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**研究生学位论文书**

Thesis Proposal of Postgraduate Dissertation

论文题目Thesis Title：**Study on the Implementation of TVET Policy in Lesotho within the New Qualifications Framework**

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研究方向Research Direction：**Comparative Education**

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开题日期Date：年year **2023** 月month **10** 日day **31**

## Title Page

Study on the Implementation of TVET Policy in Lesotho within the New Qualifications Framework

## Abstract

The Kingdom of Lesotho is undertaking a significant overhaul of the education sector. This is propelled by a bid by the Government to ensure education returns to being a source of human capital relevant to the market needs of the economy of Lesotho as mandated by the medium-term National Strategic Development Plan. This policy direction is also amplified by rampant joblessness, obsolete curriculum across education sectors, and a labour market saturated with social science and humanities degrees at the starvation of the productive sectors of the economy. To this end, an introduction of a redesigned policy for qualifications and quality assurance has been adopted as a key steppingstone to reforming the education sector in Lesotho. This research focuses on key friction points in this reform process where technical and vocational education has been targeted as a key employment creator but has been left behind in terms of policy and system reform. Therefore, the study looks at TVET implementation policy in Lesotho through historical reviews, analysis of current policy contents, objectives, results, challenges, and development plans. In the brief literature reviewed, the study finds that vocational education sector in Lesotho is marred with low enrolment rates, poor curriculum, poorly trained instructors as well as depleted resources and infrastructure, much like in the rest of Africa. The crux of the friction is that, despite these challenges, the new national qualifications framework still explicitly bestows quality assurance on the overladen technical and vocational education department. This, while it has taken over that function from other education sectors in excerption of basic education. In this study, we therefore apply current and emerging theoretical and analytical methods, in principle employing Cultural Political Economy- CPE concepts relevant to system and policy analysis to investigate the challenges of implementing technical and vocational education in Lesotho within the bounds and provisions of the new national qualifications framework.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# Research Background

## Introduction

This study is chiefly concerned with technical and vocational education policy implementation in Lesotho. The implementation is studied considering the new Lesotho qualifications and quality reform policy which significantly affects delivery of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Lesotho (MoET, 2019). The focus on TVET policy implementation is partly influenced by policy pronouncements in Lesotho that echoed improvement of technical and vocational education and amongst other objectives to alleviate poverty by training youth and adults in technical and employable industry skills (Lekhetho, 2018; MoET, 2016). Unemployment and unavailability of practical skills in Lesotho is a major burden that is plagued the government over the years. Technical and vocational education is therefore viewed as a significant and accessible means of imparting relevant industrial skills to create jobs and produce a skilled labor force capable of achieving the medium term National Strategic Development Plan – NSDP (MoET, 2016).

But the crux of this study and incentive in reviewing technical and vocational education policy implementation is brought by two major factors. Firstly, it’s the technical and vocational education policy in Lesotho on its own. Since independence, the Government of Lesotho has had one Cabinet-approved technical and vocational education policy. The policy came with the enactment of the Technical and Vocational Training Act of 1984, implemented in 1987 (ILO, 2020; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). Efforts to reform this policy have taken a significantly long period, since 2005 under the assistance of the World Bank Group. To this day, Lesotho still operates under the old policy document and some drafts that have not seen any parliament reading. The challenges of this old policy are extensively reviewed in the Education Sector Plan, 2016 -2026.

Secondly, the Ministry of Education and Training has undertaken an overhaul of the education sector three time since the policy was passed.

First was the Education Act of 1995, which was repealed in 2010 with Education Act of 2010 (Education Act (Act No.3 of 2010), 2010). In 2016, the government redrew the education sector plan and brought in the Education Sector Plan 2016 -2026, the current and key guiding document for the department. Later in 2020, the Government once again began developing an amendment act to the education basic law. Therefore, the education act has also been amended with the Education (Amendment) Act of 2021. The culmination of changes affecting the TVET policy came with the introduction of a new and encompassing policy that has been written to be transformative in nature. This is the Lesotho Qualifications Framework (LQF) in 2019 (MoET, 2019). This framework is implemented through the Lesotho Qualifications and Quality Council (LQQC). LQQC is in principle established to overhaul the entire education sector qualifications framework and quality assurance.

Therefore, this policy becomes the second and major significant factor in the study of the implementation of TVET policy in that, the policy explicitly points to the TVET department, which still operates under a 1984 Act, to undertake quality assurance in the sector. More startling is that, except basic education, TVET is another sector that the council has resolved to delegate quality assurance while it has assumed such responsibilities in other education sectors. This development and given literature reviewed on the entire TVET system in Lesotho, presents major issues for review of the sector policy implementation. These include issues of institutional capacity, curriculum development, instructors’ pedagogy, student achievements and outcomes, inspections and monitoring and evaluation challenges among others (MoET, 2016; Thetsane et al., 2020).

To carry out this research, the study therefore takes a deep dive into the theoretical underpinnings of technical and vocational education, literature surrounding technical and vocational education, a look into the origins of technical and vocational education in the region and in Lesotho in particular, TVET development in Lesotho prior to the founding of Basotho nation in 1824 through independence and up to present day (Aerni-Flessner, 2018), review of the education basic laws and policies in Lesotho. The study culminates the literature review with introduction of TVET Policy in Lesotho.

Lesotho TVET Policy review looks at the policy background, main objectives, content of the policy, measures undertaken, a snapshot of results and therefore the current and future development plans. In investigation, the study employs current, literature-proposed analytical frameworks to probe TVET policy implementation through interviews with actors within the technical and vocational education network in Lesotho. This is carried out to provide concreate policy development recommendations rooted in scientific research. This, while also contributing to the current need of theorizing technical and vocational education in Africa in general (McGrath, Powell, et al., 2020) as pointed out by current leading scholars in technical and vocational education see McGrath, Ramsarup, et al., (2020).

To begin this research, the study briefly looks into current views in the broader technical and vocational education in development. It is a necessary introductory review that highlights the salient features of TVET and the opinions driving policy formulation across regions and therefore insights into the thinking of local policy makers and current researchers.

## Current Views in Technical and Vocational Education and Development

Technical Vocational Education and Trading (TVET) is at the forefront of research in recent years, this is because it is one of the most dependable job creators for students who could neither attain nor complete university-level education (Alla-Mensah & McGrath, 2021a). As a result, most countries including Lesotho are focused on implementing and revamping their policy so that it responds to challenges of employment creation and other issues surrounding the socio-economic status of people in the nation of concern.

But even as a subject area, current reviews and studies indicate that TVET has a set of challenges that are emanating from the very institution of that education system. This is because TVET is mostly applied to accommodate students who cannot complete university education, either due to poor exit results from basic education or incomplete basic education (Aldossari, 2020). As a result, there are some challenges surrounding the value of TVET and the underhandedness that surrounds its policy implementation. Researchers have noted that most policies in education that are aimed at improving TVET are failing mainly because of the uptake of students and the lack of infrastructure support for TVET institutions see (Bennell, 2022; Karlidag-Dennis et al., 2019). There are varying arguments and contrasting motives on why TVET is not fully supported in most countries. Most of these reasons as evidenced in literature surround the lack of funds in education departments due to competing needs. Funds that are aimed at supporting and achieving sufficient policy implementation. But it is apparent most researchers note that this is mainly because of the lack of focus and lack of political will to improve TVET; its objectives, and the key role it plays in the broader education system as alluded by most education departments’ policy directives.

Therefore, considering new students who are graduating and unable to secure employment in the job market, it has become necessary for governments to focus on trying to accommodate students who cannot pass through from their basic education up to higher education to complete studies in universities (Unterhalter, 2020). Therefore, TVET becomes an open opportunity for students to pursue their vocations to attain fulfilling livelihoods even though they could not complete their university education. Moreover, in some studies, see Okolie et al., (2020) and Sakamoto, (2019), researchers have proven that TVET can absorb students who would otherwise become a social burden in an economy without basic production skills. In effect, studies have focused on analysing this issue in the education domain by putting a lens on TVET policy implementation (Ngcwangu, 2015). This is particularly the case in Africa where studies continue to show that students who acquire skills that can be applied immediately in the industry become employable (Ngware et al., 2022a) and are also able to create jobs even if they did not complete and acquire university degrees and diplomas. This is mainly made possible due to increasing harmonization of vocational education qualifications in the region (Liang et al., 2022). Nonetheless, formal education is in accordance with researchers referenced above, a process that such students would have been heavily challenged to complete through general education streams.

But TVET is taking a more prominent, transformed role in other developed education systems. This has come as practical industry-relevant skills become highly in demand and university degree curricula struggle to catch up with rapid changes in more digitized, knowledge-based, and tech-driven industries (Chohan & Hu, 2022). This transformation is further evidenced through increasing demand of digitized technical skills required by industries that are inherently shaped by developments in big data analysis, machine learning, mobile applications that require coding skills, and digital diagnostic tools in production industries including in agriculture; skills that online TVET providers are spearheading.

## Background of TVET in Lesotho

Technical and vocational education has been existing before the formation of the Basotho nation itself in 1824 as Aerni-Flessner, (2018) eloquently elaborated on Lesotho’s history as well as on classical and current reviews by (Akoojee, Gewer, & McGrath, 2005; Moffett, 2020). For brevity, technical and vocational education in Lesotho can be traced and classified in these distinct eras for review: The Iron Smelting Period, New Basotho Nation Period, Western Colonial Period, Post-Independence period, and the Modern Day Lesotho TVET System. In summary of these periods, it is observed that TVET in a broad sense of vocational education was introduced first by the western colonialists when they needed a workforce to build new churches, new schools, and other community tasks that required specialized skills that Basotho did not possess at the time. The above, notwithstanding the vocational training that had been embedded in culture as reviewed in literature. We discuss the origins of vocational education in the region where today’s Lesotho is found in detail in the literature review section.

Today’s Technical and Vocational Education (TVE), referred to officially in Lesotho as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (MoET, 2016) is embedded in the national strategic development plan which is the implementation document of the national vision 2020 (Lekhetho, 2018). The national vision 2020 puts the focus on skills development for economic growth (MoET, 2019). The strategy submits that Lesotho should exploit the demographic bonus of its large young labour force, and that the Ministry of Education and training should raise skills development and specific focus on improving relevance and applicability of skills (MoET, 2019; Thetsane et al., 2020); and expansion and upgrading of technical and vocational education institutions to support growth sectors.

Currently, the TVET sector is characterized by demand which exits available supply (Lekhetho, 2018; MoET, 2016) even with current, low enrolment rates compared to the proportion of students who drop out of basic education and secondary education. There are indeed inadequate training places in the technical and vocational training institutions for the bulk of learners from basic education (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). UNESCO further shows data indicators that show slight increases in the vocational education enrolment in there years leading to 2012, 2013, to 2014 at 3296, 3303, and 4223, respectively. Current (2020) enrolments across all sub-sectors of TVET; Artisans at Junior Secondary, Senior Secondary, at other TVET institutions and in Higher Education TVET institutions stand at 5995, 5957, and 2986 as shown by the current Education Sector Plan 2016-2026 (MoET, 2016). A bold estimation of enrolment in TVET in the sector plan for the same three tranches by 2025 is estimated at 17, 871 for junior school, 9429 for senior secondary, and 3423 for higher education.

The quality of technical and vocational education in the government is expected to undergo a complete overhaul of the legislative regulatory and institutional structures and processes to make both the management and course offerings demand-driven in a manner that is responsible for the needs and requirements of both the labour market and those of the local communities. Much like the deeper background and historical origins of vocational education in Lesotho, it is discussed in greater detail in the Literature review, highlighting current policy documents and their objectives and critical challenges facing the sector today.

## Research Introduction

This study primarily seeks to analyse the TVET system and policy implementation in Lesotho in the face of the newly introduced qualifications framework that has been supported and promoted by UNESCO. To undertake the study of TVET in Lesotho with full comprehension, it was necessary to provide a comprehensive background of TVET and the socio-political environments that surround the development of TVET globally and in Lesotho, and to also provide sufficient context on how such interact with the entire education system within Lesotho.

In this section, the study provides a precise introduction of what would be included within this research and what would be studied to scientifically arrive at the main challenges that TVET policy implementation stands to face in Lesotho in the context of the new regulatory processes that have been introduced in the country to improve the quality of education.

Therefore, to arrive at a precise discussion about TVET itself, and the introduction of the research into TVET in Lesotho, this research will cover several key areas concerning not only TVET but the education system in Lesotho. The study will cover TVET policy introduction in the country, vocational education development history, education basic law, and the development of the regulatory framework in the education system of Lesotho covering TVET up to the modern-day when an overhaul, qualifications framework was introduced in line with the national strategic development plan in Lesotho. First, it is prudent to define concepts and define TVET and look at what will be included and considered part of TVET research for this study given what has been studied before by other researchers and what the understanding of TVET covers in Lesotho in accordance with the regulatory provisions and the basic text law of education in Lesotho.

### Definition of Terms

Technical and vocational education and training as a term comprise various aspects of the subjects. It was first officiated as a term, technical and vocational education training at the World Congress of TVET and abbreviated as such in 1999 in Seoul Republic of Korea (Malechwanzi, 2022). Various other terms have been used to describe elements of the field comprising TVET (Bakali & Memon, 2021). These include Apprenticeship Training, Vocational Education, Technical Education, Technical-Vocational Education (TVE), Occupational Education (OE), Vocational Educational and Training (VET), Professional and Vocational Education (PVE), Career and Technical Education (CTE), Workforce Education (WE), and Workplace Education (WE).

Malechwanzi, (2020) further denotes concurs at the time the term TVET was recognized, it needed to be broad enough to incorporate other themes that had been loosely used to describe educational and training activities which included workforce education, technical and vocational education (USAID, 2021). That congress’s decision to officiate the term TVET resulted in the development of the UNESCO-UNEVOC At the international Centre for technical and vocational education and training in Bonn, Germany.

On the one hand technical and vocational education and training are understood as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services, and livelihoods (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2021; USAID, 2021). UNESCO feather defines TVET as part of lifelong learning, it defines that it can take place at secondary postsecondary and Teixeira levels and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development which may lead to qualifications. It also highlights that it also includes a wide range of skills development and opportunities tuned to national and local contests. UNESCO also further denotes that TVET involves learning to learn, the development of literacy numeracy skills, transversal skills, and citizenship skills. Post-compulsory other definitions include post-compulsory education and training, excluding degrees on higher-level programs that are delivered by further education institutions which mainly provide people with occupational or work-related knowledge and skills. This also includes career and technical education which is normally used in the United States; and further education and training which is normally applied in the United Kingdom and South Africa; vocational and technical education and training which is mostly applied in Southeast Asia; vocational education and training; and vocational and technical education which is normally used as a term in Australia.

Other researchers tend to describe it in similar terms as UNESCO does. For instance, Wahba, (2013) cited in van der Bijl & Oosthuizen, (2019) also defines TVET As non-academic technical education and practical training that develops the skills and knowledge of apprentices, which is learners of trades or crafts who are working in different sectors of industry and trainees, or students trained in different TVET institutions. The author further describes it as that part of the education system which provides courses and training programs related to employment with a view to enable the transition from secondary education to work for young trainees or students which is a social objective and apply the labour market with competent apprentice which is an economic objective.

Interestingly the author further describes TVET as a comprehensive term that refers to aspects of the educational process that involve in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life, (Wahba, 2013). TVET has also been defined as education or training process where it involves, in addition to general education the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills relating to occupations in various Of economic life and social life, which comprises formal (organized programs as part of the school system) and non-formal (organized classes outside the school system) approaches, see (Ngware et al., 2022a; Schendel et al., 2020).

A more elaborate definition of TVET meaning is provided by TVETJournal, (2021). It breaks the meaning based on its full term which comprises the acronym TVET. First, it describes *‘Technical*’ as subject matters that are technical in nature, relating to hardware and software including troubleshooting practices and engineering processes. *‘Vocational’* is described as occupational employment, often referring to first-hand skills within professional trades. TVETJournal further describes *‘Education’* in the term, TVET as formal education, studying in high school and including postsecondary education, such as colleges, Polytechnic, and universities. They then describe *‘Training’* as informal education also called lifelong learning and continuing education often used for initiatives of re-skilling or up-skilling company staff or the wider workforce. These definitions lead to a description and definition of TVET according to the publication as Education or training, which is technically nature and aims to provide skills for a person related to a profession for that person to get a job and provide a livelihood (TVETJournal, 2021).

