that it was easier for them to understand their role as educators when they were supported; they got to understand how being a pre-service teacher and a teacher were two different things and how responsibilities were different. The findings have also indicated that when they were supported, they were happy and they even volunteered to use their own personal funds to support the acquisition of teaching and learning support materials. It appears to me that when opportunities opened up, particularly, in terms of relaxed and friendly relationships, such opportunities were not taken up by any of the two stakeholders (ECTs and Education Officials).

9.5 Implications of the findings and conclusions

There are numerous implications that can be made from the findings and conclusions of this study. The conclusions drawn from the findings around the values and beliefs that drive the kind of support that was provided to the ECTs, suggest that the values and beliefs behind the support could be that of maintaining the schools' functionality, and not focusing on enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning for the ECTs. Given that all the participants understood how and why ECTs had to be supported, one implication is the need for Education Officials in the study, to reconsider their current attitudes and values that clearly foreground technical issues of the school's functionality and the proverbial ticking of boxes. The focus should be on what is good for the school and what is good for the teachers; in this case, Early Career Teachers.

The findings have also shown that the Education Officials know what the ECTs need, and they support them in those four main areas; namely, professional development support, administrative support, emotional support and technological support. The conclusion is that Education Officials are clearly aware of the support that the ECTs require in order for them to acclimatise, settle and grow in the profession. However, the notion of continuous professional development remains largely, a lip service. Like the first conclusion and implication stated above, all stakeholders (ECTs, Education Officials and management) need to pay special focus on continuous professional development. That is the only way that sustainability can be realised.

The findings have shown that the ECTs become happy and committed to their professional work when they feel welcome and supported. The notion of positive human relationships as part of teaching and learning environment becomes important. It is concerning that the participants in this study, particularly, the principals, departmental heads and Education Officials do not acknowledge this powerful human capital that can assist in the growth of ECTs. Building and keeping good human relations is critically important if constructive human interactions have to occur, and ECTs can learn as adult learners. In addition to the implications expressed above, the issue of continuous professional development is critically important, and Education Officials need to pay particular attention to this issue. In that way, they might be able to focus on individual needs and circumstances of ECTs.

The importance of the findings is that it has shown that when the ECTs are not provided with sufficient support, it affects the whole school and various stakeholders involved negatively. It is therefore important to prioritise the support of the ECTs to mitigate the negative impacts that results from insufficient training. Importantly, the findings clearly divulged different forms of support that can be provided to the ECTs and the benefits of the various forms of support which further supports the issue of ECTs needing training when they get to schools. Additionally, the findings flagged the factors that influence and hinder the Education Officials from providing the ECTs with support, which was vital because when the Education Officials and the ECTs are well-informed about these factors then it will mitigate strained relationships between the two parties.

9.6 Education Officials as Instructional Leaders supporting Early Career Teachers in schools: An emerging model

This section attempts to provide an understanding of the manner in which Education Officials support the ECTs in the participating schools. The findings have indicated how this happens and I am trying to portray this in a graphic way, by developing a model that captures and simplifies it. This model attempts to show how the ECTs experience this process of receiving support from the Education Officials. The challenges that the ECTs encounter in their work context is depicted. The challenges encountered by the ECTs in schools have been discussed in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight. What has been analysed is the stumbling block between the ECTs and teaching and learning that need to take place in the school which are the challenges they encounter through the lack of support that they receive from Education Officials. For reasons that I will explain, I argue that this stumbling block between the ECT and teaching and learning, I will name it the wilderness ground in the model. I begin by sketching the model of the importance of providing the ECTs with support in schools by explaining the importance of understanding the importance of the wilderness ground and how various challenges in this ground impact the ECTs' well-being and job performance. Hence, the need of Education Officials to adequately provide the support to the ECTs.

9.6.1 'Matsoho a hlatswana' (People help each other by supporting each other)

In describing the wilderness ground and wild activities that take place therein, I have entitled, '*Matsoho a hlatswana*' which translate literally that people help each other by supporting each other; no one can do things alone but they need support from others. It simply means that people have to provide each other with support in order to succeed. No one can be absolutely conversant with something without receiving support from other people. The professional life of ECTs is not easy at the beginning stages of their career as it seems. The ECTs often face various challenges that affect them in different ways. The impact of what they encounter within this period and how they deal with it, can determine what will or will not happen in their profession at school. In order to understand the ECTs challenges in their profession and why they face challenges refer to Figure 8 titled *Matsoho a hlatswana*.