Other researchers defined TVET based on either one of the Key areas of research that involves pedagogy or one of the elements in the Acronym TVET. An example of this comes from Njenga, (2022). In a study of professional competencies and the continuing professional development needs of technical, vocational education and training TVET teachers in Kenya, the author describes TVET from a pedagogy standpoint in which the definition assets TVET as teacher competence, as the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable effective performance of TVET teacher roles in the content which the teacher plays the role. This view is a pedagogical definition of TVET in the context of teaching. It is however a bit far from the base definition of TVET from the rest of the authors reviewed.

Critical to this study are the definitions provided by the newly Lesotho Qualifications and Quality Council (LQQC), the new qualifications and quality assurance authority in Lesotho on the study has sought to analyse policy implementation based upon. In its glossary of terms in the newly introduced Lesotho qualifications framework (MoET, 2019). The Council provides a three-tiered definition broken into technical skills, technical studies, and technical training. It defines technical skills as operational skills necessary to perform certain work and learning activities. The Council further defines technical studies as the studies of technologies-related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills in secondary schools. It further describes technical training as training designed to prepare middle-level personnel such as technicians and middle management for employment in trade, industry and commerce and includes theoretical, scientific, and technical components and related skill training. In summary, the Council defines Technical and Vocational Education and Training as a means of education designed mainly to prepare students for direct entry into a particular occupation or trade (or class of occupations or trades). As part of the definition, the Council further complements the definition asserting that successful completion of such programs normally leads to labour market-relevant vocational qualification recognized by the competent authorities in the country in which it is obtained.

But the African Development Bank has long shunned many of these limited definitions of TVET (AfDB, 2006) and further attributed them to the crisis that Africa went through in the 80s when the serious economic and financial crisis the continent faced at the time generated far-reaching changes in the production system and the labour market and contributed to increasing graduate unemployment. The AfDB While adopting UNESCO and ILO TVET definitions, also decried that traditionally so-called intellectual work is often contrasted with manual work. Thus, it says there would be, on the one hand, white-collar of these professions and, on the other, traders and technicians etc. The organization highlights that nowadays such a distinction is no longer possible even though society continues to undervalue and minimize technical education. consequently, pupils facing difficulties in their studies are those usually sent to vocational streams. Within such contexts, the organization explained that TVET systems found themselves unable to provide the skills required by the business world. Facing increasing costs within the context of structural adjustment programs, TVET systems drastic budgetary reductions. Lastly, it also highlights those inadequate investments in TVET contributed to its deterioration and reduced its effectiveness.

The themes around the definition of TVET centre around the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupants in various sectors of economic and social life, skills that are meant to lead to occupations and employment equipping participants with self-help skills at both formal and non-formal, public and private institutions. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, TVET in Lesotho will be studied and referred to as such.

In defining the education system, most researchers tend to describe it either from a distinguishing perspective of formal education and informal, (UNESCO, 2015) or described from a view of private and public education. Therefore, in view of the deep intersections between public and private education, formal and non-formal education, in this study, TVET System will be defined as all processes, actors and legal apparatus designed to guide and support the implementation of TVET. While TVET Policy will then refer to basic law texts, and other government documents of record related to the regulation, provisioning, and implementation of TVET in Lesotho.

## Research Content

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to aid policymakers in the Ministry of Education in responding to the challenges of implementing technical and vocational education. This thesis is primarily oriented toward practice as opposed to a theory and concepts-building research, it is also meant to contribute to the body of knowledge in vocational education for scholars and other professionals engaged in the field of vocational education.Therefore, the research design is geared towards our system policymakers in understanding recommendations made to make changes to the policy regarding technical and vocational education. This is also to highlight protruding issues that require special attention in other forms technical and vocational education to succeed in Lesotho.

Specifically, this study will aid in identifying friction points within the technical and vocational education system and policy implementation in Lesotho. Visits to help identify areas that policymakers and other stakeholders may have overlooked when designing they knew list Soto qualifications and quality policy in relation to technical and vocational education. This is more likely to have happened as it has been proven through previous studies that among all sectors of education in various countries, technical and vocational education receives much less attention from policymakers, budgeting, management, and even in research it has been proven that most researchers focus on other sectors of education whether in basic education or higher education. Therefore, it is highly likely that the impediments that policy implementation may face.

If the envisaged friction points were identified and the issues of investigation and indicated this phenomenon of overlooked problem areas would fit within a well-documented trend where technical and vocational education becomes one of the last pieces that are brought in together in policy design and formulation. Therefore, this thesis will help in putting in a more deepened emphasis and focus on all the elements that make up the technical and vocational education landscape in Lesotho. The aim is to guide policy implementation and guide it back towards best practices that have been identified to provide and more meaningful contribution towards harmonizing Lesotho’s technical and vocational education strategies.

### Problem Statement

The eye-birds view of the problem in TVET in Lesotho is about the enrolment rates that are too low given the amount of out of school children and unemployment rate and the quality of graduates within the little that is enrolled annually. The nexus between LQF and old TVET policy with previously documented capacity issues within TVD department presents both a new opportunity and recent problems that need a deep review. For further clarity and after a review of official foments of record, The current LQQC policy still explicitly delegates the responsibility of quality assurance and review of institutional providers squarely to TVD.

This is despite long-diagnosed issues of capacity within the department, poor instructor pedagogy training, and funding issues. How LQQC will maintain quality assurance given these existing challenges, and the old outdated TVET curriculum and policy is a question that needs to be deeply probed. It is a problem of responsibility sharing and a function of actors within the network of TVET provision in Lesotho. This is a nexus point of friction that needs a comprehensive investigation.

### Key Questions

1. **What are the main challenges facing the TVET system in Lesotho?**

With this question, we are studying and asking questions on a system-wide basis on technical and vocational education and training in Lesotho. Therefore, the items here would be measuring not only challenges from the basic text law of education, but the items will be measuring issues arising from the entire ecosystem of vocational education within Lesotho. That means questions will involve stakeholders’ view of the TVET system and its responsiveness.

These questions will also be targeted at practitioners, policymakers, and lawmakers to understand not only from the TVET Institutions perspective and its immediate partner, the Ministry of Education and Training. Rather, the questions will cut across all players to uncover issues that may not necessarily be related to regulations, but to the entire sector and its actors, therefore entire system.

1. **What are the main problems with the current TVET policy in Lesotho?**

With the view that technical and vocational education policy in Lesotho represents some of the most archaic regulatory frameworks in technical and vocational education in the region, this section of the study will be prudent in uncovering the issues that underline implementation of TVET due to this policy. The items in this question, will be solely devoted to understanding problems with the basic law implementing technical and vocational education in Lesotho. The main items in this section of the study will seek to understand problems that are caused largely by the shortcomings of the current policy and the related basic law.

This section of the inquiry seeks to understand to what degree the current policy can be attributed to, and isolated as the main issue with the state of technical and vocational education in Lesotho. In this regard, these items will be directed at policy specialists, researchers, lawmakers as well as leaders of technical and vocational education institutions.

1. **How does the new Lesotho Qualifications Framework affect the implementation of TVET?**

The pinnacle of this study is on the intersection of both the new Lesotho qualifications framework policy, whose implanting body is also responsible for quality assurance, the education basic law and the technical and vocational education policy. A particular focus that prompts a deeper investigation in this section and cornerstone to this study is a reference within the newly redesigned Lesotho Qualifications Framework policy document. The explicit reference within this policy document directs that quality assurance within technical and vocational education will remain chiefly the responsibility of Technical and Vocational Department within the Ministry of Education and Training.

Therefore, the questions in this section seek to understand from industry practitioners and policy makers, how the intersections of these policy documents which are in force will affect implementation of technical and vocational education. This section of inquiry is asked with the benefit of literature and hindsight, they have proven that the Technical and Vocational Department within the Ministry of Education and Training is largely incapacitated to a degree that it cannot sufficiently monitor programs quality and curriculum development to the best practices, in public TVET institutions that are managed and or exist in principle because of support from the Government of Lesotho. A key aspect that would improve technical and vocational education in Lesotho based on research.

This intersection of policies as highlighted in ‘Problem Statement’, brings an important juncture where it does not become clear how Lesotho Qualifications Framework would achieve, beyond paper requirements of quality assurance; how the framework will essentially improve the quality of TVET, when the department that is entrusted to guide policy implementation of vocational education within the Ministry is already seemingly overwhelmed in output, and the framework does not in as explicit terms as it bestowed quality assistance to TVD, reference to its capacity building and revamping to meet the new quality assurance standards. This is a particularly important inquiry within this study since private education in Lesotho has propped up recently, and up with it is the private provision of technical and vocational education and wish such developments, even greater supervision to improve quality and access.

This section of the study will be directed at practitioners; heads of TVET institutions, and policymakers within the Ministry of Education as well as lawmakers who were engaged in the development of current education policies in the country.

### Research Significance and Novelty

#### Theoretical Significance

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on what is known about TVET in Africa, specifically contributing to the analytical framework for assessment of changes in systems and policies. It further contributes significantly to general studies on technical and vocational education chiefly because even frontier researchers have not reached a consensus on a on models that can sufficiently produce comparable results, or models that are best known for improved implementation of technical and vocational education policies in each country. That is, beyond rudimentary principles in vocational education.

It is further worth noting that this research will be among quite few independent studies not only in Lesotho but within Southern Africa as a whole. Therefore, by undertaking analysis that involves systems and actor networks, these being applied in technical and vocational education, the research would be contributing meaningfully on theoretical foundations that can be applied by other researchers and policy specialists to further understand and analyse the varying dimensions in technical and vocational education in an African socio-economic context.

Moreover, this study is also replicating UNESCO’s previous analytical methods in a study that was undertaken in 2013 in a sector-wide assessment of technical and vocational education in Southern Africa. Therefore, by applying the same technique within a new context and with changes in basic education law, this would also help provide conceptual framework on whether the such techniques can still be applied to understand technical and vocational education systems today or whether new systems are needed to further gauge TVET development and policy implementation in this region, particularly given highly varied contexts, categorization and terminology in different countries even within Southern Africa.

#### Practical Significance

Lesotho has just implemented Education (Amendment) Act 2021. Apart from expected issues that address basic education, this act paves way for a wave of other legislative exercises and identical subordinate laws that would seek to implement the new Lesotho qualifications and quality assurance policy. This qualifications framework is operating within other policies of which some are over 30 years old with no amendments. Lesotho is notorious for elongated policy drafts. Therefore, it is crucial for policy makers to understand the interactions between the two policies, and how the implementation of the new qualifications framework will impact delivery of technical and vocational education, given that TVET in Lesotho would for some period, operate under old policy documents. Even with a new policy, there would still be a significant need to understand how the new qualifications framework would in practice, affect the operations of TVET practitioners, development of curriculum and quality assurance of programs in the sector.

There is also a practical, macroeconomic significance of this study to Lesotho public policymakers. Lesotho is one of the countries experiencing high rates of unemployment among young people. As a result, political leaders, legislators, and line Ministry public policymakers are under immense pressure to explore other avenues of up-skilling youth and other vulnerable members of the society for better chances at employment and entrepreneurship. To achieve this mission, technical and vocational education immediately becomes central catching system for wider youth population and retuned mine workers from South Africa to expand access to education and skills development. However, technical, and vocational education is one of the most struggling sectors in Lesotho’s education system, coupled with least focus of research.

TVET sector in Lesotho has some of the lowest enrolment volumes by students. The quality of programs within this sector varies highly in quality and depth, especially with programs that are independently developed by private providers. Therefore, the quality of vocational education is understandably questionable for some providers and minimum, current research is being done here. This is to a degree that some programs in TVET colleges, institutions and skills training centres have been discontinued. This is due to either program quality issues, capacity and or dwindling numbers of students enrolling in such programs. This is an indicator of decaying quality of education and obsolete curriculum in relation to the market needs, issues that require a significant, deep-dive review of the system.

### Key Research Novelty/ Innovation

With the strong assertion by leading vocational education domain researchers that current literature and research on technical and vocational education in Africa is characterised by weak theoretical foundations, it was prudent that this study employs current analysis methods. Therefore, this research makes use of one of the emerging study perspectives on TVET in Africa- *‘Policy, Systems, and Institutions,’* and utilizes one of the preferred theoretical methods in the field for the analysis of data - *Cultural Political Economy* (CPE). CPE is used in conjunction with analytical methods that were used in a cleverly designed study which with much relevance to the current study, also probed policy reforms in a similar domain of TVET. That study incorporates concepts in policy analysis that have been highly referenced for their clarity in policy analysis. These CPE concepts incorporate policy *Variation, Selection,* and *Retention* in analysis of themes that emerge from data. The instruments used, however, come from a previous study that covered the subject of this current study (Lesotho TVET). All these are discussed in detail in ‘Research Methods.’ Therefore, in summary, the key innovation in this study is the incorporation of new and emerging methods that have not been applied before to undertake policy analysis in an African TVET system. This has the potential to produce innovative policy recommendations founded on strong theoretical and analytical background, something that at this present stage can only be attributable to this very research.

### Research Objectives

The introduction of the new national qualifications framework in Lesotho in 2019 presented an inflection point in the education sector. The framework sought to transform the education sector including technical and vocational education while relying on old sector policy and systems regarding TVET. This is evidenced in the policy document on bestowing quality assurance for TVET on the Technical and Vocational Department (TVD) whereas the LQF has fully assumed this responsibility in other sectors. As introduced earlier in the study, the already overburdened department fuses in a key hurdle that mandates an investigation and review into the implementation process given historical facts and trends concerning TVET in Lesotho. In summary, this research is therefore primarily dealing with system and policy issues surrounding technical and vocational education implementation in Lesotho. Therefore, the objective of this study is to perform an investigation that culminates with results that can be interpreted theoretically and for policy implementation recommendations, and therefore for systemwide implementation issues within the sector. In this regard, the trajectory of this study and the research methods employed would attempt to uncover hidden, underlying issues, and issues that have not been necessarily pointed out by other studies conducted in the same context. Specifically, this research will attempt to achieve the following before the end of the program:

1. Conduct comprehensive, systematic literature review of issues that surround Lesotho’s technical and vocational education system through analysis of policy documents, published national, and international reports, published journals and other meta data related to the subject.
2. Conduct an in-depth investigation with practitioners, policymakers, legislators, technicians and leaders of vocational education institutions, all this to arrive at a common theme that can be analysed and put together to give it meaning for implementation.
3. The research also intends to utilize some of the analytical frameworks and instruments from UNESCO to replicate a study that the organization last conducted in 2013 which sought to understand the state of technical and vocational education in southern Africa. This replica study would be conducted to update the database of UNESCO regarding progress made in improving technical and vocational education in Lesotho.
4. The study would also attempt to combine the findings from the systematic literature review and the in-depth investigations conducted through interviews to have a comparative view of issues. This would be undertaken to understand whether the literature surrounding technical and vocational education in Lesotho and the primary data analysis would have greater harmony or significant variance; this, to establish whether further studies are required in the same context or modified studies would be recommended in a different context.
5. Lastly, this study would attempt to utilize all the results and interpretations given to such to produce a list of recommendations for policymakers in Lesotho to make meaningful decisions in their attempt to improve technical and vocational education in Lesotho. The recommendations would explicitly state systemwide issues that were uncovered through this research, as well as policy issues that were uncovered through analysis and investigation of current policy documents that continue to guide implementation of technical and vocational education in the country. The study would also in the same vein, make a pronouncement of the recommended study areas for further research by other scholars.

## Arrangement of Sections

**CHAPTER ONE**

Chapter one introduces the research background. Thies sub section then reviews the current views about the topic and provides a brief background of vocational education in Lesotho. The section that follows introduces the actual research in question which then details main definitions in this research. Research content plays a key role this chapter as it states some of the key sections that outlines research. This subsection introduces the main purpose of this study, sets of problems to be tackled and introduces key questions, research significance and the objectives of this research.

**CHAPTER TWO**

This is the literature review section of this research. The section opens with an introduction that cuts straight into current discussions concerning vocational education in the geographical area of study. A sub-section highlighting main principles and pedagogy concepts ensues, it unfolds the main understandings about vocational research and best practices. Then this section is followed by a deep-down literature review of the most forefront issues in technical and vocational education. It then delves into the theoretical foundations of vocations education highlighting some of the known theories and lack of such. The final part of theories looks at traditional, but current arguments in subject analysis, that is, in vocational education policy reform and implementation analysis.