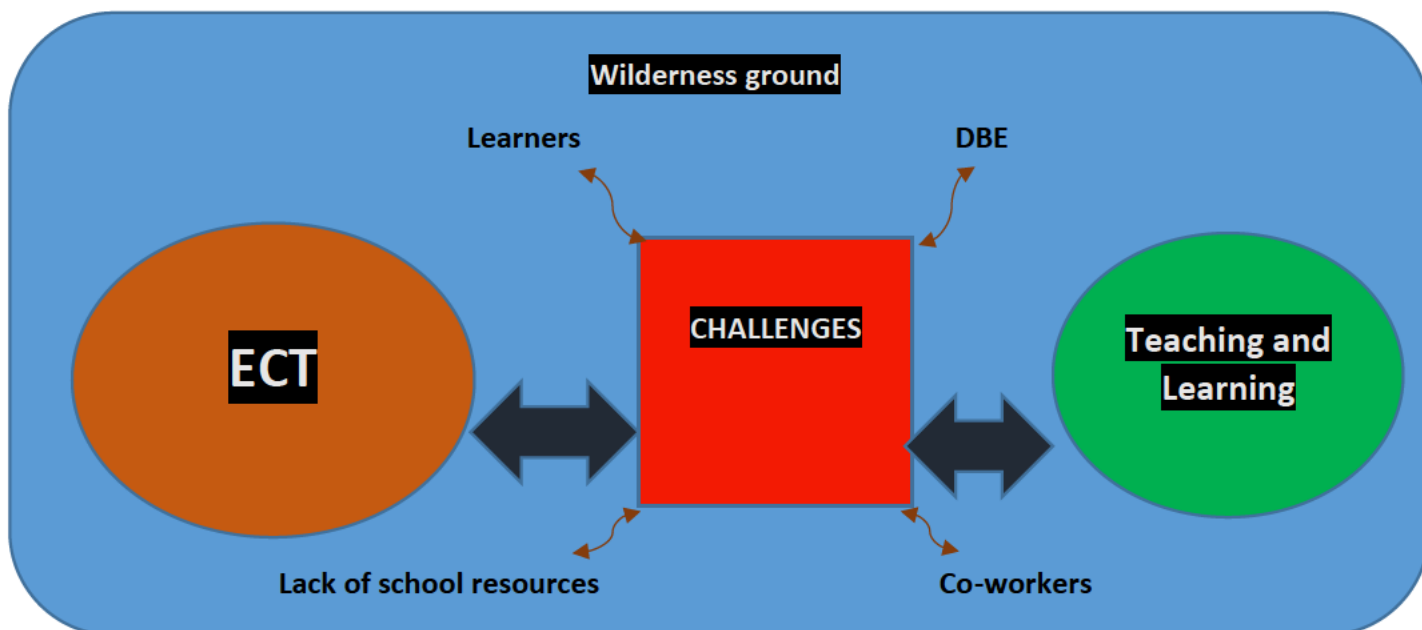


Figure 8. *Matsoho a hlatswana.* The challenges experienced by the ECT on the school grounds

The big blue rounded rectangle represents the wilderness ground which is the school premises encompassing the ECTs and teaching and learning that is taking place. The smaller orange ellipse on the left represents the ECTs and the smaller green ellipse on the right represents teaching and learning. The red square on the middle in between both the ECTs and teaching and learning pointing both directions represents the challenges that are experienced by the ECTs in schools. When you look at Figure 8, you see that the challenges are in-between the ECTs and teaching and learning which represents that challenges are a stumbling block that hinder the ECTs to effectively engage in teaching and learning. I call this a wilderness ground because the ECTs come to this space without sufficient experience, and a lot of things take place in this area that impacts the ECTs teaching learning in the schools. As a result, ECTs are perceived as fully equipped and trained when they begin their teaching profession. Sadly, that is not the case because the reality they face is way different from their theoretical knowledge that they learned at their teaching programs such as University. Due to various challenges they face when they get to the wilderness ground, they end up becoming frustrated and clueless of what is really expected of them upon their commencement in the teaching profession. It is important to note that I am not insinuating that every ECT's experience on the ground is negative. I am focusing on what challenges are faced by ECTs when they do not receive support from the Education Officials.

The ECTs arrive at work with their own plan of what kind of teachers they want to be and in most cases they want to be good teachers that are committed and competent. But in the school environment space they experience various challenges that end up affecting and impacting the type of teachers they become. They firstly experience a reality that they were not prepared for in University. There are different factors that contribute to challenges that are faced by the ECTs as mentioned on Figure 8, namely, the learners, the Department of Basic Education (DBE), the lack of resources and co-workers. For example, one participant shared that the ECTs were not prepared to work with overcrowded classes where they get to experience disruptive learners who normally make it hard for the ECTs to deliver their lessons. Disruptive learners make it hard for the ECTs to effectively manage the classroom and makes the ECTs look like they do not know what they are doing.