The next main section in literature review focuses on policy documents review regarding technical and vocational education in Lesotho. This section starts with a brief country profile of Lesotho, the study country, and a more detailed background of vocational education in the region. Then this sub-section introduces the education system of Lesotho, the basic law of education, technical and vocational education system, and then the chapter is closed with the introduction of a key policy document that necessitated this research, the national qualifications framework. It is in this subsection that key provisions of this policy documents that triggered interest into the investigation of vocational education policy implementation in Lesotho are shared.

**CHAPTER THREE**

This is where research methods employed in this study are introduced. The section opens with a research design statement which reiterate that this study is deductive in nature and would employ qualitative techniques in analysis. Then the following section introduces the analytical approaches, which provide the theoretical underpinnings of the analysis methods and justifies their use by referencing identical uses and it’s support in literature. The ensuing sub-section gets deeper into the analytical methods highlighting the types of analysis that would be undertaken. Other sections in this chapter touch on research techniques to be employed, instruments, data sources and design of interview questions. The section closes with a rational stating some of the known theoretical justifications for selected research methods and techniques.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

Chapter 4 is not written yet. This will be the main section where results from the investigations that are going to be conducted will be reported. The section currently simply introduces the intended trajectory and schedule of the study.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

This chapter is not written and has not been included in the table of contents at this stage. This is because it is the last chapter that will be written at the end of this research. It is a chapter reserved for discussion of findings in the study. It will also be reserved for recommendations based on the results and discussion of the entire research. It also entails the main limitations of this study and the conclusions that have been made in this research.

# CHAPTER TWO

# Literature Review

## Introduction

Extensive reviews on Technical and vocational education reveal that it is one of the least researched areas within the education sector. Co-authored by nine other leading scholars in TVET globally, the foremost, and authoritative literature on Technical and Vocational Education in Africa comes from Simon McGrath and colleagues, prominent researchers in Vocational Education (McGrath, Ramsarup, et al., 2020). The authors in their literature review of theories that have long underpinned studies on vocational education and training for African development make some piercing criticism of the previous studies that attempted to theorize vocational education in Africa. Mcgraph et al., (2020) argue that the majority of literature on African vocational education and training (VET) is grounded in an inadequate theorization of both VET and development and therefore they fail to fully account for political economy histories (Jessop, 2010; Jessop & Sum, 2022) emerging out of colonial regimes which the authors rightly point out that such regimes are still largely responsible for what is currently present and absent in vocational education policies and debates. Therefore, the verdict is that such previous research is of limited help in driving forward discussions around strategies needed to tackle accelerating challenges faced see (Bennell, 2021; Ekuma, 2019; Matli & Ngoepe, 2019).

In this light, African studies on VET can be categorized into three phases of theory and literature that have informed studies on vocational education across Africa (Alla-Mensah & McGrath, 2021b; McGrath, Powell, et al., 2020). First are the past, colonial era, and independence literature, then emerging theories in literature and the new theories that seek to draw upon these. In the first phase is literature that focused heavily on ‘*The Economics of training’* (McGrath, Ramsarup, et al., 2020; Paxton, 2019) which could further be classified into two broad traditions; these are on rate of return analyses and random, controlled trials; and the ‘Practice-focused research’ which the authors argue that little of it has found its way into mainstream research.

The second phase comprises emergent theories and literature, see (McGrath, Powell, et al., 2020) which include studies on ‘Policy, Systems and Institutions’ ‘Vocational Knowledge’ the ‘Critical Capabilities Approach’ which receives much attention from the researchers for its focus on the individual capabilities and the acknowledgement that it has also been Africa-focused though drawing from wider capabilities approach.

According to Mcgrath et al., (2020), innovative approaches include literature that emphasize on ‘*VET for community development’* and ‘*Skills for Sustainable Development*’. The process of theorizing VET for Africa’s sustainable development is in progress and this current research is contributing to this process by utilizing key aspects of the emergent theories as classified by McGraph et al., (2020) on Policy, Systems, and Institutions. The authors, Simon McGrath and the nine other colleagues, including other scholars, see (Avis et al., 2021) dominant in technical and vocational education agree that this literature focus is vital in emphasizing the ways that systems evolve historically and reflect the complexities of national political and economic configurations in ways that reflect the foundational influence of Carl Marx on this approach.

With the above, the study produces literature and theoretical evidence that consensus regarding some of the core theories surrounding vocational education and particularly in Africa is still developing. Nonetheless, and more broadly, researchers have reached some level of consensus on a few aspects of vocational education system starting with the very definition. The term Technical and Vocational Education coined in 1999 at a sector conference South Korea to be TVET (Alla-Mensah & McGrath, 2021a; Unterhalter, 2020). To provide a comprehensive analysis of literature we will look at the concepts and principles that surround TVET and education, we discuss frontier issues about vocational education, then we look at theoretical foundations in technical and vocational education, and we end the subsection by reviewing the forefront arguments on the models and best practices in TVET.

In the second section of the literature looks at the education system in Lesotho, we review the basic law of education in Lesotho, and then we review TVET in Lesotho and related policy documents. The final part of this literature review takes a deeper look at the cornerstone of this study which seeks to probe changes to technical and vocational education in Lesotho brought by the new Lesotho qualifications framework under the new organization, Lesotho quality and qualifications council (MoET, 2016, 2019). Therefore, the Nexus of our literature will look at the intersection of both current policy documents implementing technical and vocational education in Lesotho and the new qualifications framework introduced as a means of transforming education in the country.

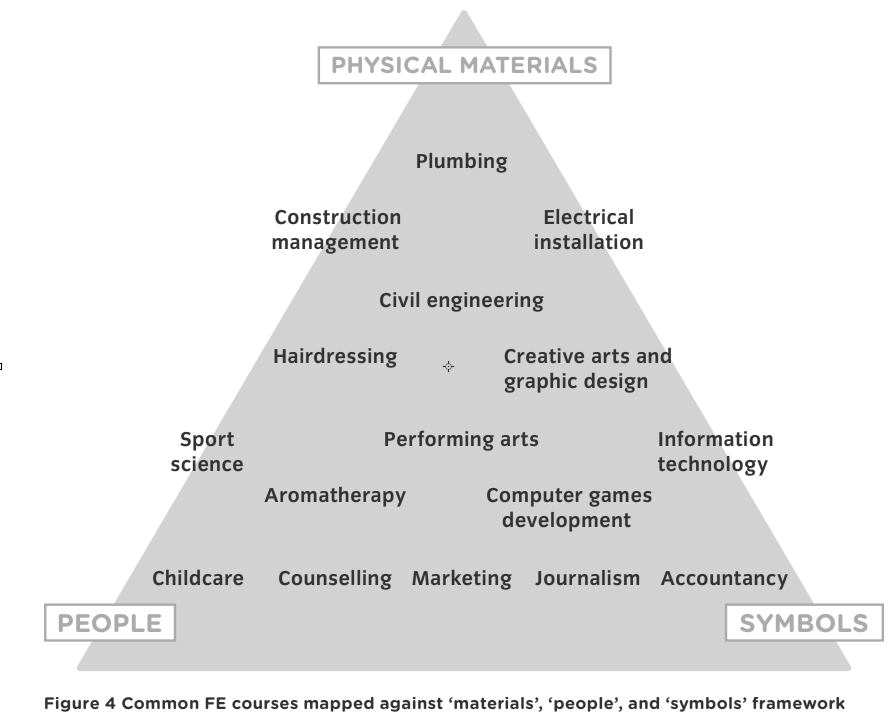
## TVET Principles and Pedagogy Concepts

Technical and vocational education is a less researched sector of the entire education body of knowledge (Schröder, 2019). In fact, most researchers allude to the fact that arguments regarding theoretical foundations surrounding TVET are still weak and become, conflicting. Debates are still rife on the best models and the best principles that guide TVET (Kanwar et al., 2019). However, pioneering research from scholars such as Mcgraph (2012, 2021) has provided some of the earliest and most trusted categorization and conceptual frameworks for understanding technical and vocational education today. Alla-Mensah & McGrath, (2021a) and Powell & McGrath, (2014) agree that TVET can be understood from the perspective of objectives and outcomes.

In this regard, McDonald et al., (2010), long asserted that each country and economic situation is different and highlighted that it is important to search for and identify defining apply what can be considered the basic principles of an effective technical and vocational education and training system see (Keller, 1968; Macdonald et al., 2010; Okolie et al., 2021). They essentially argue that modern and responsive TVET systems have established principles that consider current and expected social-economic conditions including Labour market demand (Card et al., 2010; Clarke et al., 2021), the needs of both the formal and informal sector in relation to employment (Alla-Mensah & McGrath, 2021a), and the professional capacity of TVET teachers and instructors (Okolie et al., 2020, 2021). McDonald et al., (2010) also earlier alluded that TVET must address the specific employment needs of both the rural and the urban and it must therefore consider the belief systems, the cultural norms and customs which would be different from region to region and other issues including social dimensions and gender and the climatic variations between regions within a country.

This perspective of McDonald and others on the principles of TVET emphasizes on the application and practice itself. This study also proposes several principles which could be understood within specific dimensions as concepts that must be applied and understood in order truly study TVET principles not only from a pedagogy view see (Okolie et al., 2021), but also from a whole system perspective (OECD, 2021). The early decade scholars who conceptualized these principles including (Macdonald et al., 2010; UNESCO, 2015), detailed the important principles inherent in a successful TVET system. McDonald et al., (2010) list six such principles and argues as follows; for TVET to be effective, it must be relevant to the labour market; that is, it must meet employers’ needs and expectations. This is required from new graduate employees who have undertaken TVET. The authors further detail access for trainees, quality of delivery, standardization, inclusion of soft skills, and secure and uninterrupted funding.

Other scholars discuss technical and vocational education from a perspective of outcomes (Lucas et al., 2012a; Okolie et al., 2021). This therefore build on a foundation through which TVET can be described conceptually. While studying vocational pedagogy, Lucas et al., (2012) Describe vocational education pedagogy as the science, art and craft of teaching that prepares people for certain kinds of working lives. The authors also accept that it is critically shaped by the decisions which are taken by teachers, that is their practices, see (van der Zanden et al., 2020) and both high-level strategies, and day-to-day, in-the-moment ones and the value which informed the interactions with students, therefore learning in TVET is summed up in three dimensions of people materials and symbols.



**Fig 2.1 Vocational Education learning dimensions Lucas et al., (2015)**

The authors therefore describe vocational pedagogy as the tactical orchestration of classroom talk, activities, challenges, groupings, environments, Resources, and role models. The authors here provide Pedagogical concepts on vocational education. The OECD, (2015) has provided a framework from which concepts in vocational education can be drawn from. This framework suggests that knowledge needs to be more relevant in vocational education, meaning knowledge relevance see (Asongu & Tchamyou, 2018; Casanova et al., 2021).

Secondly, it also suggests that more emphasis needs to be paid to higher-order skills (OECD, 2016) such as the forces of creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. These are said to be essential for absorbing knowledge in vocational education. Furthermore, scholars suggest character traits which entail both performance-related attributes which are adaptability, persistence, and resilience; morals; Which include integrity, justice, empathy, and ethics. The OECD suggest that these need to be shaped both at school, in the workplace and with the individual to ensure learners become responsible and active in the process. Moreover, meta-layer skills, such as learning to learn, building expertise, fostering creativity, and making connections across disciplines are also highlighted as becoming more important in a world of growing complexity.

Despite an assertion that vocational education still lags in clarity in terms of its purpose across different areas stemming from the different definitions through which vocational education is classified, some authors do agree on a few concepts that make the vocational education system. These include focusing on the governance structure, the goals of technical and vocational education within the larger education system, the pedagogy, and the outcomes. More emphasis is paid to the concepts surrounding the pedagogy of occasional education. Lucas et al., (2012) have developed a pedagogical framework adopted by UNESCO through which concepts in vocational education pedagogy can be studied. These include Dividing pedagogical content into Physical materials- Which would include for example Brick Laying, Panel beating, Hair dressing, and other materials that are involved in teaching specific vocations; People – For example includes trades in financial advice, nursing, hospitality, retail, and other industrial professionals, and on Symbols – which looks at things that learners would interact with like words, and numbers, and images, and they offer for example here accountancy command, journalism, software development, and graphic design (Hobley, 2021; Lucas et al., 2012a).

Concepts here can also be understood from the forms and methods of learning in delivering technical and vocational education. The authors here look at the concept of learning by watching, imitating, and practising, through feedback, conversation and other means of learning that are interactive in nature and provide useful practice for learners to apply in industry. Further concepts that apply to vocational education include the outcomes. That is the focus is on the outcomes of the learners who are engaged in vocational education. The cited scholars also agree on six main paradigms of competence that learners in vocational education should focus on establishing.

These include routine expertise: that is proficiency in everyday waking procedures in the domain. Resourcefulness: this is having the knowledge and aptitude to stop and think effectively when required. Functional literacies: here the learners should possess adequate proficiency in literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy. Craftsmanship: the learners must also possess an attitude of pride and thoughtfulness towards the job and aspire to excel at what they do. Business-like attitudes: here the lenders must understand the economic and social science of work for them to acquire the skills of being job creators and entrepreneurs based on the skills of their vocation. The ‘Why’ focus: here the learners should have an inquisitive and resilient attitude towards constant improvement. That is, they must develop independence as learners to tackle other creative problems that surround their work see works by (Hobley, 2021; Lucas et al., 2012a; OECD, 2021; Schendel et al., 2020).

In summary, the two main concepts in vocational education and pedagogy focus on teaching reflection and the context of learning, as well as the vocational education system. In teaching reflection here, the concept focuses on teaching relationships, teaching context, teaching models, and teaching skills and strategies. In the context of learning, there are several dimensions that cut across communication skills, communities of practice and sociability. Other dimensions include reflection, motivational clarity of values, questioning, frames of curiosity, optimism, determination, resilience risk patients, resourcefulness, and resources for Information and Communications Technology (ICT). Therefore, this can be summarized as thinking through or reasoning, dreaming up or imagining, finding out or investigating, and trying out or experimenting. Through this literature, we can also summarise that the most important dimensions in vocational pedagogy include the role of the teacher, the nature of activities, means of knowing, attitude to knowledge, organization of time, organizational space, approach to tasks, visibility of processes, proximity to teacher, and the role of the teacher (Hobley, 2021; Lucas et al., 2012b; Schendel et al., 2020).

In general, authors agree that vocational education must have clear goals, an understanding of the nature of the subject, the breadth of the desired outcomes, and an understanding of the range of learning methods that may be taken together to provide the required or the best plan for learning, and bearing in mind the type of learners and the context in which learning is being provided; that is, the level of achievement of the learners and also the expertise of the teachers and the settings that are available for learning.

## Frontier TVET Issues

Frontier issues in technical and vocational education focus on the myriad of issues which cover the entire ecosystem of technical and vocational education and across different disciplines of the sector. Scholars focus on issues including governance structures (Cowen, 2014; UNESCO, 2018). The focus here on the governance structures of TVET is brought by the thinking that a more autonomous TVET system (Schröder, 2019) would produce better learners and would deliver more skilled employees who go through the process. Another live debate is on quality assurance in technical and vocational education Quality (Ulker, 2021). Here discussions are driven by the fact that vocational education involves one of the largest sectors of education that involves private, unregulated providers in many economies. The discussions focus on the quality assurance of private providers of technical and vocational education (Ulker, 2021) and how national policies can be combined and redesigned to be comprehensive enough to focus on standardizing curriculum (Rudhumbu, 2021; UNESCO, 2021a) and other pedagogical content that goes into both public and private technical and vocational education institutions.

One of the burning issues is however on the funding models of vocational education across different countries see (Kanwar et al., 2019; Skiba, 2020; UNESCO, 2018). Here the discussion centres around the sustainable means of funding as it has been proven that the traditionally known grant-levy system (Norton & Norton, 2018) has both difficulties and benefits of implementation and therefore, the discussions around how technical and vocational education can be creatively funded in order to ensure that industry stakeholders, government, and learners can be involved in the cost-share in consideration of the fact that vocational education is already targeted at some of the most vulnerable members of the society, see also (Bennell, 2022; Garrod & Wildschut, 2020). Further frontier discussions in technical and vocational education are about accessibility (Abdelkarim, 2019; Gannon et al., 2021). Here scholars focus on issues that still prohibit access to vocational education in several countries including the number of available centres and institutions and the availability of programs that are in demand. Another key issue that surrounds technical and vocational education is the curriculum and pedagogy (Hobley, 2021; Okolie et al., 2021) and the dimensions of the outcomes (Allais, 2020) in technical and vocational education. This issue has been discussed at length on concepts and principles.