Secondly, the participants shared that the Department of Basic Education made it difficult for them to do their work effectively because they are expected to do many things but with insufficient time given to them. The participants revealed that there is a lot of paperwork that the ECTs had to do and were expected to teach and assess which was putting them under pressure due to limited time. The DBE further made it difficult for the ECTs because they interfered with the programmes that were organised by schools on how they would teach during school holidays. The DBE evidently also contributed to the challenges that were faced by the ECT. Moreover, the participants revealed that it was hard for the ECTs to do their instruction work of teaching and learning with minimal or no resources at all. It affected how they did their work and their job performance. The participants revealed that they were expected to improvise which was very daunting for the ECTs. Lastly, as much as the ECTs wanted to work hard at the right pace, the other experienced teachers would hinder this through making sure that they gave the ECTs their own work to do for them and this was straining for the ECTs and caused the ECTs to be frustrated and burnt-out as revealed by the participants in the study. As mentioned that that ECTs come to the wilderness ground with little or minimal experience, and had to learn a lot of new things and totally need support to learn and get the required experience to be effective teachers with a good job performance.

9.7 Conclusion

This chapter signals the conclusion of the entire study on the nature of support provided to the ECTs by the Education Officials. It has also highlighted some of the lessons learnt during this

study, and provided implications. Reaching this point has been extensive and straining journey. I had to build relationships with the participants throughout the year so that I could clearly understand their experiences and views. These participants included the Subject Advisors, Principals, Deputy Principals, Departmental Heads, Senior Teacher and the ECTs. The study concluded that the nature of support provided to the ECT by the Education Officials at the case schools is varied, inadequate, and insufficient. I believe that the study is contributing to the field of educational leadership and management in so far as Education Officials' understandings of the value of their role as instructional leaders in providing the ECT with support in the schools. The study has revealed the contradiction between findings and existing literature regarding the nature of support that is really being provided to ECTs by Education Officials in schools. This study suggests that the Education Officials have to support ECTs even if they received training in their respective training programs because the reality they face in the school environment is often different from what they were taught. What this study has unveiled, which is fascinating, is the fact that all the participants demonstrated profound understanding of what it means to support the ECTs and why it is important to do so. Interestingly, the understanding and actions did not match. Closely linked to this view is the finding that the conception of professional development was technical and lacked the continuous elements and the need to always keep abreast of the developments in teaching and learning environment. The findings contributes to the new knowledge through unveiling various factors that discourage and encourage the Education Officials from offering the ECTs with support. Moreover, the findings made it clear that certain factors that cause the Education Officials to not support the ECTs are beyond their control. The findings further demonstrated that it is pivotal to train the Education Officials as mentors before allocating them with ECTs to mentor to mitigate strained relationships and incompetent mentorship taking place.

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ANNEXURE A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Enquiries: M.Z. Thango
Ref: Research Permission: M. Mohanoe
Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: MZ.Thango@fseducation.gov.za



[REDACTED]
Bluegumbosch
Phuthadijhaba
[REDACTED]

Dear Ms. M. Mohanoe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE FREE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: THABO MOFUTSANYANA DISTRICT

This letter serves to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research in the Free State Department of Education within the Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District. The details in relation to your research project with the University of KwaZulu Natal are as follows:

Topic: Exploring the nature of support that is provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials in schools.

- 1. List of schools involved:** Kgola Thuto Senior Secondary School, Seolong Agricultural and Hotel School and Bolata Secondary School.
- 2. Target Population:** Three PL 1 educators, three senior educators, three Departmental Heads, three Deputy Principals and three Principals at the selected schools.
- 3. Period of research:** From the second week of February 2024 until 30 September 2024. Please note that the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year. Should you fall behind your schedule by three months to complete your research project in the approved period, you will need to apply for an extension. The researcher is expected to request permission from the school principals to conduct research at schools.
- 4. The approval is subject to the following conditions:**
 - 4.1** The collection of data should not interfere with the normal tuition time or teaching process.
 - 4.2** A bound copy of the research document should be submitted to the Free State Department of Education, Room 101, 1st Floor, Thuto House, St. Andrew Street, Bloemfontein or can be emailed to the above-mentioned email address.
 - 4.3** You will be expected, on completion of your research study to make a presentation to the relevant stakeholders in the Department.
 - 4.4** The ethics documents must be adhered to in the discourse of your study in our department.
- 5. Please note that costs relating to all the conditions mentioned above are your own responsibility.**

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Mr. MZAMO-W. JACOBS
DIRECTOR: QUALITY ASSURANCE, M&E AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

DATE: 18/01/2024

ANNEXURE B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS

Gatekeeper Permission (School Principals)

██████████

Bluegumbosch

Phuthaditjhaba

9870

██████████

28/02/2024

The Principal

Dear Sir/ Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am **MOHANOE MASECHABA** a PhD (Educational, Leadership, Management, and Policy) student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Your school has been identified as one of the schools that can contribute in data generation towards my research study. You are hereby notified that permission from Free State Department of Basic Education to conduct research at your school has also been granted (copy attached). The topic of my study is: **The nature of support that is provided to Early Career Teachers by Education Officials in schools.**

The study is intended to explore the nature of support that is provided to Early Career Teachers (ECT) by the Education Officials in schools. Given that ECTs experience various challenges in their early years of the profession, it is vital for them to receive support in order for them to adapt effectively at a workplace and develop professionally. Given that schools have become more unpredictable, complex, dynamic and fluid in nature, it is common for ECTs to encounter

multiple dilemmas in pursuit of adapting in the new work environment. The study is also intended at unearthing the potential consequences of not supporting ECTs in schools as it mentioned that ECTs who did not receive adequate support from mentors (Education Officials) often feel isolated (Brindley & Parker, 2010). The study further seeks to uncover the factors that hinder or facilitate support that is provided by Education Officials to ECTs. As revealed by Ainsworth and Oldfield (2019) that when the ECTs are cooperative and supportive, it helps to facilitate the Education Officials' efforts to assist them with curriculum and other needs. Corroborated by Hulme and Wood (2022) who further explain that underprepared ECTs are more likely to require a high level of development and support and this hinders the support provided by Education Officials to ECTs. The study seeks to solicit the experience of ECTs in schools. Furthermore, the study also seeks to explore why ECTs need support from their Education Officials. Given the postulations, the study is vital in the field educational leadership. You are thus selected to participate in this research project since your experience, knowledge and track record as an early educator/senior educator/departmental head/ deputy principal and/or principal proves that you can contribute in expanding the knowledge related to the nature of support that is provided to ECTs by Education Officials.

Framed with the Instructional Leadership Theory and Adult Learning Theory, they study further seeks to explore on how the support of Education Officials is significant in the professional development of ECTs. The study will thereof encourage school stakeholders to offer various forms of support to ECTs as a way to help them adapt in their workplace, to help them do their work effectively and for them to develop professionally in different areas such as utilising digital technology and instructional support. As a result, the support given to ECTs can bring a significant change in the whole school environment. In this study, the Instructional Leadership Theory will thus allow the Education Officials to provide different kinds of support through leadership as they will act as instructional leaders in this study which will benefit the ECTs a lot as it may help improve their productivity and help them get a sense of belonging at the workplace which would improve their attitude and self-confidence at a workplace. As supported by Day and Sammons (2013), IL entails Education Officials supporting, leading, directing and having a shared vision with the teachers. With the Adult Learning Theory, it will enable the ECTs to learn new skills and strategies from the support that they will be receiving in schools. There are various purposes of why adults want to learn such as to fill in an educational gap, for their own professional and personal development and for them to attain

work related skills (Ngozwana, 2020). This in turn, can help schools in creating a healthy working environment for everyone which will contribute to the academic performance of learners.

To this end, your permission is hereby requested to conduct *semi – structured interviews* with you as a seasoned school principal. The length of the interviews will not exceed 80 minutes and will be recorded using a smart phone or a voice recorder. Furthermore, to enhance this study, certain documents will be reviewed in this multiple case study vis-à-vis to the school principals' support provided to ECTs in your school. Documents that will be reviewed include *log book entries; Professional developments workshop invitations and programmes; educators' disciplinary records; as well as school visit tool by the circuit manager and other departmental officials*. These documents should not be older than three years and copies will be requested at the end of the interview. Of particular importance your identity will be protected since pseudonyms will be used to disguise your identity. Also, school's name will be erased on the reviewed documents.