There is a live debate on the correct curriculum and the dimensions of best practices in developing and delivering technical and vocational education, see (Esterhazy et al., 2021). Other key forefront discussions and issues that are current in technical and vocational education include transforming technical educational education so that it responds to the fast-changing knowledge economy that is becoming more digital and mobile (Chohan & Hu, 2022). The debates here are also around improving the curriculum so that it responds to the 21st century skills of digitization while also maintaining accessibility for people who may not necessarily access that form of education due to the way it is delivered and the access to tools and ICT materials required. These issues are closely linked to debates on TVETs role in alleviating poverty in secluded, rural areas through industry cooperation and expansion of access to higher education, see (Postiglione & Tang, 2019; Wang, 2022; Zhao, 2021). Other transformative issues that are at the forefront of technical educational education include greening TVET (Pavlova, 2019). Discussions also focus on how technical and vocational education and related curricula can be designed to respond to the sustainability goals of the United Nations Development Program and other climate climate-focused initiatives (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2021; Unterhalter, 2020).

This study is strictly focused on system and policy reform, and specifically intends to apply theoretical frameworks that assess the challenges of implementing vocational education within a specific context of cultural, political, and economic processes of policy formulation. Next, the study undertakes a review of theoretical foundations in this sphere of TVET and the ensuing arguments.

## Theoretical Foundations in TVET

As given in an earlier review, technical and vocational education does not have established theories through which it is analysed and studied, this is particularly the case when it comes to policy analytics frameworks in TVET (McGrath, Powell, et al., 2020; Ngcwangu, 2015), and a sub-sector within a larger education domain. Some of the key theories that are applied in education are applied when studying technical and vocational education see (Stolz, 2015; Zhang, 2015). Theories used and applied by researchers to study TVET include some leading Learning theories (Pan, 2019) and Experiential learning theories (Ngware et al., 2022b). These include studying the function of learning through human capital theories (Asongu & Tchamyou, 2018; Clarke et al., 2020; Hultberg et al., 2017) and its fiercest rivals and critics; political economy of skills (Jessop & Sum, 2022), the rights-based approaches (Deissinger, 2015; Zancajo & Valiente, 2019) to education and the human capabilities approach (Alla-Mensah & McGrath, 2021a).

The study also finds that theories that examine the relationships between individuals within a system utilize the actor-network theory which in principle studies the relationships between different actors whose activities are dependent on and or influence the outcome and the smooth operation of the entire system, see (Corbett & Ackerson, 2019; Fenwick & Edwards Richard, 2018). In the paragraphs that follow, we look at and discuss in detail, key arguments in the mentioned theoretical foundations to deduce from many and select a suitable perspective that would be used to study policy implementation challenges in the technical and vocational education environment.

## Current debates in TVET Policy Analysis

In these paragraphs, we briefly summarize some of the chief policy debates between the previous theories we introduced which is the capital human theory and some of the criticisms around it (Marginson, 2017) including political economy of skills, the rights-based approach, and the human capabilities approach (McGrath, Powell, et al., 2020). The debates here show the level of contestation and some of the dominant approaches that have been generated because of such contributions and they help to illustrate a range of alternative policy ideas for the implementation and reform of technical and vocational education systems and policies. These have emerged from education and International Development debates in general.

Human capital theorists from the initial stages including Schultz and Becker, (Goldin & Katz, 2020) centre the argument around the market investment rewards to individual skills which they claim increase their productivity, with better jobs and better earnings in work placements. In aligning with this theory, problems that imagine unemployment and poverty but lack a developing country’s status are typically attributed to inadequacy of skills and the labour workforce (Okolie et al., 2020). With this line of thinking the key goal of technical and vocational education and training and training reforms should be to expand the skills level of the workforce and align the provision of such skills according to the demands of that economy (Zancajo & Valiente, 2019).

The proponents in this theory have influenced modern policy programs and new public management principles such that it has resulted in a global toolkit of policy reforms in technical and vocational education, see (Karlidag-Dennis et al., 2019). This toolkit which is applied by UNESCO’s International Centre for technical and vocational education (UNESCO & SADC, 2013), includes a deepened participation of employers in the planning and delivery of technical and vocational education policies. It also encourages more autonomous public providers of TVET and incentives for other private providers and it seeks to curtail the role of the state, regulators, and evaluators of the TVET system. Relevant to this study, typical applications of this theoretical framework are associated with the adoption of national qualifications frameworks, competency-based training, work-based learning, and outcomes-based accountabilities (Achtenhagen & Winther, 2014; UNESCO, 2021b).

On the one hand, there are arguments for the rights-based approaches to education policy transformation. This approach emphasizes that education is a universal human right that should be guaranteed to all. It is emphasized as a matter of social justice to those who deserve education. This theoretical approach has had an influence on the formulation of the education for all frameworks that was undertaken in majority of African countries and has resulted in mobilizing official development assistance geared towards education and the expansion of access to education globally, see (UNESCO, 2015).

Authors here often quote Katerina Tomasevski, a UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education (Zancajo & Valiente, 2019). In developing a framework that is comprehensive enough two think about the right to education, in her ‘4As Framework’ She argues that education should be available free of charge, it should be accessible and non-discriminatory, and it should be of acceptable quality while being adaptable to the needs of the minorities. This line of thinking, however, in its focus represents the most conceptual contrast with the instrumental view of education as a human capital (Robeyns, 2006 cited in; Zancajo & Valiente, 2019), It also pushes the accountability for States and political leaders higher in delivering the right to education (Schendel et al., 2020). While this theory has more emphasis on the humanistic goals of education and the need to guarantee access to various levels of education, it is largely applied in primary education and not much in technical and vocational education and training.

The policy formulation approach that has received some of the most elaborated criticisms from political economy authors is the human capital theory in technical and vocational education. The most prominent criticisms of this theory are on the very suggestion of skills being viewed as tasks Atlantis need to perform. Zancajo & Valiente, (2019) assert that this is criticized because it ignores the importance of the access to theoretical knowledge that scholars argue underpins their vocational practice. The very view in human capital that knowledge economies generate better quality jobs is in turn contrasts with reducing the inequalities brought by the concentration of scarce jobs and those stuck at the lower grinches of the labour market in the oversubscribed vocations. See, (Marginson, 2017). Zancajo & Valiente, (2019) further highlight that political economy theorists argue that TVET policies and agendas that attempt to solve social problems (one of the goals of TVET) but ignore the political and labour market base issues today are bound to fail, even worse to worsen the situations.

The human capabilities theory is aligned with the rights-based approach. It draws from the contributions of capabilities theory, see (Alla-Mensah & McGrath, 2021a). Within this approach, scholars have begun promoting TVET policies that contribute to the expansion of the agency freedom of individuals(Zancajo & Valiente, 2018). Here the scholars promote the freedom for learners to pursue their own vacations. Scholars emphasize that TVET policies in this approach should be geared towards supporting the aspirations of individuals as a motive for participating in TVET programs. The propositions here tackle the inequality of opportunities for learning. This approach in general is closely aligned with the political economy critiques of social inequalities within the broader human development paradigms. It is a more balanced theoretical approach that seeks to balance both the motivations in skills-building and the recognition of the political and social landscape in different contexts where TVET may be applied.

While scholars agree that Human Capital approaches are still dominant in TVET development plans across different economies, this research has put to light the immense criticisms of this approach due to its ignorance of the socio-political structures that drive policy adoptions, see arguments in (Aldinucci et al., 2021; McGrath, Ramsarup, et al., 2020; Zancajo & Valiente, 2019). Better yet, the main research gaps here remain on the extent to which these shifts in line of thinking and theoretical debates have resulted in changes in TVET policy reforms and implementation, and more importantly, elaborative variables that underpin such policy changes.

To further highlight why this remains a knowledge gap in this sphere of theoretical policy implementation debates, the study next introduces the context of vocational education in Lesotho, and therefore issues and critical challenges to TVET systems and policy implementation. First, a brief country profile is provided, followed by a deeper overview and historical origins of vocational education in southern Africa. This is an attempt to illuminate the regional cultural semiosis and therefore silent, socio-political, and economic influences on the policy review process and implementation.

## Background of TVET in Lesotho

### Brief country profile

Lesotho, officially the Kingdom of Lesotho is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy, the head of State is the King, and the Head of Government is the Prime Minister. Lesotho is surrounded by South Africa it’s only neighbour (Maliehe, 2021). The Kingdom of Lesotho is made up mostly of Highlands, where many of the mountain villages can be reached only on horseback, by foot or light aircraft. It is a former British protectorate that heavily relies on its neighbour, South Africa. The official languages in Lesotho are Sesotho and English. English being the medium of instruction in education sector from grade 4 up to tertiary. The population of Lesotho is around 2.2 million with a geographical land area of 30,355 square kilometres. The major religion in Lesotho is Christianity and life expectancy is about 51 years for men and 56 years for women.

Lesotho is governed through three major government branches namely, the Executive which is Led by the King who serves a ceremonial function and possesses no real authority in politics (Aerni-Flessner, 2018). The Prime Minister is Head of Government and in charge of executive tasks of the government. The second branch of government is the Judiciary which is mandated by the constitution to interpret the law through which its appellate court serves as the Supreme Court of the land flanked by the constitutional court which hears and interprets constitutional matters. The third branch of the government is the Legislature which elects the members of the National Assembly and elects the Prime Minister. Lesotho practices the Westminster system of politics and employs a mixed-member proportional representation system where the National Assembly is constituted of members directly elected from the eighty constituencies and forty members elected through a closed list proportional representation system. The senate is the upper house of parliament constituted by Principal Chiefs and eleven members appointed by the Prime Minister.

In Economy, the country practices a market-based economy, but the tradition of direct government involvement in economic activity is often cited to limit private sector development, in large part. Resources are scarce despite being rich in minerals. A consequence of the harsh environment of the highland plateau and limited agricultural space in the lowlands. About 40% of Lesotho citizens live below the poverty line. Lesotho spends about 13% of public expenditure on Education.

**Table 2.1 Projected Public Spending in Lesotho MoET, (2016)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Target | 2014 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2025 |
| Public Resources |  | **Baseline** | **2017 - 2018** | | **Projections** | |
| GDP (million M) | 4% (growth rate) | 23673 | 26 629 | 27 694 | 28 802 | 36 443 |
| Population (thousand) |  | 2102 | 2 163 | 2 184 | 2 205 | 2 325 |
| Per Capita GDP |  | 11 262 | 12 308 | 12 678 | 13 062 | 15 674 |
| Public recurrent spending (million M) |  | 9 375 | 10 356 | 10 705 | 11 065 | 13 484 |
| % of GDP | 37% | 39.60% | 38.89% | 38.65% | 38.42% | 37% |
| Public recurrent spending on education (million M) |  | 2 272 | 2 475 | 2 546 | 2 619 | 3 101 |
| % of Public spending | 23% | 24.23% | 23.90% | 23.78% | 23.67% | 23% |
| % of GDP |  | 9.60% | 9.29% | 9.19% | 9.09% | 8.51% |

The current constitution in force was adopted in 1993 with several amendments to date. For the history of Lesotho, in the 1820s Basutoland was founded by king Moshoeshoe, who united various groups to repel challenges from the Zulus of King Shaka (Aerni-Flessner, 2018; Hunter, 2021). Then in 1834 territorial encroachment by Boer trekkers started decades of conflict with the Basotho nation. In 1868 Lesotho become a British protectorate, then referred to as Basutoland. Then in 1871 it was annexed to the Cape colony without people’s consent. Later in 1884 it became a British colony after revolt against Cape colonial rule. At this time, the paramount chiefs retained large degree of autonomy in the then Basutoland. Then in 1966 Basutoland gained independence and was officially renamed the Kingdom of Lesotho, with King Moshoeshoe II being the Head of State and Chief Leabua Jonathan of the Basotho National Party as Prime Minister.

A modern conflict arose in 1998 when troops from foreign region within SADC came to restore order following disputed elections (Aerni-Flessner, 2018). A key development happened in 2004 with the official opening of the first phase of Lesotho Highlands water project a major source of economic income for Lesotho. Then in 2006 one of the largest mines opened in Lesotho. Lieutenant diamond mine today produces diamonds that the Highest dollar per carat in the entire world. All ministries and ministerial portfolios are designed and approved by the cabinet of ministers under the leadership of the Prime Minister. The Ministry of Education where the department of vocational education lies is part of the line ministries that are under the control of cabinet.

### TVET of the Basotho Nation: History and Origins, 17th Century – Present.

Technical and vocational education has been existing before the formation of the Basotho nation itself. For brevity, it can be traced and classified into four distinct eras for review, The Iron Smithing Period, New Basotho Nation Period, Western Colonial Period, and the Modern Day Lesotho TVET System.

### Origins Introduction

#### Artisans in Iron Smelting in the South of Africa, -17th – 18th Century

To further make it evident that the Basotho nation engaged in organized, and formalized technical and vocational education and training that represent vocational education today even before the arrival of the colonial powers (Akoojee, Gewer, & McGrath, 2005); and that the education was also conducted outside of their familial home training but in community-organized schools, one would need to look back even deeper into the nations that occupied the geographical area. When we look briefly at the history of migration of people in the southern region of Africa, the Basotho nation do come from the Bantu speaking people (Aerni-Flessner, 2018; Hunter, 2021). These were said to have migrated from somewhere in West Africa, and Basotho are part of those that finally crossed the Limpopo River, down south and began to settle across the areas in the great plains of Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, and along the coasts of the modern South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Eswatini, Mozambique and in Lesotho in the middle of South Africa, all countries in Southern Africa (Maliehe, 2021).

It is here where they found and started intermarrying with the Indigenous people who lived in that area referred to as the San whom the westerners later gave them a derogatory name, “the bushmen.” The San were primarily living with and used tools from the Stone Age, they lived a nomadic life and supplemented their livelihoods through hunting and other means. But then a new kind of people emerged, the Khoikhoi. The Khoikhoi people were also primarily, nomadic in nature and cattle raising and some early iron smithing. The later nations that were to be known as The Khoisan, a mixture of the Khoikhoi and the San were true artisans. They were advanced iron smithing nation. They are the ones who began to develop iron smithing into a transferable skill and began propagating it among their own people which they would later use to fight and defend their own territories against invaders. The Basotho nation, who even today constitute the original San people, evidenced by today’s administrative districts of Lesotho with tongue clicks like Quthing and Qacha’ Neck Districts, and the later mixture of the Khoisan people, they are the ones who formalized this form of skills into organized vocational education system.

Therefore, by the time king Moshoeshoe I, in his bid to build a strong nation and a fortress to protect the different clans that lived in the area formed the Basotho nation in 1824, those clans were already having their own forms of vocational education. It was organized according to their clan and produced technically skilled boys and girls who were able to fulfil community tasks and help defend their communities.

#### TVET within the Basotho Nation, 1824 – 1833

The earliest formal and organized technical and vocational education among the Basotho nation were seen in traditional schools such as initiation schools for boys and girls (Akoojee, Gewer, & McGrath, 2005; Hunter, 2021). This is where young boys and girls were taught practical life skills that would help them to raise cattle, plough the farms and to harvest, home economics, agriculture, primary healthcare and to be useful in the community and be productive members of the community.

Elders of the community and experts provided this form of education deeply experienced in different fields that required specialized knowledge in a particular area. Therefore, even the organization of the curriculum and the mode of teaching of whatever skill that was to be imparted to the young boys and girls, was delivered in a manner that fulfilled a specific task sufficiently. It fulfilled community tasks that needed to be performed collectively or within their own kraals, (family). It also melded the young person into the kind of community member they were expected to grow into, bearing in mind, the kind of expertise they were therefore expected to possess during their later years and when they start to form their own kraals (start a family).

It is understandable that the technical and vocational education of Basotho during that time, or during that era, was the only form of education that was considered ‘formal’ at the time which even included graduation ceremonies known as “Ho chesa Mophato” in Sesotho language, very akin to today’s celebrations post-graduation. This was the education, there were no other education systems that characterizes the current, western TVET landscape across Africa today.