Data generated from this study will be used to write a research report for my thesis and an electronic copy will be widely available as a PhD Theses are put in the University of KwaZulu-Natal Research Space database. Information regarding your personal details and school's particulars will be kept confidential and will only be known to the researcher and the supervisor. In ensuring confidentiality, the following will be strictly adhered to:

- Your identity will not be divulged during and after the study has been concluded.
- Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and the school.
- Interviews will be audio recorder using a smart phone or a voice recorder.
- Your participation is voluntary.
- Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- You will have access to all transcript and have a right to change, revise, and review (member checking).
- Copies of the reviewed documents will be requested and school particulars be erased.
- No financial benefits you will accrue due to your participation in the study.
- An electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to you once the study is concluded.
- Interviews will be scheduled at your convenient time.
- Copies/ evidence of support / training that took place. *log book entries; Professional developments workshop invitations and programmes; minutes of the meetings; as well*

as school visit tool by the circuit manager and other departmental officials will be requested with the school's name being erased.

Please read through this information sheet and then append your signature on the Declaration of Consent form supplied. Further queries concerning this research can be forwarded to:

Prof TT Bhengu (Supervisor)

UKZN School of Education

Ellen Kuzwayo Building

Edgewood Campus

Tel: (031) 260 3524

Cell: [REDACTED]

Email: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za

Or

Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC)

Govani Mbeki Centre,

UKZN Westville Campus

Tel: (031) 260 7291

Fax: (031) 260 2384

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thank you

Your name and surname

ANNEXURE C: PARTICIPANT DECLARATION LETTER

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY

DECLARATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

I, _____ (full name of the participant) hereby confirm that I have fully read the content and the conditions contained in PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH for the PhD study to be conducted by Mohanoe Masechaba. To this effect, I *agree/ do not agree* (circle the appropriate one) to participate in the study.

Furthermore, I am aware that:

- My identity will not be divulged during and after the study has been concluded.
- Pseudonyms will be used to protect my identity and the school.
- Interviews will be audio recorder using a smart phone or a voice recorder.
- My participation is voluntary.
- My responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- I will have access to all transcript and have a right to change, revise, and review transcripts (member checking).
- Copies of the reviewed documents will be requested and school particulars be erased.
- No financial benefits I will accrue due to my participation in the study.
- An electronic copy of the thesis will be sent to you once the study is concluded.
- Interviews will be scheduled at your convenient time.
- Copies/ evidence of support / training that took place. *log book entries; Professional developments workshop invitations and programmes; minutes of the meetings; as well as school visit tool by the circuit manager and other departmental officials* will be requested with the school's name being erased.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXURE D: CONSENT FORM

I (Full name of participant)
hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this letter and the nature of the research project.

I consent to:

(Indicate by making a cross (X) as your response)

	Yes	No
PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH		
HAVE MY INTERVIEWS RECORDED		

I also understand that I am at liberty to withdraw at any time from the project should I wish to do so.

Signature of participant: ----- Date-----

Thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

Masechaba Mohanoe

Cell No. [REDACTED]; email: [REDACTED]

ANNEXURE E: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

1. What is your own understanding of educator support?
2. What is your experience with /providing support to ECTs?
3. What kind of support is provided to Early Career Teachers (ECTs)? In the following forms?
 - Professional support**
 - Administrative support**
 - **Emotional support**
 - Technological support**
4. What times did you feel like you did not provide support to ECTs and what made you feel that way? How does it affect ECTs when they do not receive support?
5. What are the specific support programs and policies provided by Education Officials to support ECTs?
6. What are the benefits of ECTs receiving support from the Education Officials?
7. What are the challenges associated with providing support to ECTs?
8. What factors hinder/limit the support provided to ECTs?
9. What factors facilitate/promote the support provided to ECTs?
10. What are the underlying beliefs and values of supporting ECTs?
11. How can ECTs be supported such that these values and beliefs can be achieved?
12. Why do ECTs need support from the Education officials (stakeholders)?

ANNEXURE F: INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW WITH THE EARLY CAREER TEACHERS

1. What is your own understanding of educator support?
2. What is your experience with being provided with support as an ECT?
3. What kind of support is provided to Early Career Teachers (ECTs)? In the following forms?

-Professional support (Inductions and workshops)

-Administrative support

- Emotional support

How do you receive it?

The importance of receiving it?

-Technological support

How do you receive it?

Importance of receiving it?

4. What are the times you felt like support was lacking from Education Official? What made you feel that way? How did not receiving support affect you as an ECT?
5. What are the specific support programs and policies provided by Education Officials to support ECTs?
6. What are the benefits of ECTs receiving support from the Education Officials?
7. What are the challenges associated with providing support to ECTs?
8. What factors hinder/limit the support provided to ECTs?
9. What factors facilitate/promote the support provided to ECTs?
10. Why do ECTs need support from the Education officials (stakeholders)?

ANNEXURE G: TURNITIN REPORT

Assignment Inbox x Turnitin - Originality Report - M x +

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