Therefore, this form of education through imparting of skills and certain vocations so that the concerned student would be able to perform a specialized task was the main form of education and it entailed key economic industries that the Basotho nation relied on for their own self sustenance and to grow their nation over time. As a result, it can be said that technical and vocational education has been existing within the Basotho nation in its own form and structure. It was however similar in concepts to the western form of education. It was also in an organized form that followed procedures, and it qualified someone to participate in it when they reached a certain age. Students would also attend short term training programs where specific knowledge was shared. It is therefore clear that these tenets of Basotho’s technical and vocational education indicate that TVET existed and followed, ‘in principle’ some of the key features of today’s westernized vocational education system.

#### Introduction of Western TVET Among Basotho, 1833 – 1966

Likewise, McGrath (Akoojee, Gewer, & Mcgrath, 2005; McGrath, 2014) agree that vocational education and training in Lesotho to has an exceptionally long history he argues that even long before the Basotho nation was founded the youth learned skills from the elders in the communities and in a more organized manner, they were also engaged in initiation schools. This line of argument is in line with what has been shared about the nature of vocational education among the Boston nation he also agrees that there were skills needed in true spear and shield making hunting hide and skin turning building and other skills relevant to agriculture.

Importantly to his study the author provides a view that the arrival of missionaries around 1833 brought with it a need for a separate set of skills that would be relevant in what they would need to settle in southern Africa. They would need the building of churches and houses and the making of their furnishings employing European styles. Therefore, this needed you set of skills that led to the establishment of an industrial school under the auspices of the Lesotho evangelical church in the Quthing district in 1862.

Earlier on while undertaking education sector analysis, Sebatane et al., (2000) also agreed with McGrath (2005) in part that formal technical and vocational education in Lesotho can be traced back as far as the 1800s and with the inception of the mission sponsored schools, the first being the Manual School at Thabana Morena in the Mafeteng District. The school was transferred to become little Leloaleng trades school in 1879 in the district of Quthing. The government sponsored school Lerotholi Technical School was established in 1905 in the capital city Maseru, and in a in addition to this school there were other several technical schools which were introduced. These include, Bishop Allard Trades School introduced in 1971, Technical School of Leribe established in 1973, and Lesotho Opportunities and Industrialization Centre in 1978.

Furthermore, there are other vocational skills training centres which were established by and for retrenched returning workers from the South African mines. The schools run short term training programs and are managed and organized by independent providers and other faith-based providers. Curriculum for the earliest technical and vocational schools in Lesotho included the more conventional and traditional trades that include leatherworks masonry electrical installations basic electronics mechanics commercial studies home economics and others (Sebatane et al., 2000).

It was post-independence in Lesotho that the education system was overhauled (Aerni-Flessner, 2018; Hunter, 2021). And therefore, technical, and vocational subjects were integrated into the general education system and were taught in the curriculum of secondary schools. Several training centres were established, and old ones were expanded. Also, in the beach too expand access the government made other significant efforts that were aimed at reforming, reshaping the education, and training system to satisfy the requirements of development that was needed at that time McGrath, (2005).

It was therefore in the later years that a dialogue which was held in 1978 concerning education recommended the formation of a multidisciplinary task force that would conduct a thorough analysis of the education and training provision within Lesotho. This dialogue proposed policy guidelines with a clear set of objectives and implications to the government, and therefore the task force propose the education sector survey reform which subsequently made recommendations that resulted in the enactment of the Lesotho technical and vocational training act of 1984 and this act superseded the previous industrial and vocational training act of 1975.

Therefore from the colonial era up to independence, the focus of TVET policy emanating from the 1984 act which is still an official statement of policy in Lesotho focus on key themes around Governance, and administration of TVET, Finance, Public and Semi-public providers, the Industry, Curriculum and Assessment, Prevocational education and skills training, and Trade tests. It further establishes the technical and vocational training Advisory Board a function that was adopted from the earlier act of 1975, These and other key issues that are pertinent to the delivery of technical and vocational education then in Lesotho.

#### TVET in Independent Lesotho, 1966 – 1993

On October 4th, 1966, Lesotho gained independence from the British (Aerni-Flessner, 2018) as the wave of countries sort to detach themselves from their then colonial masters. During this period. The Newly independent Lesotho began drafting public policies that were aimed at supporting and spurring development at the time. This saw Lesotho drafting its first constitution with much help from her colonial masters at the time. It was at this time that Lesotho’s education system was completely overhauled. New Education Act was enacted and introduction of standardized general education that followed the desired paths of the then liberation struggle politicians was also enacted. It also at this time that TVET found its way into the mainstream education and was incorporated into the general education system.

#### Today’s Developments in Lesotho TVET

TVET in Lesotho today is characterized by the same global developments as discussed earlier. These cut across, lack of funding into institutions, inferior quality of curriculum and instructors with no pedagogy in the subjects; slow up take by prospects, regulatory bureaucracy, and general unfavourable view of TVET by youth in distressed economies and high rates of unemployment.

Today there are more than 8 formal technical and vocational training centres that are institutionalized and subsidized in one way or another by the government of Lesotho. But data relating to the actual enrolment rates in this sentence is scarce the last comprehensive report that covered the technical and vocational education and research was conducted by UNESCO in 2013. It showed enrolment grades in technical and vocational schools at about 1% of youth aged 15 to 24 with a total amount of less than four thousand including public and private TVET institutions (Thae, 2013); as cited in (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022).

Lesotho’s TVET is, as alluded in historical review characterized by a mixture of both vocational training centres and higher education that comprises universities (MoET, 2016), polytechnics (technical colleges) and other post-secondary private and public education institutions. In fact, the earliest forms of higher education in Lesotho were technical colleges where majority of people obtained their education. Therefore, TVET in Lesotho was a natural development to western methods affording learning opportunities to those who could not meet the admission requirements in technical colleges. It is a given that in effect of the context above, modernized, and western TVET system has been entrenched in the education system of Lesotho since the independence of the country. Therefore, it is one of the most important education systems that has given people an opportunity to integrate into the economy.

As more higher education institutions opened, starting with the opening of the National University of Lesotho from an earlier combined institution serving Southern Africa, other technical colleges over time began to suffer enrolment. This took place as students opted to enrol in higher education institutions that could give them degrees and higher diplomas. The move, given the day’s labour market ensured that they were admitted into post graduate education and would aid them better in securing higher paying jobs. As a result, TVET in Lesotho offered at formal polytechnic institutions started to decline from the moment universities started taking better performing students as is expected. Students enrolled in higher education too for them to pursue further careers as stated. Nonetheless, technical colleges which were spread over the districts, continued to have some share of student enrolment who were aiming to get just minimum diplomas that would allow them to acquire skills to create their own jobs, secure employment in small businesses and as a steppingstone to attain higher education degrees when they qualified. These developments did not at the time significantly affect pure vocational training centres meant specifically to provide TVET to those who cannot get admission into any other institution.

The continuity of TVET, particularly in public institutions in Lesotho has been primarily driven by the government through funding (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). All students in Lesotho or majority of students who qualify for admission into higher education get enrolled in the national government scholarship program. Therefore, most TVET institutions in Lesotho get students who are either sponsored by the government or their education in the institution is supported by the government in kind. Therefore, enrolment is normally eased by an expansion of this program which ensures that institutions continue to have just enough students who are studying TVET programs. But as the economy developed and the country enters new phases of economic impediments, the government itself has, knowing the importance of TVET begun to ask questions on the value of TVET and technical colleges in Lesotho, therefore the evaluation is certainly bound to happen. The government understands the critical role that TVET plays in easing unemployment. Equally so, is the puzzling question of quality of TVET programs which in turn becomes a question of employability of TVET graduates.

Several propositions have been put forward to try and improve the curriculum and the quality of education this technical colleges provided. Some of the ideas that have been flaunted around ever since the review of TVET institutions included the detachment of TVET colleges in Lesotho from the government this was from the view that majority of TVET institutions in Lesotho were still heavily government administered. That means, the entire institution management and the entire operations apparatus of TVET providing institutions are funded directly by the government. They solely rely on government subvention and most of their operations would not exist if it was not from the government financial support.

The views that promoted the detachment of TVET colleges from government emanated from the fact that most government institutions end up not focusing much on the quality of whatever the area they were supposed to manage (ACQF, 2020; Sparreboom, 1997). Similarly, when it came to college education, it was discovered that majority of the stagnation in colleges that provided TVET programs was the fact that there was lack of motivation to develop and improve TVET. Therefore, the government and the proponents of the ideas of detachment of TVET institutions from government were adamant that if the government allowed these TVET institutions to be fully, independently managed, this would also translate into better quality education that was relevant in the market.

Further propositions to detach from the government were strongly supported by the view that other institutions which provided education and were not managed by government, including nursing schools and other technical schools seemed to perform much better and the quality of education was admired in the market. Therefore, it was seen as a sign that these colleges were performing much better than government run colleges because they were independently managed, and their quality of education ought to be a result strategic control and the accountability to clients. These being the students who were being selective on where they would pay their tuition and therefore were motivated to go to institutions where they knew they would be able to secure employment post-graduation. Other views were contradictory in in nature. Some views suggested that this TVET colleges must be attached to university institutions where the broader leadership could be brought into the institution. This in anticipation of improved quality of education the institutions provided. But this was contradictory in nature as some of the technical institutions that provided education were still convention with the National University of Lesotho as the anchor and the one which awarded degrees for those institutions.

Therefore, the notion that if technical colleges would perform better when attached to other higher education institutions and universities which provided degrees would make them perform better came under a critical review since this would be challenged by the fact that there were existing technical colleges which were already attached to National University of Lesotho and they were suffering similar symptoms where they seem to not develop and their diplomas were not responding to market conditions in fact their education was, largely behind the rest of other colleges which in the same level. Until this day, when Lesotho is introducing a new education framework, the debate is still raging on, on how to improve the performance of TVET at colleges in Lesotho.

But as discussed earlier also facing the problem of high unemployment where graduates are unable to secure jobs, therefore the focus is even deeper on how to improve the quality of TVET so that it can help absorb more students into those programs (MoET, 2019; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). That, so that the students would not be forced to find admission into universities where the universities themselves and are under scrutiny that their students are also not getting employable. Furthermore, and like the developments in the world, higher education institutions in Lesotho, especially universities that award graduate and postgraduate level degrees, are also facing the same problem. High number of graduates are unable to secure employment and graduate with degrees which industry experts often refer to them has obsolete because they were not responding to their market needs. As a result of this, TVET is also under immense pressure to try and reinvent itself so that it can become a more desired destination for students who would at minimum acquire skills that would allow them to create employment by themselves without having to investigate government or the private sector for employment.

This has especially come under light when Lesotho is developing the industry and most of the skills that are required whether it is in mining, in agriculture or other productive sectors and even in the textiles industry where Lesotho is excelling, skills that are not lacking in universities. Universities in Lesotho are on record for places where people that provide graduate and postgraduate degrees do not possess the necessary skills that are useful in the main industries that are productive in nature. These include high impact areas like diamond mines; technicians who work in mines, those who control and manage equipment in mines. These include technicians who can work in productive industries where they would be able turn into artisans with skills that allow them to operate the machinery that is used in factories.

These are desired jobs, and the government which is concerned with creating jobs has realized that the productive industry requires skills that are better provided at TVET level. Therefore, the government has a fervent desire to develop technical colleges to provide education that would respond specifically to these market needs. The pressure is even greater because these industries can absorb more students, produce more technically skilled graduates than service industries which are saturated. Industries that university bachelor’s degrees serve are as alluded earlier simple service industries. They produce graduates who have majored in fields such as law, business management, marketing, in economics and other vocations that are supportive, service-oriented industries rather than productive oriented.

One would realize that this is a paradox of sorts as universities are not able to provide the technical skills that are required. But the technical colleges too which are supposed to possess these qualities have an obsolete curriculum of which the skills that are taught in these technical colleges still belong to an era where machinery was not as advanced as today. Therefore, students who graduate with these technical skills are also not able to secure relevant employment as they still require some level of training to upgrade their skills, knowledge, their abilities and to fully integrate into the new economy with the new machinery that is technology driven.

Being technology driven also brings another great challenge that faces the government. That is, the universities can provide technologically driven programs where students can acquire new digital economy skills and develop into tech savvy graduates who can leverage the power of the Internet today, and to create new business models that could respond to the needs of the economy. However, there is a substantial portion of students who also require this technologically driven programs that should not only be available at university level, in fact majority of programs that are offered even online are offered by institutions that are not necessarily degree awarding institutions. These institutions provide requisite skill sets that are within a specific area of the technology paradigm that a student would be interested in enrolling within.

Similarly, in Lesotho, this has been viewed by government as another available avenue to create jobs and to provide education that will be responsive in today’s technology driven market. Once again technical colleges have become under fire to not only develop their curriculum and to ensure that the current policy that exists support the development of this new curriculum but also that the technical colleges should be the main base where people could acquire technology skills that would allow them to gain expertise in one field. This, even if it does not necessarily lead to an award of a degree but provides enough knowledge base that the person who’s enrolling in the program would be able to secure employment or create projects that would earn them sufficient revenue for self-reliance.

The ability to create self-employment and to be skilled technically, and in this instance, technology based technical expertise, technical colleges are seen as a bedrock on which technology can be democratized in a manner that it becomes reachable through students who would not even qualify to enter technical colleges. These include those who do not have sufficient basic education that is acceptable even by TVET providing technical colleges. This means to solve this problem; technical colleges would be the best place where technology can be introduced. This being where specifically designed programs can easily be integrated so that students can enrol for specific technical skill sets that they wish to acquire. This done such that they can leverage the power of the internet to also create livelihoods that depend on the digital economy. But as the conversation moves on, this provided in hindsight view, that the main vehicle through which this can be achieved is a review of policy that guides technical education in Lesotho.

This would entail reviewing the policy to ensure that provision of technical education in colleges includes programs that are not necessarily degree awarding or are aimed for students who would qualify for a diploma or certificate in a particular field but should also be open to every person who needs to acquire a specific skill set that would allow them to have expertise in one sphere of technology and allow them to develop that skill to a degree that they would be able to create sufficient employment for themselves. Now, it would be clear that technical colleges would not only be faced with the problem of the obsolete curricula but also to develop programs that are technology-based programs. Programs that provide education that is tailored specifically for a particular skill, so that a prospective student who can read and write would be able to enrol into that program. Allows the students to acquire a technology skill and be able to have a standalone success emanating from that skill. This being any skill, whether this would involve being able to write software in a specific language for a specific industry. These are the tenets that TVET would be expected to develop into with the new policy direction and to be integrated into the whole program infrastructure that is afforded to students within these colleges

Therefore, this phenomenon is bringing in an interesting juncture in which the government of Lesotho finds itself caught between. The technical colleges which have the technical education required or can deliver technical education required in the market, but do not have requisite curriculum and are not set up to respond to the market needs of today. On the other hand, the universities of which the programs offered are largely service oriented and graduates from those universities possess skill sets that are largely service oriented and may not necessarily be able, or the path may be much harder for them to develop into technically skilled graduates who can fully integrate into the productive sector in the economy, which is the largest employment creating sector within Lesotho’s economy.

The context of this background should be viewed in consideration of the type of economy Lesotho has and the type of government structure it has including its education system. This would make a lot more sense in trying to understand why this is such a difficult problem for Lesotho to overcome or for responsible actors within that sector to effect changes that can come into effect immediately. As alluded earlier, Lesotho’s economy is within the least developing economies in the world and therefore the budget for education is equally heavily limited. That said, Lesotho sponsors majority of higher education, which means 90% of students who enrol in higher education are sponsored by the government of Lesotho (ILO, 2020; MoET, 2016). So, this means whatever the case there is to solve, the university leaders and college leaders know that every single academic year, the government of Lesotho is going to bring in new students funding.

It would be assumed that if the government were to solve this problem by cutting funding into this universities so that students pay for themselves this issue would be fixed. But there is a new phenomenon that any government of the day would face. The parents and guardians of students who were expecting that post-graduation from high school, their children would be enrolled in institutions of higher learning in the same quota as the previous year would demand that it be kept unchanged, in fact the government has tried to even hint at doing that. The fallout from the announcement was so severe that the government itself made another announcement that it would not go ahead with the implementation of that policy. On the front of TVET, this paradox that the government finds itself within makes it extremely difficult for it to use its leverage as a financial custodian, a sponsorship leverage to try and force technical colleges and universities to revamp their programs so that they become relevant to the market needs.

The above background of the socio-political landscape surrounding the issue brings us closer to the main thesis of this study. Thats because to try and push the development of curriculum in Lesotho and to ensure that students also continue to enrol in the universities, colleges, and technical institutions in Lesotho the government has turned to regulatory processes. The universities and colleges would have to go through a more expanded and robust program review process. The curriculum verification process and the qualifications review of every program that is offered in the universities and in the technical colleges. This is where TVET found itself in the crosshairs of the government where the government now has revamped its requirements for awarding degrees and diplomas for students to graduate from institutions of higher learning.

This is centred around the fact that the qualifications framework in Lesotho was based on old systems that did not include sufficient checks and balances that ensured programs were in constant development over time and that submissions for accreditation and review of recent programs were done in a manner that it included the industry (MoET, 2016). This, so that the accreditation of programs that are offered was a holistic process that included not only the government agencies or the universities and technical colleges only. But that it also included the industry market leaders where the countries were going to be employed. Therefore, in a bid to develop and improve higher education quality in Lesotho, the government has embarked on a new framework; on a new accreditation framework and reestablishment of institutions that are responsible for accreditation of programs and institutions of higher learning emanating from the basic text law of education in Lesotho.

Part of their creation process requires review of the existing policies that guide various levels of higher education in Lesotho. The review of policies also includes the curriculum review of the programs and the education system itself, from basic education to higher education. Stuck between the new qualification framework which seeks to guide the entire quality of education in Lesotho, TVET which finds itself not only from the societal pressures of development but now on the cross paths of the regulatory framework that is in fact trying to tackle the same problems that were hard to solve between the parties now being pushed by the regulatory requirements that the government has imposed in order to try and develop the sector with the main goal - to improve the quality of education.

## Introduction to Lesotho Education System

Lesotho education system is guided by the current Education Act of 2010, amended in 2021, which mostly to reflected changes in primary education teaching profession and to pave way for the incoming Lesotho Qualifications Framework (MoET, 2019). This Basic Law is implemented by the Education Sector Plans. The current Education Sector Plan (ESP) in force ran from 2016 –land will end and be reviewed in 2026. In general here are the structures that are important in supporting education in Lesotho : the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) is in charge of education in general; The national curriculum development centre (NCDC) develops curriculum for basic education; Department of inspectorate is responsible for quality of basic education; Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECOL) is responsible for examinations for basic education; Technical and vocational department within (MoET) is in charge of technical and vocational education and training; And presently the council on higher education is responsible for quality assurance in higher education which the current Lesotho Qualifications and Quality Council (LQQC) proposes to dissolve in its own place.

Lesotho’s education system is organized along formal and informal domains. Currently, the formal education system is organized on five levels: Pre-primary, primary, secondary which consists of junior and senior secondary, post-secondary which consists of vocational and technical schools, and higher learning education. The informal education exists to address the educational needs of youth and adults who are unable to go through the formal education system and set up and it offers primary and second level education. In total, the formal system comprises of 2204 pre-primary schools that is 243 reception classes, and 1478 primary schools, 341 post primary schools of which 250 offer both junior certificate and Lesotho general certificate of senior education wild ninety-one offer junior certificate only. There are twenty-six technical and vocational schools offering automotive mechanics, bricklaying, blistering and home sciences. There fourteen higher education institutions.

For learners, there are seven years of primary, or Junior School which start from grades 1 to 7 (Education Act (Act No.3 of 2010), 2010). Then the next phase and the second last of basic education at the three years of junior secondary school which start from form A, B, C. This culminated in the awarding of junior certificate. The highest face of basic education in Lesotho last two years from form D to E. Learners who complete this level are awarded Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) at Ordinary Level. The new Lesotho Qualifications Framework formalizes a higher level which requires students to complete three years of higher secondary school and are awarded Advanced Standing for tertiary admission.

While this effort is already practiced by a few schools, all students who complete general certificate of education have a direct entry into universities in Lesotho. When the new qualifications framework has been adopted widely Lesotho, the Ministry of Education anticipates that lenis who complete ordinary level of education will be admitted into polytechnics and colleges while those who complete advanced standing will be admitted directly into universities. Lesotho has made considerable progress in its efforts towards education for all by introducing free primary education in 2000 through to 2006. This effort was reinforced by the Education Act of 2010 which made primary education not only free but compulsory.

The net enrolment ratio in lower basic education increased from 82% to 95% between those years between 2000 and 2010, and the cross-enrolment ratio in Grade 1 was 98% when last studied in 2014 (MoET, 2016). And the government continues to engage in efforts towards financing its primary education system. The sector is annually allocated about 23.3% of the government’s recurrent budget on average, which corresponds to 9.2% of Lesotho’s national GDP. Still a study conducted in 2015 highlighted that the education sector still faces major challenges including: poor retention rates at primary and secondary levels, low student learning outcomes and achievements, graduates with inadequate skills for the job market, high inefficiency in the system, HIV and AIDS and poor school governance.

The education system in the Lesotho is a shared responsibility between state, churches, and communities. Most schools are owned and managed by church organizations, whilst the government pays teachers’ salaries and meets most of the costs of maintenance and learning materials. According to the education statistical bulletin (2015), the transition rate of pupils from lower basic education to secondary education at the end of 2014 was 70.6% while the 2015 gross enrolment rate (GER) for junior and senior secondary was at 66.9 and 38.9% respectively: The GER for males was estimated at 56.8% and 32.9% while GER for females was 77.3 and 44.9 for junior and senior secondary levels respectively (MoET, 2016). The results from the 2010 continuous multiple surveys show that 2% of girls and 5% of boys never involved in school in the social and huge disparities across districts also exist, with mountainous districts showing inferior performance compared to lowland districts in the align with peoples and wild for lower basic education.

The main challenges of the Lesotho education system in the relevance of its higher education training to the market demand. The national strategic development plan therefore emphasis is a skills gap in Lesotho’s five productive sectors which include manufacturing, tourism, actual culture, rural economy, mining, micro and small medium enterprises development. This is even though 33% of pursuit students still travel to study abroad in other higher education institutions.

Stemming from the system of government endless Soto the Minister of Education is headed by a minister who is supported by deputy ministers. The principal secretary is the chief accounting officer overseeing six major departments which include semi column examinations council off Lesotho, council on higher education which the current qualifications framework calls for its abolition and replacement with the new Lesotho qualifications and quality council, the teaching Service Commission, UNESCO Commission, deputy principal secretary who oversees the administration of the department including finance, administration, and human resources, and TVET Advisory Board.

## Lesotho Education Basic Law

The current basic law is the Education Act of 2010, its predecessor was the Education Act of 1995. The current law was amended in 2021 to reflect changes in teacher professions and to pave way for the incoming Lesotho qualifications framework. This act is implemented through long term sector plans. The current sector plan is the education sector plan which runs between 2016 to 2026. The overall goals and objectives of the current act are to improve access to quality and relevant education and training at all levels; ensure that curriculum materials are relevant to the needs of Lesotho; strength and leadership, accountability and governance at all levels of the education sector; promote gender equality and ensure empowerment to disadvantaged groups; ensure equivalence, harmonization and standardization of the education and training system with international education goals.

The strategic objectives of the basic law through its sector strategic plan echo much of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) which covers SDG 4 in ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning and opportunities for all, it also covers SDG 5 on gender equality and women empowerment, SDG 8 on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and promotion of productive and decent employment, and SDG 10 which aims to reduce inequality within and among countries.

In order to achieve the set SDGs and the National Strategic Development Plan objectives of developing the human capital in Lesotho, the main goals of the education law through its strategic plan entail the following: To reform the national curriculum and assessment system so that it meets the needs of Lesotho; it also aims to improve access to comprehensive early childhood care and development; increase access to quality free and compulsory lower basic education; increase access to quality secondary education; increase access to technical and vocational education; to improve relevance of programs offered at higher learning institutions; to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of non-formal education delivery; to keep the spread of HIV and AIDS among sector employees, teachers and learners by 2025, and to improve strategic information, planning and accountability at all levels of the sector. One of the broad goals and objectives that are associated with the education sector in Lesotho add him prove access, quality and equity; to enhance relevance and applicability of skills; and expand and upgrade TVET institutions.

Some of the weaknesses highlighted by the education sector plan and that the Education Act is not all encompassing that is it is too specific on basic education and this lack of coordination with line ministries. Relevant to this study, the education sector plan identifies one of its first weaknesses in implementation of policies and plans such as the higher education policy. The plan recognizes also inadequate training places for the technical and vocational education and training institutions and the shortage of technical and vocational education and training institutions. The education sector in Lesotho faces a multiple of threats which include higher attrition rate of professionals at higher learning institutions and elevated level of dependency on external consultants for the development of key documents governing the sector and the inadequate strategy for attaining experts at higher education as well as low production of maths and science experts.

## TVET Policy in Lesotho

### Background

Technical and vocational education in Lesotho is officially termed, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (MoET, 2016). It is governed by the Technical and Vocational Training (TVT) Act of 1984 (ILO, 2020; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). Attempts to reform this policy document began in 2005 with the assistance of the World Bank Group. To this day, the country still operates under the legal framework of the1984 Act passed by parliament then and implemented in 1987 (MoET, 2016; UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2020). This is notwithstanding that current implementation guidance and development is guided by newer, but broader education policies; chiefly the Education Sector Plan 2016 -2026 and now the Lesotho Qualifications Framework (LQF). Lesotho’s technical and vocational education is embedded in the national strategic development plan which is the implementation document of the national vision 2020 (MoET, 2016). Therefore, the national vision 2020 puts focus on skills development for economic growth. The strategy submits that for Lesotho to exploit the demographic bonus of its large young labour force, the Ministry of Education and training should raise skills development and specifically focusing on improving relevance and applicability of skills; and expansion and upgrading of technical and vocational education institutions to support growth sectors.

The Ministry of Education and training through its Technical and Vocational Department (TVD) (MoET, 2016), Serves as the umbrella body through which vocational education controlled. The mandate of the Ministry of Education through its technical and vocational department extends two operational responsibilities which encompass formulating regulatory practices to improve the quality of delivery systems and mechanisms through which curriculum development; Inspection and assessment; Accreditation of programs and institutions; administration of trade tests to determine skills proficiency levels of workers; support for provision of workshops and equipment; Training of staff at technical and vocational education institutions and schools and to undertake continual assessment of skills needed. To this end, TVET institutions offer varying programs to meet these skills development needs.

Chart, pie chart

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**Fig 2.2 Most popular TVET Programs in Lesotho MoET, (2016)**

However, this mandate is still conducted through an old and archaic technical and vocational training act which was established in 1984 column which then came into operation in 1987. Today, the technical and vocational training department (TVD) Overseas the regulatory processes in the following categories: it overseas 93 secondary schools which offer basic education that is related to technical and vocational training including metal work, woodwork, Technical drawing and design, home economics, and agriculture; it also overseas 17 skills training centres offering pre vocational skills to lower basic education school leavers, disadvantaged groups and retrenched mine where cousin deportees; It is also in charge of 20 technical and vocational training institutions catering for post junior and secondary school leavers, offering automotive mechanics, bricklaying, and blustering and home sciences and so on; It also overseas 19 participating industries and companies which provide experiential opportunities for traineeship schemes or industrial attachment purposes for trainees and postsecondary institutions.

Some of these institutions are owned by the government which accounts for 8%, community 24%, churches into 2%, and others are privately owned which accounts for almost half at 46%. They change owned vocational education institutions are some of the earliest in the country which were founded with a strong mandate to serve the local communities surrounding them, and with a clear religious perspective coupled with gender focus reflected in the curriculum offered in such institutions. The management of this institutions has been charged controlled while government has funded the institutions over time.

### Main contents

The main contents of TVET Policy addresses systemwide components of technical and vocational education in Lesotho. The main components of the policy are encapsulated in the Technical and Vocational Training Act that also established the Technical and Vocational Training Advisory Board. The policy provides for management and provision of guidance in relation to the establishment of training schemes, programmes, national trade standards, the regulation of apprentice and worker in designated trades, methods for ascertaining the standards of proficiency for trainees and workers as well as the facilities and training provided by technical and vocational institutions in terms of pre-service and in-service programmes. This is achieved through five main themes that include Accreditation of institutions, Determination of skills proficiency levels through trade tests, Establishment and setting of standards, Quality assurance and Administration of TVET in Lesotho.

### Objectives of the policy

TVET Policy contained within the Education Sector Plan 2016 – 2026 highlights several policy objectives that the sector seeks to meet changing labour market demands. Formulation of these goals was guided by four main pillars, namely access, quality, equity, and relevance, and these emanate from the tenets of Sustainable Development Goals, Africa 2063, SADC Protocol on Education and Lesotho National Strategic Development Plan (2012/13 – 2016/17). Detailed analysis of the Ministry’s Education Sector Strategic Plan (2005 – 2015) was also carried out to inform processes and content of this Sector Plan (MoET, 2016). These main objectives include to establish continually reform the TVET system governance, develop and introduce TVET curriculum, introduce and develop a funding model, increase access and enrolments in TVET programs, improve quality of TVET through registration and accreditation of TVET institutions. In the next paragraphs, the study takes a closer look at each of the stated policy objectives.

On improving the TVET governance and funding, the current policy statements derived from the education sector plan indicate a focus on improving the management system in TVET and to broaden the financing modalities of TVET. The target here was to have an effective TVET governance structure in place by 2020 and to increase the number of funding agencies by 2026. The education sector plan further highlights a key strategic action being to review and operationalize the TVET Act which established the Technical and Vocational Training Board and therefore to advocate for the establishment of the Lesotho Skills Authority (LSA). Further strategic actions include developing the capacity of TVET providers on financial mobilisation and management, facilitating the design of appropriate TVET financing models for all state supported TVET providers, and facilitating the establishment of a National Training Fund (NTF).

The policy aims to facilitate increased access and enrolments in TVET by introducing the modularised programmes that are flexible with multiple entry and exit points and introduction of TVET evening classes. This is carried out with the strategic objective to expand capacity of Technical and Vocational systems to cater for all (including marginalized groups). the target being that at least 30% industry-based training conducted by 2026, at least 30,000 TVET learners enrolled in TVET by 2026 and 20% enrolments in technical fields for disadvantaged groups by the same year.

The policy further aims to improve quality of TVET through registration and accreditation of TVET institutions. Reforming the curricula to make it more responsive to industry needs as well as improving scope for self-employment for income generation. This shall entail putting in place a demand-led, customer-focused, and diversified TVET system with top priority being given to skills development through infusing communication, numeracy, ICT, science and entrepreneurship in all training programmes. The strategic objective here is to strengthen quality and delivery of TVET programmes. The target in this objective is that by 2026 Lesotho must have TVET programmes that cater for the needs of the country, that 100% of students and 60% of instructors go through the internship/attachment programme, have a functional quality assurance frameworks, that 40% of technical teachers and instructors should have completed long- and short-term training, and finally that TVET programmes include support skills such as Entrepreneurship, communication, etc.

### Results of current TVET policy

Currently, TVET sector is characterized by demand which exists supply even with low enrolment rates as a proportion of students who drop out of basic education and secondary education. Days and inadequate training place in the technical and vocational training institutions for the bulk of learners from basic education. There has been an increase in the vocational education enrolment in there yes leading to 2012, 2013, to 2014 at 3296, 3303, and 4223, respectively. Current (2020) enrolments across all sub sectors of TVET; Artisans at Junior Secondary, Senior Secondary, at other TVET institutions and in Higher Education TVET institutions stand at 5995, 5957, and 2986. A bold estimation of enrolment in TVET in the same sector for same three tranches by 2025 is estimated at 17, 871 for junior school, 9429 for senior secondary, and 3423 for higher education.

The quality of technical and vocational education in the government is expected to undergo a complete overhaul of the legislative regulatory and institutional structures and processes to make both the management and course offerings demand driven in a manner that is responsible to the needs and requirements of both the labour market and those of the local communities. Therefore, in terms of the actual improvement of the program offerings the nationally approved approach for curriculum development shall be undertaken and the roles and responsibilities for the current structures that are responsible for TVET curriculum development shall be reviewed to align them to the imaging qualitative and quantitative challenges.

The education sector plan also highlights that the existing TVET programs shall be continuously reviewed so that they comply with the standards that shall be set through a consultative process that shall include the involvement of industry or employers. The TVD also highlights that the quality of TVET programs shall also be attained through development of the national module accreditation structure and later provide an instructor accreditation system. The department also makes a direct reference to the national qualifications framework which it says shall also be affected as part of the quality assurance effort of government. Emulation of good practices for other regional and international technical and vocational training institutions are expected to be part of the quality improvement strategy.

### Critical Challenges to TVET in Lesotho

The education sector plan 2016 – 2026, (MoET, 2016) highlights that Lesotho faces several challenges regarding technical and vocational education which reflect regional challenges that have been highlighted in literature earlier. This challenge is included inadequate technical and vocational training institutions and training spaces for the bulk of potential learners. It also highlights the limited courses and training facilities which result in lower enrolments as a key challenge. Its further highlights under qualified training staff instructors who offer the traditional TVET programs. Moreover, the education sector plan also highlights that majority of employees still acquire uncertified on-the-job in formal training due to shortage of training facilities and funding. The TVET sector also faces poor perception attitudes by the society due to the very positioning that it is geared to those who may perform poor in basic education or have no other alternative means of obtaining better education.

The cost of training in technical and vocational training institutions and limited support from government enterprises and societies presents one of the typical bust most critical challenges to vocational education in Lesotho. There is also an observed problem where institutions offer courses that do not respond to the ever-changing labour market demands as they are still largely traditional and supply driven. Relevant to this study. The education sector plan also highlighted again that there is also a challenge of poor collaboration of public and private participation in the technical and vocational education system from policy to implementation levels.

### Future Development

In order to respond to these challenges the technical and vocational department has developed a road map that largely aspires to achieve the following column to facilitate increased access and enrolments in TVET; Improve quality of vocational education through registration and accreditation of institutional providers: reforming the vocational education systems governance with the view of increasing quality and relevance to the world of work: developing the vocational education funding model which will ensure sustainable funding through the facilitation of stronger stakeholder participation in TVET through effective public private partnership arrangements.

In this objectives the department has said pretty high targets including at least 30% industry based training conducted by 2026, at least 30,000 TVET add learners embroiled in TVET and by 2026, at least 20% enrolments in technical fields for disadvantaged groups by 2026, TVET programs that cater for the needs of the country to be formulated by 2026 100% of students and 60% of instructors to go through the internship or attachment program, quality assurance framework implemented and functional by 2026, 40% of technical teachers and instructors should have completed long and short term training by 2026, and T vet programs should include and support skills such as entrepreneurship, communication, and etc; achieve an effective TVET governance structure in place by 2020, and increase the number of funding agencies by 2026 (MoET, 2016, 2019).

## The Lesotho Qualifications Framework and its Impact on TVET

In line with the objectives of the education sector strategic plan 2016 – 2026, (MoET, 2016) Lesotho to has developed a quality assurance and qualifications policy that is aimed at transforming the education sector in Lesotho. Historically, Lesotho developed a qualifications framework in 2005, but the 2005 LQ F was not fully implemented. It is envisaged that structures that were proposed were not established, it is assumed to be the principal failure of This first version of the qualifications framework which was supported by the World Bank group.

Furthermore, the former qualifications framework was partially implemented on an ad hoc basis with several different entities playing distinct roles including examinations council of Lesotho, technical and vocational department, and the council on higher education in Lesotho. The revision of 2005 Lesotho qualifications framework started in 2016 through a highly consultative process and it was ended in 2019. The revised version of the lawsuit qualifications framework was approved by cabinet in June 2019, and it is designed to be an integrated level framework which covers 10 notches from basic education, TVET, higher education, and professional development awards.

Some of the key objectives of the Lesotho qualifications framework are to integrate existing sector frameworks into one as reflected in the level descriptors below. This includes basic, TVET, Higher Education, and Professional Training. The second objective is to remove barriers between institutions and other sub-sectors for improving articulation and learner progression. It further seeks to uphold equity and address enabling citizens to acquire qualifications irrespective of age and lack of formal qualifications. Moreover, it aims to improve articulation and learner mobility through links and pathways between education and training courses and qualifications with a view of facilitating learner mobility.

Table

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**Fig 2.3 Level Descriptors under LQQC MoET, (2019)**

It also seeks to foster quality and relevance through outcomes and standard based education and training which is more demand driven and leads to meaningful employment. The framework also acknowledges and value diversity and therefore the wealth of all qualifications as they serve identified purpose is contributing to the broader national development goals. It also seeks to facilitate curriculum innovation and qualifications renewal and upgrading TVET qualifications to higher levels. It also aims to ensure consistency in terms of qualification verification and articulation processes of all awards.

In the main, the LQF aims to facilitate mobility of learners, allow comparison of qualifications, and serve as a coherent and integrated framework for all qualifications in Lesotho that is also consistent with other country frameworks in SADC and beyond.

Alignment of curriculum and awards, integration into the general education system in the new LQF. The revisions to the LQF as stated to reflect critically the implications of a model that ensures that the goal of achieving equivalence, harmonization, and standardization of qualifications in the Lesotho education and training system are achieved. It is also set to be built from insights and lessons covering more than two decades of framework developments across both developed and developing world and have been examined and benchmarked for the Lesotho context call my therefore the imaging LQF is stated to serve as the principal instrument through which national education and training qualifications are recognized and quality assured.

The Lesotho Qualifications Framework is also stated to build on try a way that dates back from 2005 aligning with the objectives of the Ministry of Education and Training - Education Sector Plan that ran between 2005 and 2015, the higher education policy of 2013 which is in force and the education sector plan which is current that is running between 2016 to 2026. These developments are said to have been underpinned through the provisions of the Education Act, 2010 and Higher Education Act, 2004.

Critically and relevant to this study the implementation of the Lesotho Qualifications framework is clearly stated to have significant implications for resourcing and human capital development. It is however stated that the benefits and advantages that it purports to bring to all stakeholders in the management of qualifications and education in Lesotho makes the investment and transformation necessary and worthwhile. The implementation of the current framework adopts the principles that are echoed by the government which include fitness for purpose with minimum costs to society.

The absence of a functional qualification framework in Lesotho is acknowledged by the Ministry of Education that it renders Lesotho vulnerable as a country in terms of enabling and enacting the transformative aspects of the framework such as the recognition of prior learning, the recognition of current competencies, and credit accumulation and transfer to provide life from learning for all citizens and many more challenges outlined in the framework. It further states a need to build capacity internally for verifying qualifications and competencies to ensure a highly skilled workforce. Therefore, it draws reference to the recently launched African Qualifications Verification Network (AQVN) (ACQF, 2020) which is expected to make a significant difference. Critically, the framework acknowledges that given the immense potential and transformative nature of the framework, the impact upon institutions about transformation and realigning their qualification mix to a revised LQF has capacity and resource implications.

The LQF summarizes its existence as a policy document be an aspirational, contemporary, and responsive framework that serves a means of creating an integrated national qualifications framework for learning, articulating with qualifications in industry and other social partners, and supporting efforts to enhance the consistency of standards, as well as gaining greater measures of equivalence and the mutual recognition of qualifications.

In that regard, the framework proposes that with response to the concerns of the Government of Lesotho, regarding proliferation of parastatals that are not sustainable in the long run it will dissolve the current Council on Higher Education (CHE) and form a new organization established to be responsible for managing qualifications at all LQF levels and quality assurance of basic education, higher education and technical and vocational education and training. The policy proponents I said that this is the most efficient and effective way of implementing the Lesotho qualifications framework given the context and size of the Lesotho education sector. Therefore, the policy drafters proposed a new institution now called the Lesotho Qualifications and Quality Council (LQQC) and part of its mandate will be to take over the quality assurance functions in higher education which were currently performed by the council on higher education.

With restive interest in this study, the LQQC explicitly asserts in the LQF policy document that the Technical and Vocational Department within the Ministry of Education and Training will continue with its responsibilities as outlined in the Technical and Vocational Training Act of 1984 (ILO, 2020). The accreditation of TVET programs and implementation of qualifications framework will be the responsibility of LQQC. While the primary responsibility for implementation of improvement plans lies with L QQC, Technical and Vocational Department through its inspections will perform quality assurance and other related initiatives. When dealing with TVET programs, LQQC will work closely with Technical and Vocational Department, such that submissions made to LQQC by TVET institutions on program accreditation will have been endorsed by TVD.

The composition and the governance structure of the LQQC does comprise various sectors including the technical and vocational education department. The LQF policy document however does also explicitly state that to respond to the framework as a transformative and integrative strategy for repositioning and streamlining the education and training system, fundamental structural and legal changes need to be affected in the structures of basic education, TVET and higher education. The policy document also highlights that the model implies a radical structural and legislative overhaul to create a new system based on quality enhancements within the framework of fitness for purpose with minimum cost to society approach.

The above principles are said to have been emphasized to ensure higher level policy alignment, cohesive governance, oversight and resourcing arrangements for all education and training institute interventions. It states that the establishment of elk provides a strategic and overarching body for dealing with qualifications and quality assurance. The policy document also critically states that the LQF will be managed as an integrated framework, and this will ensure that each sub-sector develops at a similar pace and more importantly eliminates costly duplications.

Diagram

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**Fig 2.4 Lesotho Qualifications and Quality Council Governance Structure MoET, (2019)**

With the above analysis of literature that entailed relevant theories applied by scholars in studying policy reforms and implementations in Africa, there is a clear pathway for further research. Therefore, after this review of relevant policy documents that are in place in Lesotho, which all affect the implementation of technical and vocational education, it is principally clear that there are significant challenges that lie ahead for vocational education policy implementation in Lesotho. This, notwithstanding developments in current review of policies and the education basic law, particularly when previous key policy documents including the 2005 qualifications framework was not implemented.

This research is also necessitated and given a point of departure for investigation by the specific references within the LQF of delegating the key task of quality assurance further out to the Technical and Vocational Department regardless of the very our various assertions that technical and vocational education is highly underfunded, under-resourced, and does not enjoy the same level of government support despite recognition of its importance in the broader economy of skills in Lesotho.

Therefore, as highlighted earlier in research content under Problem statement, this intersection represents a significant friction point that requires a deeper, and comprehensive investigation applying relevant analytical framework to assess the potential challenges of system and policy implementation given these key policy documents. Furthermore, a complementary investigation on how these policy directives would affect the general trajectory of technical and vocational education in Lesotho. All these to also contribute to theorizing vocational education studies in Africa and provide a frame of reference for other technical and vocational education policy practitioners and researchers around Africa and beyond.

# CHAPTER THREE

# Research Methods

## Research Design

This research is a comprehensive, practice and policy-oriented study meant for real-world application. Analytical approaches in this study are also selected with the intention to contribute to the theoretical underpinnings of technical vocational education and training, system analysis and policy assessment in Africa. Nonetheless, this study utilizes existing theories, therefore it is deductive, qualitative research that is based on two main forms of data assessments, systematic literature analysis and primary data collected through interviews.

## Analytical Approaches: CPE

For this framework as discussed earlier, we borrow from Zancjo and Valiente, (2019) Where they used cultural and political economy (Jessop & Sum, 2022) as an analytical framework to study technical and vocational education and training policy reforms In Chile between 2006 and 2018. The authors, and therefore this study also selects cultural and political economy (CPE) approach because it highlights the explanatory factors affecting the processes of discussion and reform on a specific policy domain, and in this case, TVET policy.

Therefore, among varying cultural and political economy frameworks, this study also adopts a framework proposed by, Jessop (2010), see also (Jessop, 2010; Jessop & Sum, 2022). CPE uniquely allows us to analyse not only economic, institutional end political influence in their political processes, but it also includes the role of the semiotic driver such as discourses or ideas that get floated around during policy discussions. It has been long understood that ideological drivers can have an important influence on fast-tracking the pace of development, particularly in Lesotho where the country is notorious among researchers for having lengthy policy discussions that take long to implement (Lekhetho, 2018). In their study too, Zancjo and Valiente, (2019) noted that ideas play a crucial role when it comes to the analysis of why some countries adopt specific processes of policy reform and therefore why some policy solutions are presented as feasible to policymakers and other stakeholders in the field.

In further reasoning for the selection of CPE, it clearly identifies three key areas and mechanisms of policy reform: this includes *‘Variation’*, *‘Selection’*, and *‘Retention’* (Zancajo & Valiente, 2019). While these three dimensions do not entail a sequential understanding in terms of policy processes according to the authors, they provide a critical road map in which emerging themes can be categorised to determine whether policy propositions would find their way into practice or whether such policy propositions will be dropped along the way and not reach *‘retention’*. Specifically, variation mechanism takes place when a policy on this specific domain is problematized, Zancajo & Valiente, (2019) indicate that this can be triggered by several events which would be contextual in nature. This could be an economic crisis, or student mobilizations, and it generates the need to review policy discourses, policies, and practices adapting them to the new circumstances that emerge. The second mechanism, *‘selection’*, entails political struggles between competing definitions of the causes of the problem and the policy solutions to be adopted between human capital and the right of education agendas and so on. At this stage, policy actors produce strategies that would promote their policy suggestions and solutions to decision-makers within the country.

And lastly, the *‘retention’* mechanism includes the institutionalization of any given policy solution through the changes in the national legal framework and their incorporation into function and practices, including technocrats, practitioners, and other beneficiaries. Therefore, briefly, these three phases of policy reform and processes identified within the CPE frameworks are in fact influenced by drivers of material and semiotic nature. In summary, CPE as a framework in TVET does not only allow us to identify policy shifts guiding the implementation and reforms but also to analytically highlight the political-economic and educational drivers that explain their adoption by political authorities in Lesotho (in this case).

## Reconstructed CPE Policy Analysis Model for TVET

TVET Policy Implementation Variables

Policy reform and Implementation Process

**Fig 3.1 CPE Policy Analysis Model**

### Analytical Methods

Technical and Vocational Education and Training is primarily driven by a complex system of both formal and non-formal education, public and private providers, deeper stakeholder engagement and cross cutting, inter-departmental policies that work together to make vocational education possible and accessible to those who really need (Alla-Mensah & McGrath, 2021a; McGrath, 2014). Therefore, to achieve an effective and successful technical and vocational education system, there are set principles that are widely adopted as discussed in literature; principles that researchers have established effective for a successful TVET system in any country.

Therefore, for the analysis of Lesotho’s TVET system and policy implementation challenges, the study will also borrow from (Lucas et al., 2012a) and (OECD, 2021; UNESCO & SADC, 2013)principles inherent in a successful TVET system to establish a theoretical underpinning for the key aspects of a successful TVET system based on the set of principles proposed by the authors. This set of principles for a successful implementation of the TVET system encompasses; Relevance to the Labour Market, Access for Trainees, Quality of Delivery, Standardization, Inclusion of Soft-skills, and Secure and Uninterrupted Funding. Therefore, on the one hand, the study will attempt to analyse TVET system in Lesotho based on these six principles inherent in a successful system proposed by UNESCO and echoed by the OECD, (2021). This assessment will be conducted to arrive at an evidence-based result on the impending challenges of vocational education system and policy implementation in Lesotho by establishing a spectrum of congruence of Lesotho’s TVET system in such principles.

A measurement instrument will be drawn from a combination of UNESCO, (2013) sector analysis of TVET in Southern Africa and from a study by Zancajo & Valiente, (2019) in their study of policy reforms in Chile 2006 - 2018. Since these principles will be studied under the auspices of the new Lesotho Qualifications and Quality Council existence (MoET, 2019), the study will then map out the listed principles against the provisions of the new Lesotho Qualifications Framework policy and ask respondents and participants engaged to offer an informed opinion and experience-based response in comparison of the two key documents; Being ‘Principles and strategies of a successful TVET program’ and the ‘Revised Lesotho qualifications framework policy’ which both seek to guide implementation of a TVET system. The variance of views and opinions of participants will be measured to provide some conclusions on the envisaged implementation challenges. The studies performed will include desk literature analysis, primary data analysis, and a repeat study of UNESCO’s region-wide, sector analysis of technical and vocational education in southern Africa.

### Desk Literature Analysis

The first phase of the study will focus on informing and building knowledge on the fore-front developments in TVET that highlight the potential challenges that TVET system faces in Lesotho. Therefore, a thematic and systematic literature review and analysis of basic text laws, official documents of record from the Government of Lesotho, sector-specific reports and past assessment reports of authoritative sources in TVET will be undertaken.

### Primary Data Analysis

The second phase of the analysis will focus on answering the key questions in the thesis by mining new data from the ground through structured and semi-structured interview questions that are extended to stakeholders within the technical and vocational education sector in Lesotho. This part of the research will focus preferably on stakeholders who participated in the 2013 UNESCO technical and vocational education sector assessment that was conducted in Southern Africa.

### Repeat Study: Updating UNESCO-UNIVOC Data on Lesotho TVET System

On parallel with the second phase of the study, the analysis will revisit related sections of technical and vocational education in Lesotho that UNESCO commissioned for a study in 2013. It was a comprehensive review of TVET system in Lesotho at the time, contained in a study that comprised other countries in Southern Africa. There have been significant developments since the study was undertaken in 2013 and it has not been undertaken since. UNESCO keeps a live update of vocational education vital statistics that are updated with piece-meal information (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022). Therefore, it is prudent to seek to revamp Lesotho’s progress and update UNESCO’s data based on data from interviews with stakeholders.

Then, in a bid to provide meaning, and interpretations, and to build a scientific system of recommendations on the findings of the study, and in addition to CPE in the main analysis, the Actor-Network Theory constructs, (Fenwick & Edwards Richard, 2018) will be applied to analyse the relationships that exist between responsible officers and individuals in implementing Lesotho’s technical and vocational education. It will also be used to understand the overlapping of tasks, the gaps and ambiguity of responsibilities that appear from interviews, and the assumptions that inform the decisions of individual actors within the vocational education system in Lesotho. All these would have been collected through interview questions conducted for the second phase. When time permits and interest is supported, a form of survey questionnaire will be conducted to squarely replicate UNESCO’s rating basis in their previous research.

## Research Techniques

Qualitative data analysis techniques will be undertaken to analyse data, the volume, and the themes that appear from the interviews. Interviews will be undertaken to ascertain the significance of the assumed challenges from the literature. Qualitative research methods will be used to also collect descriptive data which will help provide the meaning behind the collected data. It will also be used to uncover underlying issues which metric data alone cannot express vividly to provide conclusive information.

## Research Instruments and Data Sources

### Population

As indicated earlier, the study will attempt to interview respondents who participated in the UNESCO survey in 2013. The study will also attempt to interview stakeholders who participated in the drafting of the new Lesotho Qualifications and Quality council policy.

The envisaged respondents in this research will include the following:

1. Department of TVET MoET. - 3
2. Department of Planning MoET. - 1
3. Selected Heads of TVET Institutions - 3
4. Industry Partners in Lesotho TVET - 3
5. Department of Policy, MDP- 3
6. Selected TVET Instructors - 3

### Research Instruments and Interviews

The research will utilize both primary and secondary data sources, therefore instruments employed in this study will encompass both data collection-oriented instruments, policy objectives and authoritative reports.

**This will include the following:**

1. Interview questionnaires.
2. Basic text law documents.
3. Previous surveys reports.
4. Authoritative.

### Design of Interview Questions

In line with the studied guidelines on constructing research questionnaires, the questions contained in our interview questionnaire would mostly be obtained from and slightly modified from previous, academically constructed surveys that were undertaken in similar research. This is to minimize the aspect of biases from own question design or to construct interview questions that are leading in nature; a phenomenon that has a potential to distort the outcome of the research.

In consideration of the type of research being conducted the following type of questions will characterize the entire interview questionnaire being utilized across all respondents.

* Closed-ended questions,
* Single response questions,
* A form of rating.

These types of questions will be distributed and designed based on the type of interviewee, and available format of interview, (in person, remote, or third party).

## The rationale for Research Design

### Sampling Design and Target Population

The research will utilize a target population of technical and vocational education and training and government officers to make a relative sampling design that is relevant within the sector in education. The purpose of sampling is to secure a representative group, which enables a researcher to gain information about an entire population when faced with limitations of time, funds, and energy. Furthermore, Gray at al., (2017) Defines sampling as the selection of a small group of individuals from whom we obtain data to be able to generalize about a large group.

It is envisaged that the target population will help in securing a validity construct of arguments in terms of subject relevance. The present study will use an occasional sample based on the availability of respondents, given that this method of choosing a sample is limited in nature the generalizations from this research would be limited to the sector of technical and vocational education and training.

### Sampling Frame

On the one hand, this research will be constructed to collect data from only practitioners in technical and vocational education and training in Lesotho as recognized by the government of Lesotho and other development partners. On the one hand, the respondents will also come from the employees of such departments and students who would be pre-qualified by this study to hold or be in possession of valuable information about the development and implementation of education and, technical and vocational education in Lesotho.

### Sampling Size

The size of the sample used in this research will depend heavily on the availability of the target respondents. Although the required number for the research to provide significant meaning and generalizations to research is set on varying levels, in this research the respondents in each category of the interview will be limited to a minimum of two individuals each. It is worth noting that while this is a purposeful selection of the population, convenient sampling enables researchers to save time and costs among all other methods of population design and sampling frame. It has also been established by previous researchers that the smaller the difference is regarded as important to detect, be it in word cloud themes or other kinds of differences, the greater the sample size required in a study. Convenient sampling is under the umbrella of non-probability sampling. Which is a method that allows researchers to select elements for the sample in a convenient manner.

## Research Progression

## Secondary Data Collection, August – October 2022

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis. Site visits and virtual leads will be followed up from initial contacts to collect data on both open and protected sources with agreement from the authorized handlers of the information and within the ethical conduct of academic research of Zhejiang and Normal University.

### Primary Data Collection, October – December 2022

When the proposal is approved, the study will begin with first hand data collection. The primary data will be collected from the respondents listed in interview questions and the metrics will be provided to establish a standardized collection of data. The time of the interview and the schedules will be slightly altered to accommodate the preferences of the interviewees to get the most valuable information when the respondents are free to provide information.

### Data Aggregation, December – January 2023

Following primary and secondary data collection, aggregation of data will be conducted to prepare all information from all sources for analysis. This stage will involve classification of data cleaning of data, removal of faulty data, qualification, and screening of faults in other secondary information sources, and therefore data will be prepared and put in appropriate places to allow for ensuing analysis.

### Thesis Writing, January 2023 – December 2023

Comprehensive thesis writing will be undertaken after data aggregation. However, thesis writing would happen in concurrence with both primary secondary data collection, where data does not need to go through aggregation and cleaning. But writing will be paused for data aggregation to ensure that only data that must go through that process, has been analysed has been taken through the data aggregation process, which is in principle, the gleaning function during the study.

Thesis writing will continue and will involve submission for reviews and editing. This is an activity that will live up to the last day of the final document submission. Within phases of this research, writing will also be done in participation to the manuscript construction being prepared for publication. This would also be done in partial fulfilment of the program requirements. Therefore, this stage will be critical in not only thesis writing but also in other aspects of research as data collected for this thesis would also be prepared for publications intended for incorporation into the final thesis submitted.

**Table 4.1 Research progression timetable**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Start Date** | **Duration** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | Month/  Year | PERIOD: June 2022 – March 2024 | | | | | | | | | |
| Jun | Aug | Oct | Nov | | | Dec | 2023 | | Jan ’24 Mar 24 |
| **Proposal Defense** | 06.2022 |  |  |  |  | | |  |  | |  |
| **Secondary Data Collect.** | 08.2022 |  |  | | |  | | |  | |  |
| **Primary Data Collection** | 10.2022 |  |  |  | | | | |  | |  |
| **Data Aggregation** | 12.2022 |  |  |  | | |  | | |  |  |
| **Thesis Writing** | 01.2023 |  |  |  |  | | | |  | | |

# CHAPTER FOUR

# Lesotho TVET and LQF Policy Review

## TVET Policy Background

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Main Policy Objectives

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Content of Policy

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis. \

## TVET Policy measures

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## LQF Policy Background

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Main Policy Objectives

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Content of Policy

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis. \

## LQF Policy measures

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

# CHAPTER 5

# Challenges Implementing TVET in Lesotho

## Institutional Capacity

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Curriculum Development

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Teacher Training

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis. \

## Student Outcomes

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

# CHAPTER 6

# Comparative Studies of TVET between China and Africa

## TVET and Human Development, Lessons from China

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Financing Education and TVET, a Comparative Review

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

# CHAPTER 7

# Discussion and Recommendations

## Findings

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Conclusion

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

## Recommendations

During or immediately after the primary data collection, second data sources will be contacted to retrieve information required for analysis.

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# Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

**ACQF** - African Continental Qualifications Framework

**AfDB** - African Development Bank Group

**AQVN** – African Qualifications Verification Network

**CHE** – Council on Higher Education

**CPE** - Cultural Political Economy

**CTE** – Career and Technical Education

**GER** – Cross Enrolment Rates

**HIVAIDS** - Human Immunodeficiency Virus, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

**ICT** – Information and communications technology

**ILO** – International Labour Organisation

**LQF** – Lesotho Qualifications Framework

**LQQC** – Lesotho Qualifications and Quality Council

**LSA** – Lesotho Skills Authority

**MDP** – Ministry of Development Planning

**MoET** – Ministry of Education and Training

**NQF** – National Qualifications Framework

**NSDP** – National Strategic Development Plan

**NTF** – National Training Fund

**OE** – Occupational Education

**OECD** - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**PVE** – Professional and Vocational Education

**SADC** - Southern African Development Community

**SDG** - Sustainable Development Goals

**TVD** – Technical and Vocational Department

**TVE** – Technical and Vocational Education

**TVET** – Technical and Vocational Education

**TVT** – Technical and Vocational Training

**TVTAB** - Technical and Vocational Training Advisory Board

**UN** – United Nations

**UNDP** – United Nations Development Programme

**UNESCO** – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**UNEVOC** - International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

**USAID** – United States Agency for International Development

**VET** - Vocational Education and Training

**WE** – Workforce Education / Workplace Education

# Appendices

* 1. **Table 6.1 Summary of the State of Education in Lesotho UNESCO, (2021)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **INDICATOR** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2019** | **2020** | **Data Sources** |
| Enrollment in vocational programs, secondary education, female (%) |  |  |  | 66.6 |  |  | *Source: World Bank / UIS* |
| Enrolment in secondary vocational, both sexes (number) |  |  |  | 2,858.0 |  |  | *Source: World Bank / UIS* |
| GDP (current USD) |  |  |  |  |  | 1,875,227,642.5 | *Source: World Bank* |
| GDP growth (annual %) |  |  |  |  |  | -9.6 | *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics* |
| Government expenditure on education (% of total) |  |  |  |  |  | 13.8 | *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics* |
| Government expenditure on vocational education (% of total government expenditure) |  |  |  |  |  |  | *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics* |
| Labor force participation rate, total (% of total population ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) |  |  |  |  |  | 39.1 | *Source: World Bank / ILOSTAT* |
| Net Enrolment Rate, secondary education, female (%) |  |  | 50.0 |  |  |  | *Source: World Bank / UIS* |
| Net Enrolment Rate, secondary education, male (%) |  |  | 32.7 |  |  |  | *Source: World Bank / UIS* |
| Population aged 15-24 years (%) |  |  |  |  | 19.6 |  | *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics* |
| Proportion of 15-24 year-olds enrolled in technical and vocational education |  | 1.3 |  |  |  |  | *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics* |
| Total Population |  |  |  |  |  | 2,142,252.0 | *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics* |
| Unemployment (%) |  |  |  |  |  | 24.6 | *Source: World Bank / ILOSTAT* |
| Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) |  |  |  |  |  | 37.8 | *Source: World Bank / ILOSTAT* |
| Youth literacy rate, population 15-24 years, both sexes (%) | 86.6 |  |  |  |  |  | *Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics* |

Graphical user interface

Description automatically generated

* 1. **Fig 6.1 Lesotho Formal Education System UNESCO, (2021)**
  2. **Table 6.2 Categories of vocational education and corresponding learning methods Lucas et al., (2012) OECD, (2015)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Categories of vocational education and corresponding learning methods** | | |
| **Categories** | **Issues to consider when choosing learning methods** | **Some methods that work** |
| **People** | While practical learning experiences are essential, it is not possible to expose some clients (children, older people being cared for, hairdressing clients for example) to vocational learners until learners have reached a certain standard. In some cases, it may never be possible (where a client could be adversely affected by a novice or inexperienced approach). | Watching and imitating (especially using film), using virtual learning environments, using simulation and role-play and, sometimes, games. |
| **Physical materials** | Of critical importance in working with physical materials is getting the right mix of practice and theory, providing sufficient opportunity to practice in different contexts. Knowing when it is important to describe specific practical skills is important, whether this is helpful before, during or after they are practiced. | Learning by watching, imitating, teaching others, drafting, sketching, being coached and competing against the clock are useful examples. |
| **Symbols** | Most vocational education requires the ability to work with words, numbers, and abstract concepts whether overtly (as in accountancy) or implicitly (as in electrical installation). In teaching abstract concepts, it is important to provide a range of methods, including those which call on approaches that sit comfortably with those with an interest in practical learning. | Learning through games can make the abstract more enjoyable, as can the use of visual models, stories and worked examples. |

* 1. **Table 6.3 Vocational education outcomes and learning methods Lucas et al., (2012) OECD, (2015)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vocational education outcomes and learning methods** | | |
| **VE outcome** | **Issues to consider when choosing learning methods** | **Some methods that work** |
| **Routine expertise** | Acquiring routine expertise requires time on task and this alone is an  important reason for providing vocational learners with lots of ‘hands on’ opportunities. Being told ‘how to’ is no substitute for trying it out. | Watching, imitating, extensive practising, talking things through with peers, giving and receiving feedback, reflective feedback, using VLEs are all examples of effective methods. |
| **Resourcefulness** | To be able to deal with the non-routine requires practice in different contexts where the situation or the resources  available are novel couples with a deep understanding of the processes of the vocational education in which the learner is engaged. | Whichever method is selected, it is important that both the processes of the specific vocation and the  more general learning processes are made explicit. This requires the teacher constantly describing what  is going on when they are modelling a skill, regularly giving feedback to learners as to what they seem to be doing and encouraging a culture in which learners feel free to critique each other’s work. Learning through simulations and scenarios can be helpful as is enquiry-based and real-world problem-solving approaches. Prompt sheets generated by learners can be useful in suggesting lines of enquiry which they can pursue when they get stuck. Such lists would include two lines of self-support:  1 thinking through where they may have encountered a similar situation before, and  2 scanning their environment for tools which might help or other people who might be able to help. |
| **Craftsmanship** | This is a sometimes-neglected area of vocational education and the one which can all too easily fall through the cracks of competence-based approaches. It calls for the specific description of certain habits of mind – pride, a determination to strive for perfection and constant self-critique. | Encouraging pride and a passion for excellence is rarely the preserve of a specific method. Rather it is the result of the role modelling of the teacher and other learners, their language used, and the culture in which the vocational education is located. |
| **Functional literacies** | There are two schools of thought with regard to the teaching of functional literacies. The first suggests that they are best learned in authentic situations as part of the vocational learning being undertaken. In this case they would be likely to be taught by the vocational teacher. The other is that these are specialist skills which a skilled vocational teacher of, for example, furniture or counselling may or may not have and are best left to specialists. | Whichever approach is adopted there is a need to map functional literacies against specific vocational areas or categories more precisely so that whoever teaches them it is more likely that learners will be engaged. If such functional skills were not acquired first time round (at school) then methods chosen will need to be innovative, especially engaging, and able to boost confidence by requiring only small progress to trigger a noticeable reward. |
| **Business-like attitudes** | As with craftsmanship, this is largely about mindset, though it is perhaps easier to describe, involving as it does, explicit connections to customers/clients/service user; markets and competitors; cost, income, and profit; financial and other accountabilities. There are also aspects of social responsibility and ethical behavior which are important. | Not connected to specific methods, it is important to use a vocabulary and language from the target vocation as well as the routines, processes, and cultural expectations it brings. Methods which are more authentic will be important, although this needs to be balanced by explicit learning about the needs of the chosen ‘business’. |
| **Wider skills for growth** | Employers broadly agree that in addition to the skills of their specific vocational area, wider skills, sometimes referred to as 21st century skills are essential. With the pressure of assessment, it is important not to allow this critical outcome of vocational education to be squeezed out. The wider skills can be embedded in the teaching of the vocational education the better. But this requires them to be named explicitly, so a group of, for example, performing arts students will be learning about an aspect of theatre craft and at the same time explicitly be taught about the different collaboration skills which need to be present in an effective team. | Whichever methods are being used it is helpful if a common language is developed, one which works in the specific vocational context. Extensive practice in different contexts will be important too. |
|  | | |

**End**